

Chapter 3

Catoctin and Prince William Parks Join the War Effort

The decision of Donovan's organization to establish its first U.S. training camps at Catoctin Mountain Park, Maryland, and Prince William Forest Park, Virginia, had been based on their' rural, isolated location yet comparative proximity to the nation's capital. Each site should occupy several hundred acres, be located away from highways and be "preferably far distant from other human habitations," Major Garland H. Williams, deputy chief of Special Operations, put it.¹ Given the need for speed, secrecy and isolation, these particular sites were obtained in March 1942 because they were readily available and met the OSS criteria at that time.² It was particularly helpful that the two sites were already federal property and that they combined rugged, wooded terrain with existing camping, administrative, and maintenance facilities. Those favorable circumstances were, of course, the result of their being part of the U.S. National Park Service.

Origins of Catoctin and Prince William Parks

Both parks had been developed in the 1930s by the National Park Service as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" program in response to the Great Depression. They were part of a federal project for converting land that had become sub-marginal in agricultural production and was accessible from metropolitan areas into parks and recreational facilities. Under the leadership of Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, the federal government in the mid-1930s began acquiring land for what were called Recreational Demonstration Areas (RDAs). The original intention was for the federal government to establish the RDAs and subsequently to relinquish them to the states. Most were deeded back as state parks, but a few—Prince William and Catoctin among them—would remain permanently within the national park system.³ Early on, leadership in the

¹ Maj. Garland H. Williams, "Training," memorandum, n.d. [January or February 1942], p. 6; located in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 161, Folder 1754, National Archives II, College Park, Md., hereinafter, National Archives II.

² Lt. Col. H[enson], L. Robinson to Col. Atherton Richards, OSS Planning Group, subject: Schools and Training Report [a 14-page, historical and geographical overview of the entire OSS training program], 30 October 1943, p.1, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 162, Folder 1757, National Archives II.

³ Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 187, 189; see also a contemporary report on the program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park

RDA program was assumed by the U.S. National Park Service (NPS), a permanent government agency created in 1916, to preserve and oversee the federal parks.⁴

Enthusiastically Conrad L. (“Connie”) Wirth, assistant director of the National Park Service, championed recreational development in the parks.⁵ He led the National Park Service’s dramatic expansion into development-oriented, recreational programs in the parks to provide healthy, outdoor, recreational facilities for urban dwellers. NPS studies identified a special need for such facilities by social organizations for urban youths.

The National Park Service sought sites within about 50 miles from an urban center, with at least 5,000 acres, and with good water, available building materials, and an interesting environment. The plan was to construct picnic areas, family campgrounds, and an organized camping area. The latter would contain three to six group camps, each of which would contain a general dining hall, an office, and an infirmary. Each group camp would have three to four sub-units, each with a lodge and half a dozen four-bed cabins plus a cabin for the group leader. Thus each camp was designed for 70 to 100 campers and a group staff of 20 to 30 persons. In general, the camp buildings were to be rustic style constructed of lumber or unpeeled logs on a stone foundation, with these materials obtained from the site.⁶ As Wirth recalled forty years later, “We proposed to build campsites primarily for group camping but also to provide year-round camping and recreation for individuals, small groups, and families. Our general objective was to

Service, “Emergency Conservation Work under National Park Supervision on State and County Parks, Metropolitan Sections of Municipal Parks and Resettlement Recreational Demonstration Projects,” n.d. [c. 1937], in National Park Service Records (hereinafter NPS Records) (RG 79), Entry 54, Box 20, Folder “Virginia, R.S. 0-207, Reports,” National Archives II.

⁴ On the origins of the U.S. National Park Service within the Department of the Interior, see Harland D. Unrau and G. Frank Williams, *Administrative History: Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s* (Denver, Colo.: NPS Denver Service Center Publication, 1983); Ronald A. Foresta, *America’s National Parks and Their Keepers* (Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future, Inc., 1984); Horace M. Albright as told to Robert Cahn, *The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-33* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Howe Bros., 1985); Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997); U.S. National Park Service, *The National Parks: Shaping the System*, 3rd ed., rev. by Janet McDonnell (Washington, D.C. Govt. Printing Office, 2005).

⁵ Conrad Wirth was a landscape architect who worked with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission before he joined NPS in 1931. Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 139-140. In 1934, Arno B. Cammerer, NPS Director, 1933-1940, established an NPS team to make a preliminary survey of recreational needs of the nation and their applicability to national, state, and local parks. Its members included George Wright, head of the Wildlife Division, Conrad Wirth, head of the Recreation, Land Planning and State Cooperation Division, and John Coffman, chief forester of the National Park Service. Coffman is a distant relative of the present author.

⁶ Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 188-89. The estimated construction cost of \$75,000 to \$100,000 for each camp was in addition to the cost of acquiring the land, which NPS hoped to purchase for \$5 an acre but which was later extended to an average of \$10 per acre.

provide quality outdoor recreation facilities at the lowest possible cost for the benefit of people of lower and middle incomes.”⁷

In 1936 President Roosevelt signed an executive order giving the National Park Service control over the entire Recreational Demonstration Area program. Eventually it would establish 46 RDAs in 24 states. Drawing on financial and labor support from such temporary New Deal agencies as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and others, the National Park Service’s large-scale movement into outdoor recreational development contributed in no small part to the dramatic growth of the NPS from managing primarily a limited number of large national parks of the West to responsibility for dozens of parks across the country.⁸

Acquiring Land and Building Cabin Camps at Prince William Forest Park

Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area (later renamed Prince William Forest Park) with 14,000 acres in Virginia and Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area (later Catoctin Mountain Park), with nearly 10,000 acres in Maryland were two of the seven largest of the RDAs.⁹ They were also among the first selected by the National Park Service. Because of Chopawamsic’s proximity to Washington only an hour away, and accessibility to top government officials and the national press corps, Wirth wanted to make it a model experiment. He believed that its success or failure would affect the entire RDA program.¹⁰

The sprawling wooded area west of Quantico, Virginia, seemed perfect for the RDA program. It was only 35 miles from Washington D.C. which badly needed additional camping facilities for urban youth. The land was economically unproductive, the soil having been depleted by farming and mining practices. The area was sparsely populated, and residents suffered high unemployment, more than half of the 150 resident families were on relief and only 40 families had any regular income. The forest itself was attractive, with second growth trees, abundant wildlife, three lakes, 18 miles of fresh water streams—Chopawamsic Creek and Quantico Creek—and timber and stone for

⁷ Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 186. Wirth later served as NPS director, 1951-1963, initiating Mission 66, a large scale, long term project targeted at 1956-1966 for restoring and developing the national parks for post-war America.

⁸ Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 140-142. NPS’s emphasis on recreational expansion and management in the parks did generate criticism among some of it NPS’s longtime supporters such as the Save the Redwoods League, the Wilderness Society and the National Parks Association, *ibid.*, 142-145. Another area of expanded NPS responsibility in the 1930s was historic site management.

⁹ See the listing in Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 187.

