

Three Lakes Shelter Preservation Project

A CCC Adirondack Shelter - Good for Another 70 Years

Civilian Conservation Corps

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was a work relief program created in 1933 as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal. Men were hired across the nation to conserve, protect and renew natural resources. In Alaska, the Forest Service was charged with handling the relief funds and overseeing the CCC program.

The CCC workforce proved their worth by building and working on a huge variety of projects that left their mark in Alaska history.

Recreational planning was a large component of the program and, with that mind set, the remote shelter and trail theme was born.

Adirondack Shelters

The Three Lakes Shelter is located on Mitkof Island, on the Petersburg Ranger District. It is one of about 39 Adirondack style shelters built on the Tongass National Forest between the mid 1930s and the early 1940s. Most of the shelters are on lake shores accessible by CCC era trails. Thirty of the shelters are still operable, having been patched or repaired over the years.

All of the shelters are beam and pole frame covered with hand split shakes. Specifications are nearly identical as the same plan was used across the Forest. Materials varied with what was at hand.



A rough-cut yellow cedar plank floor adds the finishing touch.



The Three Lakes Shelter is on a planked Forest Service trail that receives high seasonal use by tourists and locals alike. After nearly 70 years, the shelter was deteriorating and patchwork maintenance would no longer suffice. To protect the shelter's historic integrity, Forest Service archaeologists developed a preservation plan to stabilize the shelter for future enjoyment. Our work culminated in a product that combines old with new and embodies a sense of Alaska's remote yet accessible frontier.

Historic Property
The Civilian Conservation Corps built the original Adirondack style shelter in 1938 as part of a program initiated by President Roosevelt to put Americans to work and provide remote recreation and travel access. In 2006 Forest Service employees and volunteers used Resource Advisory Committee funding to rebuild the shelter, salvaging components when possible and integrating them into the reconstruction process. This property is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. Please help preserve this shelter for ours and future generations.



To accomplish the task at hand, we assessed each component for soundness.



Forest Service archaeologists, cabin and trail specialists, and a slew of volunteers restored the shelter by replacing rotten and deteriorated components with like materials.



We used traditional hand tools when possible.



Split red cedar shakes enclose the shelter.



Shelter + Dog + Boy = FUN



Each piece was labeled with location and dimension attributes prior to dismantling.



Recycled sound pieces of the original rear roof rafters provided material for the new, shorter, front roof rafters.



We took the shelter apart in sections and cut out the rotten components.



The shelter is put back together with hardware and fitting techniques that were used in the construction of the historical structure.



Local materials, namely Alaska yellow cedar, were harvested as replacement components.



Rotten components are replaced with in-kind pieces.



Original pieces with structural integrity are preserved and fitted with new components.



Many hands make light work moving heavy beams from forest to shelter.



By
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