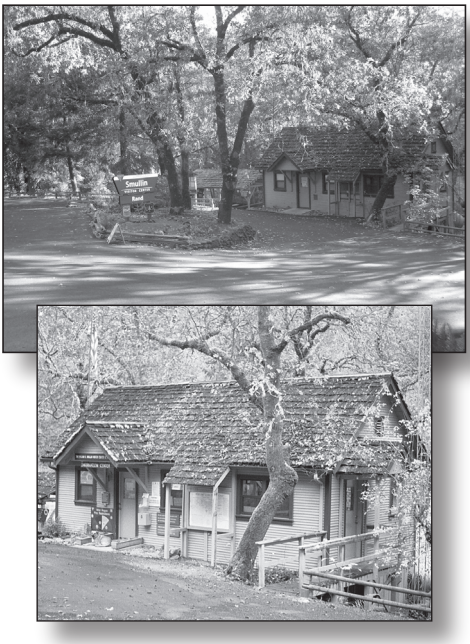
Rand
National Historic Site



Smullin Visitor Center at Rand 2004

BLM

Oregon - Medford District Office

August 2004

Rogue National Wild and Scenic River

Rogue National Wild and Scenic River

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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General Information

The Rand National Historic Site (Rand) is located in southwestern Oregon approximately 25 miles northwest of Grants Pass, Oregon, and 3 miles downstream from the community of Galice. Rand is located on a terrace on the west side of the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River in steep, mountainous country with elevations ranging from 700 feet at the river's edge to 4,000 feet on nearby peaks.

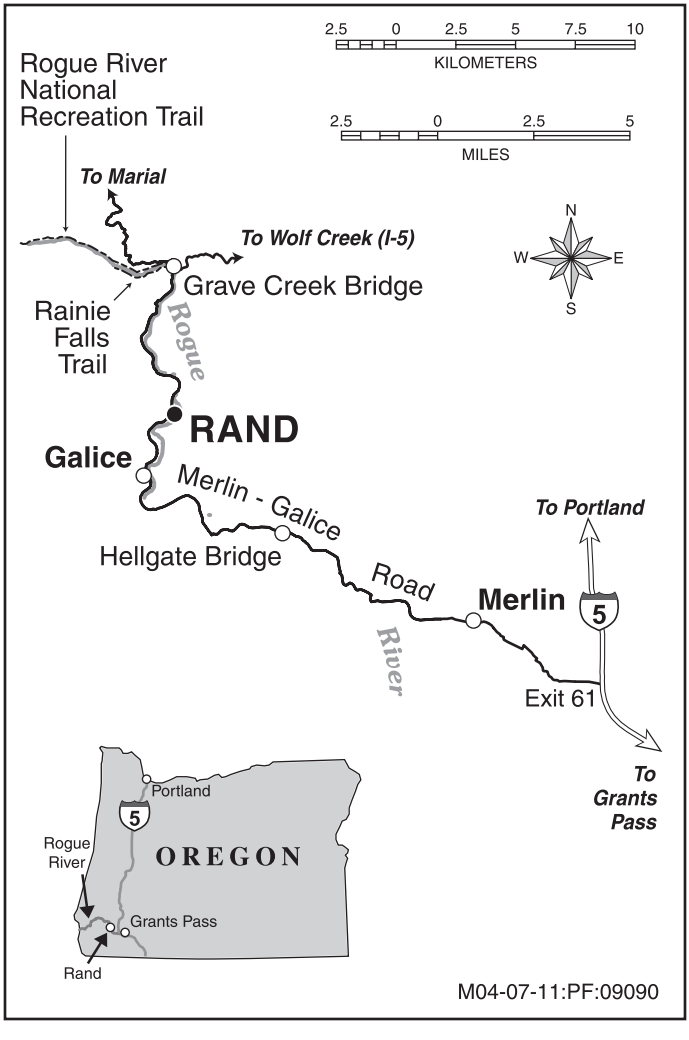
Rand's history is as rich as the gold that filled the dreams of prospective miners, drawing them to the area in the 1850s. Beginning in 1909, Rand became home to one of the first Forest Service rangers for the Siskiyou National Forest. From 1933 to 1941, approximately 200 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers called Rand home. Today, Rand is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to provide resource protection and quality recreation opportunities along the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River.

The Smullin Visitor Center at Rand is open May 15 through October 15, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. October 16 through May 14 hours vary, please call ahead. Visitors are welcome to the Visitor Center and to explore this historic place. Entry of buildings, other than the Visitor Center, is by permission of a Bureau of Land Management Employee only. Please respect the privacy of the residents.