¹⁰ Conrad L. Wirth to Arthur E. Demaray, associate director of NPS, 22 April 1935, NPS Records (RG 79), Box 124, National Archives II.

constructing access roads and park facilities for the organized group camping that the youth and charitable organizations of Washington needed.¹¹

Land acquisition, or more accurately obtaining options to purchase land, began early in 1935.¹² Many of the several hundred residents, whites and blacks, did not want to leave, some of the families having lived there for generations. Few had electricity, telephones, or indoor plumbing, but most of the people did not consider themselves poor, as they existed on subsistence farming, barter, or occasional work, often at the U.S. Marine Corps base at nearby Quantico, the Army Corps of Engineers Post at Fort Belvoir or the Navy Yard in Washington. Illicit bootleg whisky stills operated in the backwoods. Many of the rural residents did not see why they should be forced to leave in order for group camping facilities to be created for the urban youth from Washington. Yet, they felt helpless against the power of the federal government, as even those property owners who took their case to the courts ultimately had to sell their land. While the Resettlement Administration acquired the land, the NPS project managers helped relocate 40 of the poorest families and connect them with relief and retraining agencies. But after leaving their homes, many of the residents simply moved to just beyond the boundaries of the park, where many of their descendants continue to live to the present day.¹³

In contrast, the Washington Council of Social Agencies was overjoyed, calling the National Park Service “our fairy godfather” because it was not only providing the park but was incorporating the suggestions of the council and its social agencies for the kinds of wholesome outdoor facilities they wanted.¹⁴ NPS made plans for Chopawamsic RDA as a model, character-building camp. The idea was to take underprivileged youth, who had been forced to live in the “artificial living conditions” in the “sprawling, overcrowded cities” and through organized camping help produce a “human crop” of “sturdy citizens.”¹⁵

¹¹ “Chopawamic, Va., ‘At the Small Lodge,’ Preliminary Report,” 28 January 1935, pp. 10-12; Arno B. Cammerer to C. Marshall Finnan, Supt., National Capital Parks, 2 February 1935; see also photographs and commentary in reports entitled “Observations and Photographs on Chopawamsic Creek, December 17, 20, and on Quantico Creek, December 18, 24, 26, and 27, 1934; all in NPS Records (RG 79), E-47, Box 124, Folder 501, National Archives II.

¹² Because of the multiple federal entities involved in the RDA project, it was actually the Resettlement Administration that acquired the land; NPS selected the site and would plan the facilities. Charles Gerner was the project manager and William R. Hall, assistant project manager from NPS for the Resettlement Administration. Hall acquired options to buy 12,400 acres, appraised at \$181,000, for \$139,000. Susan Cary Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park: An Administrative History* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1986), 9-10, 14-15; see also “Land Acquisition, Chopawamsic, Virginia,” “Old Resettlement Administration File,” closed 31 December 1937, NPS Records (RG 79), E-47, Box 126, Folder 630, National Archives II.

¹³ Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 11-13.

¹⁴ Mary Edith Coulson, secretary of the Washington Council of Social Agencies, to William R. Hall, 13 July 1936, NPS Records (RG 79), RDA Files, Entry 47, Box 121, National Archives II.

¹⁵ The quotations are from the film, *Human Crop* (U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1936), copy in Prince William Forest Park Nature Center; see also Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 15-16, 19.

Construction began in 1935, and was performed, under overall NPS supervision, primarily by jobless local workers and some artisans hired by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the 18 to 25-year-old unemployed urban youths in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).¹⁶ The CCC units of about 200 young men each, working under quasi-military regimen, built or brought their own portable, wood and tarpaper work camps, then joined with WPA men to construct the access roads and the first two cabin camps, using mainly local materials and working with their own portable sawmill and a rock crushing gravel maker.¹⁷ Despite working through 1935 and early 1936, the CCC and WPA crews were not able to complete the two cabin camps when they were officially opened in June 1936.¹⁸

By 1939, the CCC and other work crews had essentially completed the five cabin camps at Chopawamsic RDA. Instead of turning it over to the state of Virginia, however, it was decision to retain it as a permanent part of the National Park System and make it part of the National Capital Parks. The reason given was its value as “an ideal recreational and camping area needed to organized camping facilities for various social service agencies and other organizations” in the Washington area.¹⁹

Since Chopawamsic RDA (Prince William Forest Park) was virtually complete and because it would remain within the National Park Service, the NPS, in late 1939, sent a new manager to take over the facility from the project managers who had overseen its acquisition by the Resettlement Administration and its construction by the CCC and WPA. The new manager, Ira B. Lykes, would manage Chopawamsic RDA for the next dozen years, from 1939 to 1951. Lykes was originally from Trenton, New Jersey, and after graduating from high school there, he had worked in engineering and construction companies in the state capital, while taking some night courses in business administration at nearby Rider College. Subsequently, after five years researching titles and purchasing

¹⁶ Reported in “14,000-Acre Park Approved by House,” *Washington Post*, 6 August 1940, clipping in NPS Records (RG 79), E-47, Box 124, Folder 501, National Archives II. On the CCC, see John A. Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1967); see also John C. Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942: An Administrative History* (National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1985). On the WPA, see Nick Taylor, *American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation Back to Work* (New York: Bantam, 2008).

¹⁷ The three original CCC work camps (SP-22 near the current park headquarters; SP-26, near Camp 2, site of the Old Randal home off Route 626; and SP-26, near Camp 3) were abandoned in 1938-39. SP-26, near Camp 3, was re-established in March 1938. Two additional CCC camps were built in 1941 and which operated from June 1941 through February 1943. Their mission was primarily defense-related construction work at military facilities in the area, such as Fort Belvoir, the Corps of Engineers’ main training facility. These two new CCC camps were designated NP-D-5 and NP-D-16, near Camp 3. John Gum was the superintendent for NPS of these two CCC camps, which came under the War Department. See the listings in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 17, 24. Most of the buildings in these CCC camps were demolished in 1959-1960.

¹⁸ Progress Report, 1 July 1936, NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 54, Box 121, and W.R. Hall, project manager, “Report on the First Open House Held at Chopawamsic on Wednesday, August 16, 1939,” NPS Records (RG 79), E-47, Box 124, Folder 501, National Archives II.

¹⁹ Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 1986), 7. Public Law 763, Chapter 663, 76th Cong., 3rd Sess., approved 13 August 1940.

land for the State Highway Commission, he joined the National Park Service in 1933 as a foreman in charge of general park development at Voorhees State Park in High Bridge, New Jersey. The next year, he was called to the NPS regional office in Richmond, Virginia, and over the next several years, he had various assignments with the National Park Service in the southeastern states.²⁰ In December 1939, now that Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area was ready for full operation, he was sent there as its manager to run the park.²¹ At 33, Lykes was still slender and of medium height and he looked trim and fit in his NPS ranger's uniform and broad-brimmed hat.²² Three decades later, he recalled the appointment. "I said, yes I would [accept the position]. I wanted some more field experience. So I went up there ... and established myself, living in a CCC barracks and commuting back to Richmond until the [manager's] residence was finished in 1940."²³

Lykes took over an operating park. Some of the CCC units were still working, but most of the organized group cabin camps had been completed. The cabin camps were numbered in the order in which they were built. They were segregated by race. Racial segregation remained a fixture in southern society until the mid-20th century, and the NPS at that time deferred to "local custom" in the racially segregated camps.²⁴ Camps 1 and 4 in the northeastern part of the park were then known as the "Negro camps." They were maintained by organizations for underprivileged African-American youths from Washington, D.C. Camp 1 (originally known as Camp Lickman, later Goodwill) was for boys from what was then called the "Negro YMCA." Camp 4 (Pleasant) was originally designated for African-American mothers with children up to age three, but it was used only one year for that purpose and then became the camp for black girls and young

²⁰ Beginning in 1934, Lykes was assigned to the NPS office in Atlanta, Georgia, where he worked in various capacities on Recreational Demonstration Area projects in a number of southeastern states, returning to Richmond in 1937 to handle special services, including publication of the *Regional Review*. In 1939, he was at various times in charge of all Virginia Wayside development, Superintendent of North Carolina Beach Erosion Control Project (later Cape Hatteras National Seashore), Superintendent of Kings Mountain National Military Park, South Carolina, and NPS Assistant State Inspector for Florida. Ira B. Lykes' biographical information obtained from various documents, including Temporary Appointment, Transfer, Reinstatement, or Promotion Form for US Civil Service Commission, 17 July 1941; Loyal Data Form, 17 November 1947; "Profiles: Ira B. Lykes," unidentified clipping; all in Ira B. Lykes, Personnel File, National Archives and Records Administration, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Mo., obtained by the author, 26 April 2007.

