

Hart Mountain Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp

By Lee Juillerat

Camp Hart Mountain, a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, operated from October 1937 until July 1941. Located near Plush, about forty miles northeast of Lakeview, the camp was established by enrollees from Camp Clear Lake near Tulelake, California. Superintendent William Edmiston reached the camp on October 17, the same day that 166 enrollees of Company 3442 arrived in Lakeview after a four-day train trip from Rutledge, Georgia. They were taken to Camp Hart Mountain by truck and housed in tents.

CCC crews helped develop the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, established on December 21, 1936, by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's executive order. Other projects included improving the road and stringing telephone lines from Plush to the camp and, later, to the refuge headquarters, building a garage for vehicles at the refuge headquarters, erecting fabricated buildings, and constructing a road from the camp to refuge headquarters.

Reports that CCC and refuge personnel filed every few months describe flu outbreaks and storms: for example, five inches of snow fell on December 23-24, 1937; on December 28-29, the temperature was minus 3 degrees; and two inches of rain fell between January 1 and January 8, 1938. The first Thanksgiving dinner at the camp included "Roast Young Tom Turkey and all the fixings," and enrollees traveled to Lakeview for a "large Christmas dinner." There were baseball games, "camp picture shows," and "indoor games," and the men spent time "keeping the stoves going."

Fieldwork at the camp ended on July 8, 1941, and the last enrollees left on July 10. On July 21, Edmiston transferred to the Desert Game Range Camp FWS-4 in Las Vegas. Most camp buildings were disassembled and hauled away. Only the infirmary remains; it was renovated in the mid-1950s as a living quarters/office-laboratory. Camp Hart Mountain is now an RV campground.

Sources

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