Directions to Rand

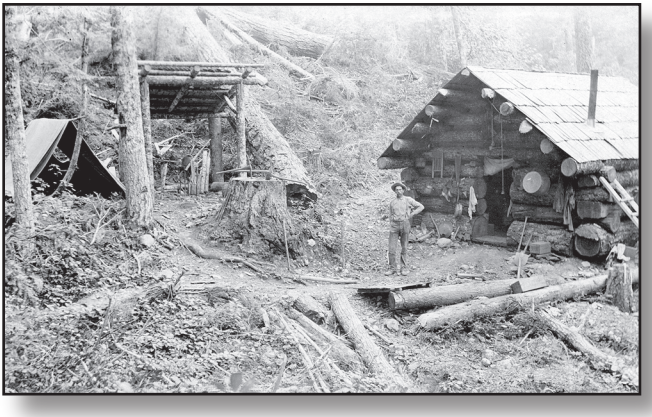
From I-5, take Merlin exit #61 (one exit north of Grants Pass). Follow the Merlin-Galice Road 19 miles west through the towns of Merlin and Galice. Rand is located on the east side of the Merlin-Galice Road 2.6 miles past the community of Galice.

Map to Rand



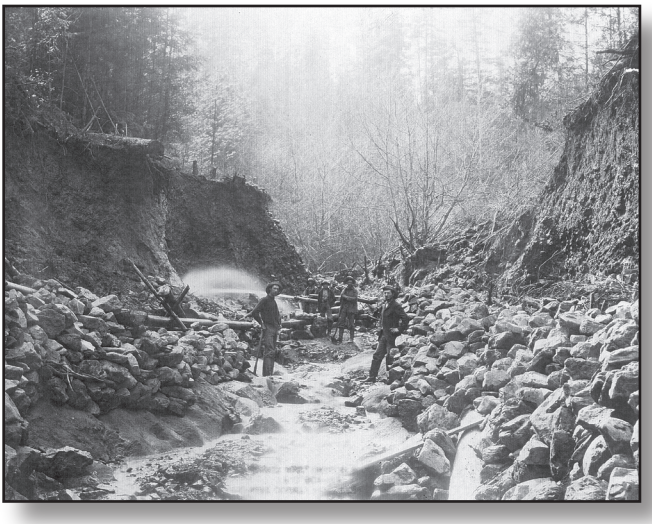
Searching for Gold in the Rogue River Valley

With the discovery of gold in Jacksonville, Oregon, in 1852, Oregon's Willamette Valley farmers made their way south over the California-Oregon Trail into the Rogue River Valley in hopes of striking it rich. Miners swarmed the Rogue River and other rivers in the area scouring the banks for gold and displacing local Native American bands. The most accessible and valuable deposits were largely extracted during the 1850s, however, mining still continues throughout the valley today.



Mining Camp on the Lower Rogue

Nathaniel "Yank" McNair was responsible for the first permanent settlement on the terrace now known as the Rand National Historic Site. It was here that McNair staked the Big Yank Placer Mine. In August 1874, Yank discovered rich gold quartz veins about one mile downstream from his placer claim. Within a few months, Yankville, a small logging and sawmill camp, emerged



Hydraulic Mining

on McNair's placer claim to supply lumber for the mining operations downstream. However, limited access and poor mining technology soon resulted in a failed exploitation and the demise of the little camp of Yankville.

Around 1900, the Rand Mining Company purchased the Big Yank Placer mining property, which included the former site of Yankville. In 1905, the company surveyed the terrace to lay out lots for a townsite they called Rand. The name Rand came from Witwaterstrand, a gold-laden ridge in South Africa. In 1906, the Rand Mining Company joined the Almeda Mining Company to form the Almeda Consolidated Mines Company. Several dwellings and the Rand School were constructed on the townsite.

The Forest Service Moves In

In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt created the Siskiyou National Forest as part of a program to set aside massive tracts of land as reserves. The Galice Ranger District, one of six ranger districts established on the forest by the spring of 1909, assumed responsibility for the management of the lands in the Rogue River Canyon. Fire suppression, timber sale management, and trail construction programs were soon underway.