²¹ Mrs. J. Atwood Maulding, Director of Personnel, Department of the Interior, to Ira B. Lykes, 24 August 1940 in Ira B. Lykes, Personnel File, National Archives and Records Administration, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Mo.

²² Physical description of Ira B. Lykes in early 1940s provided by the widow of Capt. Arden Dow, chief instructor at OSS Training Area A-4 in Chopwamsic RDA, Mrs. Dorothea ("Dodie") D. Dow, Athens, Georgia, telephone interview with the author, 16 June 2005.

²³ Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview, 23 November 1973, by S. Herbert Evison, pp. 30-31, tape number 261. I am indebted to David Nathanson, NPS, Harpers Ferry Center, Harpers Ferry, W. Va., with responding on 1 November 2005, to my request for a transcript of the Lykes' oral history interview.

²⁴ "The Effects of Segregation on Park Management," chapter three in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 39-49.

women. The other three camps were maintained by organizations for white youths. In the southwestern quadrant of the park, Camp 2 (Mawavi) in the western quadrant was ultimately maintained by the white Girl Scouts of Arlington, Virginia. Camp 3 (Orenda) in the southeastern quadrant, near the park headquarters, was to be maintained by the Family Service Association for White Children, for white mothers and their children to age three, but this lasted only one year; thereafter, Camp 3, which held 120 campers plus staff that brought it to a total of 160 persons, was used by a variety of white groups.²⁵ Camp 5 (Happy Land), on the west side, close to Camp 2 (Mawavi) had not been finished when Lykes took over at the end of 1939, but it was completed the next year. Originally, Camp 5 was the smallest of the five camps, accommodating 96, but later it was expanded to hold 120 persons. It was maintained and operated by the Salvation Army.²⁶ The abandoned CCC camp with its barracks rather than cabins was not designed for organized camping, but it could be used for group purposes. There were separate entrances to the white and black camping facilities. The black camps were entered from the Dumfries Road (Route 234) on the north side of the park. The white camps were entered from the old Joplin Road (old Route 629; today Route 619). Although NPS planned for a main entrance that would connect both white and black camping areas, lack of funding for land acquisition and construction delayed the establishment of a single main entrance and interior connecting roads until 1951.²⁷

Although by 1940, the five cabin camps were essentially complete, a system of roads and bridges needed to be built along with a main entrance. In addition, day-use facilities had not been constructed. Unfortunately, the Depression emergency funds and agencies were being shut down, and beginning in 1940, the federal funding focus shifted to a defense buildup. Lykes had to work creatively for funding to get work done that was not related to defense needs. Throughout the twelve years that Lykes ran the park, he demonstrated great energy and imagination and proved to be an effective manager in particularly difficult times.

Like other park superintendents, Lykes was dedicated to the park and a combination of preservation and development. Public support is crucial for National Park Service, which, despite being a government bureaucracy, has high public approval ratings due to its role in preserving parks, monuments, and historic sites for the American

²⁵ For itemization of the racial identification and the uses of the five camps (plus the CCC camp), see the list in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 43, which is based on the Minutes of a meeting of National Capital Parks officials and representatives of the Social Service Agencies of Washington area, 11 December 1942. See also the Report on Camp Good Will and Camp Pleasant in Chopawamsic RDA for the summer of 1938 submitted to the NPS, 11 October 1938 by William H. Savin, Director of the Family Service Association of Washington, D.C.; and for appraisals and pictures of some of the camps, see Camp Appraisal Reports on the use of Camp 2-G for July and August in both 1938 and 1939 by the Jewish Community Center, Washington, D.C., and on Camp 2 for summer 1941 by the Arlington, Virginia, Council of Girls Scouts; in "Camp Appraisal Reports, Chopawamic, Virginia [1938-1941]," NPS Records (RG 79), E-47, Box 123, Folders 207-25 and Folder 314, National Archives II.

²⁶ Ira B. Lykes, superintendent, 1939-1951 of Prince William Forest Park, oral history interview by S. Herbert Evison, 23 November 1973, Audiotape #261, transcript, pages 38-39, both located at NPS, Harpers Ferry Center Library, Harpers Ferry Center, W. Va.

²⁷ Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 42-47.

people. Lykes understood he had to ensure influential public support for the new park. Some former park employees remembered him as strong-willed, and demanding as well as creative, but in interacting with the public, Lykes emphasized friendly persuasion. He sought, he said, to “convince people.”²⁸ Through numerous acts of attention and kindness, he built a reservoir of good will toward the park among neighbors as well as officials and other influential individuals and groups, from mayors, chambers of commerce and tourist agencies to the charitable and youth organizations in Washington, conservationists, and wildlife groups, and the commanders at the adjacent Marine base at Quantico and the nearby Army post at Fort Belvoir.²⁹ Indeed, in his primary mission of preserving and developing the park, Lykes, for much of his tenure, would be dealing with the military.

Although the main function of the park was for civilian use, the military had begun using the park as early as 1938. Both the Corps of Engineers post at Belvoir and the Marine Corps Base at Quantico had conducted maneuvers that year in the emerging Chopawamsic RDA (Prince William Forest Park).³⁰ Such field exercises continued, and after U.S. entry into the war in December 1941, they became so frequent, particularly from Quantico, that by early 1942, Lykes complained to his superiors that the Marines “have assumed the right to enter upon the area without [even] advising or consulting this office.”³¹

Land and Cabin Camps at Catoctin Mountain Park

Catoctin Mountain Park, north of Frederick in central western Maryland, also originated as an NPS Recreational Demonstration Area in the mid-1930s. It was a mountain area with submarginal land on which the soil was badly eroded and the forests overharvested. Unemployment was widespread among the mainly poor, white residents, who qualified for resettlement. There was fresh water, roads, and excellent fishing, and the National Park Service believed that conservation could restore the area and that recreational facilities could be provided for metropolitan areas including Baltimore, 60 miles away, and even Washington, D.C., 75 miles distant.³² The Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area (RDA) was authorized in 1935, and land acquisition began under the

²⁸ Ira B. Lykes, retired in Venice, Florida, interviewed 4 September 1985, by Susan Cary Strickland, and quoted in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 23.

²⁹ Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 23-24.

³⁰ Arthur Demaray to Lt. Col. R. Valliant, 31 August 1938, NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 54, Box 121, National Archives II.

³¹ Ira Lykes, Monthly Report, May 1942, quoted in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 25-26.

³² Matt Huppuch to Conrad Wirth, 12 July 1934, NPS Records (RG 79), RDA Program Files, Box 57, National Archives II. See also Edmund F. Werhle, *Catoctin Mountain Park: An Historic Resource Study* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2000), 159-160.

Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), which had the funds.³³ Although the nearest town, Thurmont, supported the establishment of a park to boost tourism, many of the Appalachian people who lived on and around Catoctin Mountain were unwilling to sell, and FERA began appraising the properties in preparation for going to court.³⁴

Meanwhile, NPS appointed a project manager to develop and supervise the new Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area. The man who would run the park for its first two decades, from 1935 until his retirement in 1957, was Garland B. (“Mike”) Williams. Despite the similarity of their first and last names there was no family relationship between Garland B. (“Mike”) Williams of the National Park Service and Garland H. Williams of the Federal Narcotics Bureau and the Office of Strategic Services.³⁵ Mike Williams, the son of a yardmaster for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, was born in Chesterfield County, Virginia in 1893. He graduated from John Marshall High School in Richmond, took correspondence course in civil engineering, and then worked on railroad construction before joining the U.S. Army in World War I. During the war, his leadership abilities led to his promotion through the ranks from private to second lieutenant. Returning to civilian life in 1919, Mike Williams worked as a civil engineer on a variety of projects and then as a real estate appraiser for the railway. Laid off by the railway in the Depression, he soon obtained a position with a New Deal emergency relief employment agency, the Civil Works Administration, becoming manager for CWA projects in the City of Petersburg, Virginia.³⁶

Mike Williams’ experience in dealing with difficult issues of land and labor impressed NPS assistant director Conrad Wirth, and in January 1935, he offered the 42-year-old Virginian the position of managing the development of the new Catoctin RDA.³⁷ Accepting the position, Williams immediately went to work to counter the local opposition which had spread because of unfounded rumors that the government wanted to use the land as an artillery range for nearby Fort Ritchie and fears of Republican county commissioners about government intervention and the loss of property taxes. Williams emphasized that plans were for a recreational park and that increased tourism would enhance local revenue. NPS reduced the land acquisition goal from 20,000 to 10,000 acres, and Williams assured residents that condemnation would only be used as a last

³³ Werhle, *Catoctin Mountain Park*, 160-161.

³⁴ “*Catoctin Park Plans Menaced as Owners Refuse to Sell Land*,” *Washington Post*, 25 June 1935, 1.

³⁵ To avoid confusion, the present study will refer to the two Garland Williams by using either their full names with different middle initials or by reference to “Mike” Williams for the NPS project manager and Major, later Lieutenant Colonel Williams for the official in Donovan’s organization. Lieutenant Colonel Williams left the OSS in July 1942; Mike Williams was the NPS manager at Catoctin from 22 January 1935 until his retirement on 31 August 1957.

³⁶ Documents in the personnel file of Garland B. (“Mike”) Williams from the National Archives and Records Administration, National Personnel Records Center, Civilian Personnel Records, St. Louis, Mo, obtained by the author, 8 February 2005.

³⁷ See the appointment documents signed by H.C. Bryant, acting associate director, NPS, FERA Land Program, and Guy W. Numbers, acting chief, Division of Appointments, Mail, and Files of NPS; personnel file of Garland B. (“Mike”) Williams National Archives and Records Administration, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Mo.

resort. Meanwhile, he decided to obtain five-year leases for the government to use the land while attempting to convince owners to sell. He also began to line up support groups including fishing and conservation organizations, and several social welfare youth groups in Baltimore.³⁸ By the fall of 1935, Williams' campaign had produced results, and the commissioners of Frederick and Washington counties publicly praised the government's program of purchasing the land for a park as "an asset to the nearby local communities."³⁹ With the five-year leases in hand and as the land acquisition program slowly proceeded, Mike Williams launched the construction program for the park in January 1936. Recruiting unemployed men and others with skills, Williams first put in fire break trails as a fire prevention measure, then erected a work camp, including a saw mill, blacksmith's forge, garage and administration building at what would later be known as "Round Meadow." The workers then constructed roads and bridges across steams to provide access to the planned recreational facilities.⁴⁰

The facilities at Catoctin RDA were built over a three year period, between January 1936 and May 1939. Plans called for two picnic areas and four group cabin camps, and Williams requested information, including plans for the latter, from Chopawamsic RDA, which had already completed its first camps.⁴¹ The rustic architecture and layout of the two camps were similar in the two parks, although the nearly 2,000 foot high forested Catoctin Mountain provided a different environment than the low-country, hilly woodlands of Chopawamsic. At Catoctin, the first two cabin camps were built of local chestnut logs and native stone. Cabin Camp 1, later known as "Misty Mount," was erected on a rather rugged, wooded southern slope of the mountain. It had a capacity of 96 campers, plus counselors and other staff.

Cabin Camp 2, "Greentop," was established farther up, near the top of the mountain on a less rugged area that was already partly cleared and partly wooded. Greentop was created as a special needs camp for disabled children as a result of an intensive effort by the Baltimore-based Maryland League for Crippled Children, most of whose young clients had paralyzed legs as a result of poliomyelitis. Because of its special needs purpose, Cabin Camp 2 included an in-ground swimming pool and particular sports and therapy facilities. The League helped to purchase special equipment required for the children. The camp included a dining hall and kitchen, a kitchen staff quarters with bathrooms attached, two recreation lodges with porches, wash houses, a craft shop, and an infirmary, and quarters for the leaders and the staff. Since it was a co-ed camp, there were separate units of cabins for boys and for girls. It had a capacity for 72 campers plus counselors and staff members. Cabin Camp 3 located atop the mountain, was to be called

³⁸ Werhle, *Catoctin Mountain Park*, 163-166; Barbara M. Kirkconnell, *Catoctin Mountain Park: An Administrative History* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1988), 17.

³⁹ *Catoctin Clarion*, 18 October 1935, 1.

⁴⁰ Werhle, *Catoctin Mountain Park*, 168-171.

⁴¹ .A.P. Bursley to Garland B. Williams, 29 May 1936, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park Office.

“Hi-Catoctin.”⁴² It was planned as an organized group camp for boys with a capacity for 72 campers and nine counselors in three subunits; each subunit in the standard NPS boys’ camp comprised six, four-cot cabins. In addition, the standard camp had an infirmary, a dining hall, and an administrative unit housing six staff members, one nurse, and four kitchen helpers. Plans called for a swimming pool, craft shop, playing field, camp fire circle, camp office, central shower, recreation hall and nature lore building. Instead of the logs used in the other two camps, Hi-Catoctin was constructed with frame construction and rough board siding. A lodge was constructed with a beautiful view of the valley below the mountaintop. The planned fourth cabin camp, a girls’ camp, was never built, due to lack of funding and changed conditions resulting from preparations for World War II.⁴³

Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area opened fully to the public in the spring of 1939, although public use had begun in 1937 when Camp 1 was completed. The NPS press release lauded “the 10,000-acre preserve, of which 90 per cent is forested, embraces a rugged terrain ranging from 523 feet to 1,890 feet in elevation. Some of the higher summits command excellent views of the surrounding countryside. Approximately 50 miles of nature trails lead the hiker through picturesque woodlands and beside sparkling streams.” The area was being adapted, the press release stated, for service as “a low cost organized camping center available to accredited character and health-building groups and institutions, but there also are facilities for picnicking and other recreational activities by the general public.”⁴⁴

With the opening of the third of the cabin camps in spring 1939 and with land acquisition proceeding rapidly after a favorable decision by a U.S. District Court had cleared the way for condemnation, Williams turned to other improvements in the park.⁴⁵ From 1939 to 1941, he was assisted by a unit of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) which arrived from Quantico, Virginia.⁴⁶ Supervised by two Army officers, the 200 young CCC men brought along some two dozen prefabricated portable structures, including dormitories, a mess hall, recreation hall, administrative center, residence for the camp superintendent, and a garage for their vehicles. They erected the CCC work camp

⁴² Wehrle, *Catoctin Mountain Park*, 176-178; Kirkconnell, *Administrative History of Catoctin Mountain Park*, 35-39.

⁴³ Although Hi-Catoctin was planned as a boys’ camp, it was used in the summers of 1939 to 1941 for family camping by the Federal Camp Council of Washington, D.C., a group that offered camping vacations for federal employees. Kirkconnell, *Administrative History of Catoctin Mountain Park*, 30, 41.

⁴⁴ “Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area, Maryland, General Information,” material for an informational leaflet on Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area including capacity numbers or each camp, included in E. M. Lisle, acting regional director, memorandum for the director, attn: editor-in-chief, 9 May 1939, NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47, RDA Files, Box 59, Folder 501, National Archives II.

⁴⁵ Although the park would benefit the public, many of the mountain people who had to give up their homes remained disgruntled even decades later. Wehrle, *Catoctin Mountain Park*, 172-175.

⁴⁶ CCC Company Number 1374, arrived from Quantico, Virginia where it had spent the previous four years constructing cabins and other facilities at Recreational Demonstration Areas like Chopawamsic RDA, in the area around Washington, D.C. John C. Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942: An Administrative History* (Washington, D.C. National Park Service, 1985), 50.

on a site just north of the Central Garage Unit and project office of Catoctin RDA, a site later known as Round Meadow.⁴⁷

At Catoctin between 1939 and 1941, the CCC workers engaged in a massive conservation and construction program. One of their first tasks in 1939 was to build a project manager's residence on the Park Central Road for Mike Williams, his wife, and their three sons, who had been living in Frederick. In April 1941, they completed the Blue Blazes Contact Station at the entrance to the park on Route 77.⁴⁸ In the meantime, they installed a water supply system, sewage systems, installed power lines, blazed miles of foot trails, improved roadways, planted 1,500 trees and shrubs, and enhanced Hunting and Owens Creeks by clearing obstructions and building small dams for fishing pools. In addition, they fought numerous brush fires successfully, but lost a battle with one in the fall of 1941 that destroyed their garage and trucks. With the economy booming under defense spending, Congress cut back CCC, and the unit at Catoctin was terminated in November 1941. With the help of the CCC boys and the FERA workers before them, NPS manager Mike Williams had created a magnificent new park.⁴⁹

The park was put to use as quickly as it became available. The polio-afflicted boys and girls from low-income families were brought by the Maryland League for Crippled Children to the park each summer between 1937 and 1941.⁵⁰ At the camp, the physically-handicapped children, ages 7 to 16, spent eight-week periods, improving, it was hoped, their physical condition and mental outlook through healthy foods, exercise, arts and crafts, and camaraderie in a nature setting. The Salvation Army used Cabin Camp 1 (Misty Mount) every summer from 1938 to 1941. A number of other organizations, including Girl Scouts from Frederick and Washington counties, used Misty Mount for short-term camping. Cabin Camp 3 (Hi-Catoctin) was used each summer from 1939 to 1941 by the Federal Camp Council and by white Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops from Washington, D.C. There were no facilities for black groups at Catoctin in this period.⁵¹

⁴⁷ *Catoctin Clarion*, 28 April 1939.

⁴⁸ That station was enlarged in 1964 and served as the visitor center and park administrative headquarters until 1973.

⁴⁹ When the CCC unit departed, Mike Williams was left with only 30 WPA workers. On the CCC projects at Catoctin, see Werhle, *Catoctin Mountain Park*, 178, 185-186, 194-196; and Kirkconnell, *Administrative History of Catoctin Mountain Park*, 43-49, 71-75.

⁵⁰ The crippled children temporarily occupied Camp Number 1 (Misty Mount) as soon as it was completed in 1937, but moved to the new special needs facility, Camp Number 2 (Greentop), when it opened in 1938.

⁵¹ Kirkconnell, *Administrative History of Catoctin Mountain Park*, 65-69. Racial segregation was still widespread in American society in the 1930s, reinforced by state laws and local ordinances in the South and often by custom in the North. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes supported the idea of making New Deal programs and benefits to all Americans, but he was also aware of the power of local customs and conditions. Thus black and white campgrounds, such as those at Chopawamsic RDA, were in practice segregated. However, Catoctin RDA did not provide for any black campgrounds, despite an effort by several prominent African Americans and black aid organizations in Baltimore in 1939 to have a camp for crippled black children constructed next to that for the white crippled children at Greentop. A 1940 NPS master plan recommended "a comprehensive development outline for Negro use." However, Catoctin RDA

With Nazi Germany expanding its control over Europe and its submarines striking across the Atlantic, President Roosevelt proclaimed an unlimited national emergency in the spring of 1941. Later that summer, even before the United States entered the war some of the Army's young, draftees were sent to Catoctin, where tents were set up next to the CCC barracks at Round Meadow, and the new recruits were given military training.⁵² In a gesture of goodwill towards Great Britain, half a dozen Recreational Demonstration Areas were made available for British sailors to relax while their warships were being repaired at shipyards like Baltimore's, and between June and November 1941, Catoctin RDA was host to 630 British sailors. They and their officers came in groups of 60 to 100 to spend one or two weeks in the facilities of the park.⁵³ Mike Williams reported that the British sailors behaved themselves in a gentlemanly manner and kept the grounds and buildings in excellent order, although a sizable telephone bill arrived after they had gone.⁵⁴

The National Park Service and World War II

The National Park Service was put in a difficult situation by the country's mobilization during World War II. Although its original mandate was to hold the resources of the national parks in trust for the American people, during the wartime emergency, it was often asked to place those resources at the disposal of the armed forces and war production agencies. The new director of the National Park Service, appointed in 1940, was West Coast preservationist Newton B. Drury.⁵⁵ A dedicated Republican with a

remained exclusively for white use in this period. Wehrle *Catoctin Mountain Park*, 179-80. Wehrle, Appendix 17, lists the organizations that did use Catoctin's cabin camp facilities in the prewar period.

⁵² Werhle, *Catoctin Mountain Park*, 194.

⁵³ "Use of organized camps by British Sailors [Catoctin]," report, n.d., in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 7, Central Classified File, 1939-1949, General, 201 National Defense-General, Box 73, Black Binder, "War Uses., C," National Archives II. Some 7,000 British sailors enjoyed outdoor relaxation in NPS Recreational Demonstration Areas in the summer of 1941; By 1942, some 22,000 British sailors had participated "British Seamen Rest and Romp in U.S. Camps," *New York Herald-Tribune*, 1 March 1942

⁵⁴ Matt C. Huppuch, chief, recreational use and consulting service, NPS, memorandum for Conrad Wirth, 14 June 1941, subject: Cooperation with the Navy Department, NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47, Box 57, Folder, 201; Garland B. Williams to Regional Director, report, 16 September to 1 November 1941, and statistical report to Conrad Wirth, 4 July 1944; all in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 7 Central Classified Files, 1933-1949, 201 National Defense, C., Box 79, Folder 201, all in National Archives II. Lontime Thurmont resident, James H. Mackley, who was 12 in 1941, remembers that some of the British sailors visited the local school. "One of the sailors gave me a [British] penny. It was really big, the size of a half dollar." James H. Mackley, telephone interview with the author, 13 June 2006.

⁵⁵ Formerly director of the Save the Redwoods League in California, Drury was the first NPS director not to have prior experience in National Park management. Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 150; on Drury's pre-NPS career, see Susan R. Schrepfer, *The Fight to Save the Redwoods: A History of Environmental Reform, 1917-1978* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 23-76. For his

suspicion of bureaucracy, Drury disagreed with the NPS's dramatically expanded missions under New Deal, believing instead that the agency should have a more passive, caretaker role.⁵⁶

Given the shift of government priorities to national defense, the National Park Service in World War II was reduced, as Drury later explained, to simply a "protection and maintenance basis."⁵⁷ Like other domestic federal agencies, NPS saw its appropriations and personnel drastically reduced during the war.⁵⁸ But at the same time, the war confronted the National Park Service with unusual demands. The War and Navy Departments sought to use the national parks in many ways. Rest camps for military personnel were established in Grand Canyon, Carlsbad Caverns, and Sequoia national parks as well as many other NPS facilities, including a Marine Corps rest camp at Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area in 1945. Many of these cases, service personnel were housed in cabin camps, lodges, or even refurbished old CCC work camps on the park grounds. Hospitalization and rehabilitation was provided at Yosemite and Lava Beds national parks. The military held overnight bivouacs in a number of parks and extended maneuvers in Hawaii National Park and Mt. McKinley National Park in Alaska. The War Department also obtained permission to conduct extensive training in national parks such as in Yosemite, Shenandoah, Yellowstone, Isle Royale, and Death Valley as well, of course, as in Catoctin and Chopawamsic (Prince William Forest) Recreational Demonstration Areas. Some 2,600 permits and authorizations for use of park facilities and resources were granted for defense-related purposes.⁵⁹ Most of the parks and recreational demonstration areas were also made available for use by military as well as civilian visitors, but with wartime rationing of gasoline and rubber, the number of visitors plummeted to one-third by 1943. Still some 35 million visitors, including eight million

appointment, see diary entry of 23 June 1940, Harold L. Ickes, *Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*, 3 vols. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1954), 3:213.

⁵⁶ Newton B. Drury, "Former Directors Speak Out," *American Forests*, 82/6 (June 1976): 28; and Foresta, *America's National Parks*, 48-49.

⁵⁷ Newton B. Drury to the Secretary of the Interior, 28 July 1950, NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 19, National Archives; for an earlier statement, see Drury, "What the War Is Doing to National Parks and Where They Will Be at Its Close," *Living Wilderness* (May 9, 1944): 11.

⁵⁸ The number of permanent fulltime NPS employees was cut from 6,000 in November 1941 to 1,600 in June 1944. NPS headquarters was moved to Chicago for the duration of the war. The basic NPS budget (for administration, maintenance, and operations) remained stable at around \$4.5 million a year, but appropriations for land acquisition, construction, and development were cut from \$26 million in fiscal 1940 to \$16 million by fiscal 1943, and then completely eliminated for the rest of the war. Charles W. Porter III, History Branch, NPS, "National Park Service War Work, December 7, 1941-June 30, 1944," pp. 47-48, a 63 page typescript report, n.d. c. 1944, in NPS Records (RG 79), Director Newton B. Drury's Files, Entry 19, Box 23, National Archives II.

⁵⁹ Newton B. Drury to Secretary of the Interior, subject: War Times Uses of the National Park," 28 July 1950 [during the Korean War], NPS Records (RG 79), Papers of Newton B. Drury, Entry 19, Box 23, Folder, "Wartime Experience of N.P.S." Charles W. Porter, III, "Supplement Covering National Park Service War Work, June 30, 1944 to October 1, 1945," p. 13, n.d., c. 1945, 16 page typescript, accompanying "National Service War Work" NPS Records (RG 79), Papers of Newton B. Drury, Entry 19, Box 23, National Archives II.

men and women in uniform, visited the national parks during the war putting an additional burden on the severely reduced park staffs.⁶⁰

Faced with wartime demands, the National Park Service concluded that the good of the nation lay in conserving the parks intact for future generations. As Drury declared during the war, while the National Park Service recognized its obligation to help the war effort, it needed “to hold intact those things entrusted to it—the properties themselves, the basic organization to perform its tasks, and, most important of all, the uniquely American concept under which the national parks are preserved inviolate for the present and future benefit of all of our people.”⁶¹ As early as November 1940, with the beginning of the defense mobilization before the United States entered the war, Drury and his staff had formulated criteria for evaluating possible war uses of the parks. The criteria emphasized the need to determine that the request for usage came from a defense agency, that the use of park land was necessary for defense and that it would not cause irreparable damage to the park. NPS also wanted to ensure that alternatives to using park land had been considered and exhausted. If it was agreed that the military’s use was essential, then the use permit should include specific conditions to protect the park, and there should be provisions that when the military usage was terminated, the military repair any damages and restore the property to its previous condition.⁶² Drury later concluded that NPS had been surprisingly successful in meeting its criteria and preventing irreparable harm to the parks.⁶³

⁶⁰ Visitors to the national parks dropped from 21 million in fiscal 1941 to 10 million in 1942, and reached the lowest point of 7 million in 1943, but there 8 million in 1944, 10 million in 1945, and back to 21 million in 1946. During the war, a total of 8 million visitors were men and women in uniform. Newton B. Drury to Assistant Secretary of the Interior Doty, subject: War Times Uses of the National Parks,” 2 August 1950 [during the Korean War], NPS Records (RG 79), Papers of Newton B. Drury, Entry 19, Box 23, “Wartime Experience of N.P.S.” folder, National Archives II.

⁶¹ Newton B. Drury statement in the National Park Service, Annual Report to the Secretary of the Interior, 1942, reprinted in Charles W. Porter III, History Branch, NPS, “National Park Service War Work, December 7, 1941-June 30, 1944,” p. 1. For similar during the war as NPS sought support from conservation groups, see Newton B. Drury, “The National Parks in Wartime,” *American Forests* (August 1943); and Carl P. Russell, National Park Service, “The National Parks in Wartime,” *Outdoor America* (July-August 1943), clippings, which along with the above document are in NPS Records (RG 79), Papers of Newton B. Drury, Entry 19, Box 23, “Wartime Experience of N.P.S.” folder, National Archives II.

⁶² Memorandum from NPS Director Newton B. Drury to Washington Office and all Field Offices, 27 November 1940, reprinted in “National Park Service War Work, December 7, 1941-June 30, 1944” pp. 2-3, NPS Records (RG 79), Director Newton B. Drury’s Files, Entry 19, Box 23, National Archives II.

⁶³ Newton B. Drury, Oral History Interview, “Parks and Redwoods, 1919-1971,” conducted by Amelia Roberts Fry and Susan Schrepfer, 2 vols., Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1972, 2:405-6.

Obtaining Permits for Military Training Camps

At Donovan's headquarters in Washington, D.C., Colonel M. Preston Goodfellow and his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Garland H. Williams, had determined early in 1942 that Catoctin and Chopawamsic (Prince William Forest Park) would make valuable sites for the paramilitary training camps. Negotiations for military use of these two NPS parks proceeded at the departmental level between the War Department and the Department of the Interior.⁶⁴ On March 24, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson wrote to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes that "it has been determined that a military necessity exists for the acquisition by purchase and by transfer" of certain government lands, buildings, and other improvements under control of the National Park Service in Catoctin and Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Areas. Stimson asked that these be transferred by executive order to the War Department for military purposes. The matter was urgent, he wrote, as troops were scheduled to arrive at those locations that week, and he asked for immediate permission to occupy and use those NPS sites, pending their formal transfer to the War Department. He noted that the War Department planned to purchase tracts of land within the training area that remained in private hands. Consciously avoiding any mention of Donovan's organization, Stimson cautioned that "The War program demands that the utmost secrecy be maintained regarding the military use of this property. That fact, or the arm of the service so using this property, should not appear in published Federal Records."⁶⁵

Neither Secretary Ickes nor NPS Director Drury wanted to have the parks turned into military training camps and certainly not for the duration of the war as Stimson had requested. On 25 March 1942, the Secretary of the Interior wrote to Stimson, reminding him that these RDAs had been developed for work "of vital importance, "primarily for rebuilding the health" of children and adults from lower income groups in Baltimore and Washington. He directed that the War Department be granted a use permit but only until 1 June 1942—just over two months—with the understanding that the NPS would help the War Department locate an alternative site and bring in portable CCC barracks for housing. If an acceptable alternative could not be found, Ickes agreed to grant a special-use permit but only on a year-to-year basis. In keeping with Drury's criteria, Ickes insisted that the military was not allowed to make any changes in the park without prior review and concurrence by the National Park Service. "The [NPS] managers who are

⁶⁴ In keeping with the NPS criteria for preserving the parks, Interior initially resisted the War Department's request for the properties. In mid-March 1942, Donovan's office had sent up the chain of command a letter stating that there was a "military necessity" for obtaining substantial parts of the two RDAs for a military training program. The classified "secret" letter of 11 March 1942 from the Coordinator of Information asserting the military necessity of acquiring parts of the parks, in this case Catoctin, is cited in Maj. Gen. Thomas H. Robins, assistant chief of engineers, to Commanding General of the Services of Supply, 19 March 1942, subject: Land Acquisition—Troop Housing, Vicinity of Washington, D.C. copy in World War II File, General Information Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md.

⁶⁵ Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, 24 March 1942, NPS Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Box 73, Folder 201, National Archives II.

now on the areas [Catoctin and Chopawamsic] will remain there, will be of all possible assistance to the Army, and also will aid in protection of the areas from fire and abuse.”⁶⁶

Donovan’s organization was not to be deterred, however, and on Saturday, March 28, 1942, three days after Ickes’ temporary, short-term authorization, two military officers representing Lt. Col. Garland H. Williams’ office arrived unannounced at Chopawamsic (Prince William Forest Park). They introduced themselves to NPS Project Manager Ira B. Lykes and requested permission to inspect Cabin Camps 2 and 5 with him to determine their housing capacities. Afterward at Lykes’ office, they took notes on the layout plans for all five cabin camps. Lykes handed them copies of the Rules and Regulations for the use of the facilities issued by the Secretary of the Interior in 1937. Designed to preserve public property, the regulations protected structures, trees, flowers, rocks, wildlife and relics, prohibited camping outside designated areas, and banned firearms and explosives. They last seemed particularly quaint, given what Special Operations plan to do in the two parks, but it did put Donovan’s organization on notice that the National Park Service intended to continue the preservation of the property entrusted to its care. The two officers told Lykes that their men would start arriving to occupy Cabin Camp 5 in four days on Wednesday, April 1st.⁶⁷ The same military takeover date, 1 April 1942, was set for Catoctin RDA.⁶⁸

Rumors immediately flew thick and fast around both Chopawamsic and Catoctin about what was happening to the parks. On 5 April 1942, an outdoor sports columnist reported in the *Baltimore American* that Catoctin RDA had been “taken over for use in the present war effort” and was closed to the public.⁶⁹ The head of Maryland’s State Parks wrote to NPS concerning rumors that the Army was going to establish an Officer’s Candidate School there and conflicting rumors that the Army would take all of the park or simply the half north of the Thurmont-Foxville Road (today Route 77). Conrad Wirth responded that the Army wanted only the area north of the road and that a use permit had been granted but only until 1 June. It was hoped, he wrote, that the Army would vacate

⁶⁶ Secretary of the Interior to Secretary of War, 25 March 1942, copy in National Park Service Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Box 73, Folder 201, National Archives II. *Kirkconnell’s Administrative History of Catoctin Mountain Park*, page 85, errs in listing the permit to 1 June 1943. Ickes’ letter granted it only to 1 June 1942.

⁶⁷ Ira B. Lykes to Conrad L. Wirth, Confidential memorandum, 30 March 1942, with copy of 19 April 1937 Rules and Regulations, in National Park Service Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Chopawamsic, Project CHO-IV-1&1A, Box 73, Folder 201, National Archives II. The two officers were probably Capt. William J. Hixson, the first commanding officer of Detachment A and Lt. Rex Applegate, an instructor in pistol shooting at Area B, both of whom returned to Chopawamsic on Tuesday, 31 March 1942 with Lt. Col. Garland H. Williams

⁶⁸ A year later, an OSS report indicated that “we have utilized the property [at Catoctin] for the Office of Strategic Services since April 1, 1942....” “F.J.B.” [Lt. F.J. Ball] to Major [Otto C.] Doering, Executive Officer OSS HQ, 30 March 1943, subject: Release of Area “B,” OSS Records (RG 79), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

⁶⁹ The *Baltimore American*, 5 April 1942; the columnist was J. Hammond Brown.

by then, but “it may be necessary to extend this permit for a much longer period.”⁷⁰ On 10 April, the *Catoctin Enterprise*, a weekly newspaper from Thurmont, reported that although no announcement was made as to how the area would be used, the government was taking over Catoctin “for use in the war effort” and “the public will be barred from entry into the area proper.”⁷¹ Indeed, during the war, public recreational use of the Catoctin RDA was limited to picnicking in the West Picnic Area and trout fishing on Big Hunting Creek, both of which were south of the Thurmont-Foxville Road and therefore outside the military area of the park.⁷² During the war, although local residents around Catoctin—as well as around Chopawamsic RDA down near Quantico—realized that the Army had men in the closed off parks, they never knew until recent years that these were special soldiers in “Wild Bill” Donovan’s clandestine organization.⁷³

When Donovan’s organization took over Catoctin and Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Areas in April 1942, the public and any unauthorized visitors were barred from entry, warning signs were posted, sentries were stationed at the entrances and armed guards periodically patrolled the perimeter. It soon became clear to the National Park Service that the military intended to stay. Years later, Ira Lykes recalled that in early spring 1942, NPS Director Newton Drury and his staff had advised him that “Colonel Donovan and his cloak and dagger boys” were looking for a place and had decided that Chopawamsic was ideal for their purposes. “We would have to cancel all the leases on camp grounds, and they would move the OSS in there. I was to remain as the liaison between the National Park Service [and OSS] and help them in any development they wanted done in the war effort.”⁷⁴ NPS did notify the charitable and other social agencies that had been issued permits for the summer 1942 camping season at Catoctin and Chopawamsic RDAs that because of the military, they could not use the park. It offered them alternative facilities at abandoned CCC camps in smaller RDAs in Virginia and Pennsylvania.⁷⁵ Faced with the upcoming expiration on 1 June of the two-month

⁷⁰ Karl E. Pfeiffer to Conrad L. Wirth, 6 April 1942 and Wirth to Pfeiffer, 13 April 1942, National Park Service Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Box 73, Folder 201, National Archives II.

⁷¹ “Catoctin Area Is Ordered Closed to the Public,” *Catoctin Enterprise*, 10 April 1942, 1.

⁷² Garland B. Williams, Narrative Reports for months of April 1942 and June 1943; NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47, RDA Files, Boxes 57 and 61, National Archives II.

⁷³ Telephone interviews by the author with longtime residents of Thurmont, Maryland: John Kinnaird, Frank Long, 7 June 2006; James H. Mackley, 13 June 2006; and with longtime Triangle, Virginia resident, Robert A. Noile, 27 April 2007.

⁷⁴ Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview by S. Herbert Evison, 23 November 1973, Audiotape #261, transcript, page 39, both located at NPS’s Harpers Ferry Center Library, Harpers Ferry Center, W.Va.

⁷⁵ Newton B. Drury to Assistant Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman, 15 April 1942; Stimson to Ickes, 22 May 1942, both in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47, Box 126, Folder 901; Herbert Evison, acting superintendent of land planning, memo to Garland B. (Mike) Williams, 11 June 1942; and G.B. Williams, memorandum to the director, attn: Mr. Wirth, 14 June 1942; both in (RG 79), Entry 47, RDA Files, Box 61, Folder, Catoctin; and Herbert Evison, NPS, memo for the manager of Chopawamsic RDA, 16 June 1942, NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47, RDA Files, Box 124, Folder 600, all in National Archives II.

temporary permit, Secretary of War formally requested permission to continue to “occupy” the two parks for “the duration of the present emergency.”⁷⁶

The Department of the Interior accepted the fact that the military would use the parks, but it still sought to control the duration and the terms of that usage. Consequently on 16 May 1942, the Secretary of the Interior issued special use permits, retroactive since March 25th, authorizing the War Department to use certain lands and facilities within Chopawamsic and Catoctin RDAs. The permit did not provide an expiration date but indicated that it was “revocable at will by the Secretary of the Interior.”⁷⁷ Seeking to preserve the parks during their use for commando-style training, the permit had a number of protective provisions. It excluded from the NPS administrative and staff facilities from military control. To protect the environment, the permit required “that precaution shall be taken to preserve and protect all objects of a geological and historical nature...that wherever possible, structures, roads, as well as trees, shrubs and other natural terrain features, shall remain unmolested...that every precaution shall be taken to protect the Area from fire and vandalism” and that the military would help fight forest fires. The normal prohibition against weapons or explosives in the park was omitted in this special permit for the military, but the permit did require NPS approval for any new structures the military would build and required that their location was to be determined through consultation between the military and the NPS park manager. Upon termination of military usage, all structures erected by the Army were to be transferred to the Department of the Interior or removed by the War Department, “and the site restored as nearly as possible to its condition at the time of the issuance of this permit, at the option of the Secretary of the Interior.” An accompanying letter from the Secretary of the Interior stated, as the Army had agreed, that private lands purchased by the War Department within Catoctin and Chopawamsic RDA would be transferred to the Department of the Interior to inclusion in the parks when the need for them for national defense was ended.

⁷⁶ Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, 22 April 1942; Stimson to Ickes, 3 May 1942, NPS (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Box 73, Folder 201, National Archives II.

⁷⁷ John J. Dempsey, Acting Secretary of the Interior to Secretary of War, 16 May 1942, and “Special Use Permit Authorizing Use of Land in the Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area, Maryland, by the War Department for National Defense Purposes” signed by Dempsey, 16 May 1942 both in NPS Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Box 73, Folder 201. Special Use Permit for Chopawamsic, 16 May 1942, with identical provisions, is in (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Chopawamsic, Project CHO-IV-1&1A, Box 73, Folder 201, National Archives II. Dempsey’s original letter of 16 May 1942 had accepted “for the duration of the presentation emergency,” but the permit, pre-dated 16 May 1942 (apparently neither written nor delivered until mid-June), listed no expiration date, indicating instead that the permit was “revocable at will by the Secretary of the Interior,” which was apparently as far as Ickes was willing to go.

Acquiring Additional Land for the Camps

The War Department moved quickly to facilitate the training camps for Donovan's organization. On 30 March 1942, a representative of the Army's land acquisition office arrived at Chopawamsic RDA (Prince William Forest Park) with the intention of acquiring privately held tracts within the area assigned to the military as quickly as possible.⁷⁸ Lykes and John E. Gum, Acting Superintendent of one of the CCC work camps in the park, spent the morning with him going over the acquisition status of the remaining private properties lying north of Joplin Road (today Route 619).⁷⁹ Lykes urged the War Department to acquire the ramshackle, wooded area on the eastern edge of the park known as "Batestown," that the park manager denounced as "a hot-bed of bootleggers, thieves and vice." He warned that it would be "a potential health hazard to the adjoining Camps 1 & 4 and the Quantico Creek Watershed." For years, the park manager and the local sheriff had tried to catch the moonshiners, but they never did. Now, as Lykes wrote to Conrad Wirth, "I believe every effort should be made to induce them [the War Department] to acquire these properties as well as other interspersed tracts throughout the [Chopawamsic] Area."⁸⁰

At that time, Chopawamsic RDA (Prince William Forest Park) was composed of 14, 446 acres obtained by NPS between 1935 and 1941.⁸¹ During the next year, the War

⁷⁸ By 12 March 1942, the Coordinator of Information's office had allocated funds for the acquisition and construction of training centers, and within a week after the Secretary of the Interior had signed the temporary permit on 25 March, a representative of the War Department's Division of [Land] Acquisition arrived at Chopawamsic RDA W.O. Hall, to Bernard L. Gladieux, 12 March 1942, subject: status of K & L Activities—COI, in Records of the Bureau of the Budget (RG 51), Series 39.19, Emergency and War Agencies, Folder, COI-General Administration. Hall reported that in regard to the K & L (unvouchered funds) activities, the Office of the Coordinator of Information had allocated around \$2 million for the purchase of a vessel for secret missions, for airplanes for secret missions, and for the construction of training centers in the United States and England for enlisted men and volunteer personnel for special missions. A copy of the document is in CIA Records (RG 263), Thomas Troy File, Box 2, Folder 19, National Archives II.

⁷⁹ Ira B. Lykes to Conrad L. Wirth, confidential memorandum, 30 March 1942 [a separate memorandum from the one of the same date cited above], in NPS Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Chopawamsic, Project CHO-II-1, Box 81, Folder 201, National Archives II. A longtime resident of the area, Gum supervised CCC camp ND-16.

⁸⁰ Ira B. Lykes to Conrad L. Wirth, confidential memorandum, 31 March 1942, in NPS Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Chopawamsic, Project CHO-II-1, Box 81, Folder 201, National Archives II.

⁸¹ The 14,446 acre figure is from Ira B. Lykes to F.F. Gillen, December 1941, NPS Records (RG 79), File 1460/3, which in 1986 was at the Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland, and was cited in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 28. Archivists believe that those NPS records, including Ira Lykes' correspondence and monthly reports cited by Strickland were later transferred to National Archives II in College Park, Maryland, but they cannot be found there. Telephone conversations by the author with Joseph N. Groomes, Washington National Records Center, 14 October 2005; Joseph D. Schwarz, archivist for NPS records at the National Archives II, 17 October 2005; and Michael Grimes and Rene Jaussaud of NPS's National Capital Region, 21 October 2005.

Department acquired an additional 1,000 to 1,500 acres of isolated, privately held tracts scattered within the park, which were acquired for security purposes.⁸² The “Batestown” area was not among the parcels acquired during the war. It still exists today, although the park acquired some of it in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Similarly, in Maryland, the War Department gave priority to acquire the last in-park private properties at Catoctin RDA (now Catoctin Mountain Park). Starting the first week in April, the Real Estate Branch of the Corps of Engineers mapped the area. The War Department soon leased 20 acres from the Church of the Brethren. By the end of 1942, it had by various means, optioned and then purchased from private owners 225 acres of land within the park north of current Route 77.⁸³ The next year, it obtained the last fifty acres of private property within the areas of Catoctin park used by the military, bringing the total War Department acquisition at Catoctin to 275 acres.⁸⁴

As Colonel Preston Goodfellow recalled proudly in 1945: “We got three camps [OSS Areas A, B, and C] from the Department of Interior for a dollar a year, provided we’d clean up [acquisition of] the farm areas which they contained. We had the War Department real estate people condemn them, then bought them up.”⁸⁵

⁸² The transactions were handled by the Army Corps of Engineers’ regional Real Estate and Land Acquisition Office in Baltimore. Capt. Stanley H. Lyson, S-4 (Supply), OSS Schools and Training Division, to Lt. Warner, undated [c. February 1945], subject: Data on Detachment A, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives II.

⁸³ Kirkconnell, *Administrative History of Catoctin Mountain Park*, 92. For details, see War Department, Corps of Engineers, Real Estate Branch, “Map Showing Government Property, Catoctin Area,” 26 May 1942, NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 21, Office of the Chief Counsel, Legislature File, 1932-1950, Box 76, Folder HR 3807; and “Report Furnished Director in Response to Memorandum of August 30, 1943,” “County of Frederick,” “County of Washington,” NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47, RDAs, Box 60, Folder 601, both in National Archives II.

⁸⁴ Map showing Government Property Catoctin Area, prepared by the War Department, Corps of Engineers, Real Estate Branch, originally 26 May 1942, but updated, in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 21, Office of the Chief Counsel, Legislative File, 1932-1950, Box 76, Folder “HR 3807, National Archives II.

⁸⁵ M. Preston Goodfellow, interviewed for the OSS official history in 1945, and quoted in *History of Schools and Training Branch*, OSS, 29.