Jesse P. Dewitt was the first ranger assigned to the Galice District. In 1909, Ranger Dewitt moved into a tent on the Almeda Consolidated Mines Company's Rand development. He continued to live in a tent for eight years because the Forest Service had difficulty obtaining the rights to build a house from the Almeda Consolidated Mines Company. In 1916, Ranger Dewitt wrote Forest Supervisor Nelson MacDuff:

> *"...The present ranger headquarters...do not provide any conveniences for the proper handling of the work and my family is forced to live in cramped and unsanitary quarters... If I had the necessary funds I would go ahead and construct quarters at my own expense... Real live action is needed more than anything else... I have lived here for the past eight years under adverse conditions... The land is simply lying there unused and there is no appar-*

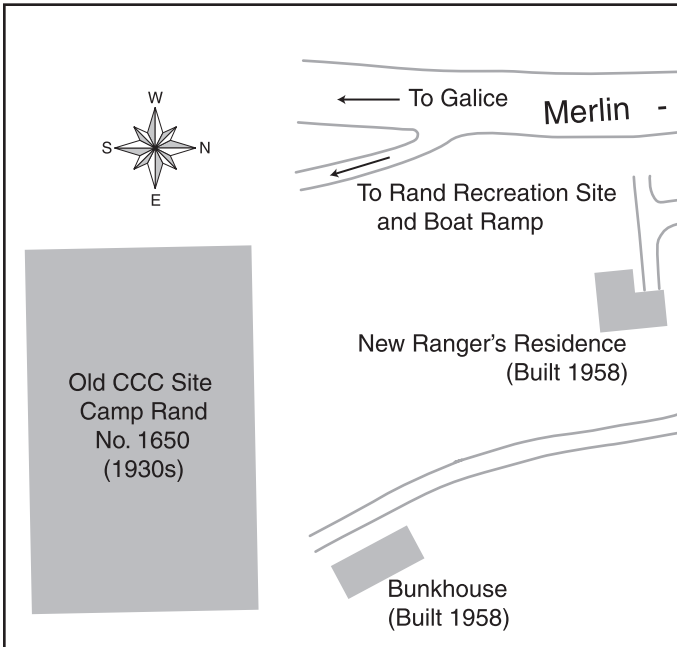
Forest Ranger's Camp

ent reason why I should put up with temporary quarters indefinitely."

Finally, in October 1916, the Almeda Consolidated Mines Company rented the Forest Service a small parcel of land for 10 years at one dollar per year. In the fall of 1917, construction began on frame buildings for the Rand Ranger Station, including a home, barn and office. The Siskiyou National Forest's lease for the Rand Ranger Station property expired in 1926, but no challenges to the agency's presence on the site were made. Efforts by Forest Service administrators to locate representatives or heirs to the Almeda Consolidated Mines Company failed. In 1932, the mining claim on which the station was located lapsed, allowing the Forest Service to pursue permanent legal occupancy of the site.

1948

Rand Nationa



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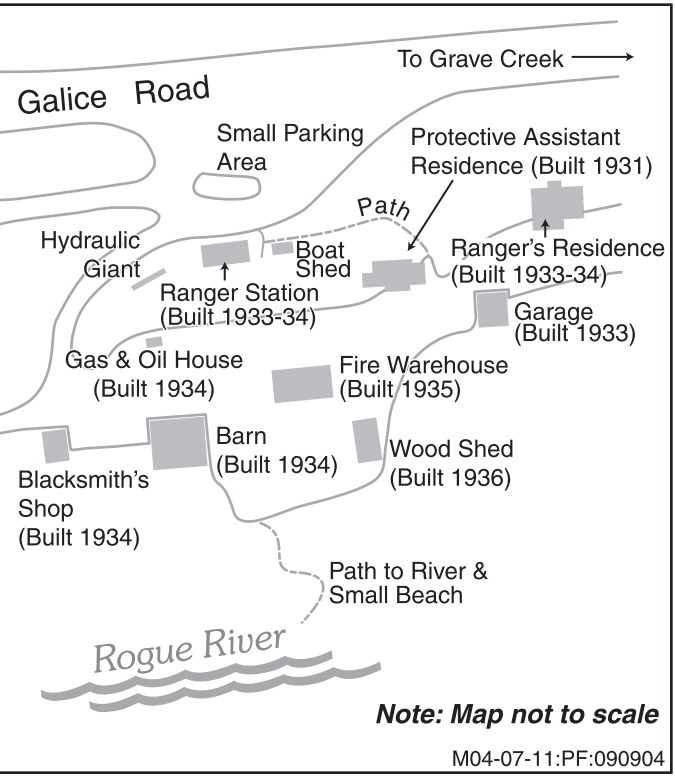
Civilian Conservation Corps Provides an Economic Boost

The Depression of the 1930s brought hard times to the Rogue River Canyon. The residents mined, cut wood, and grew their own food to survive. In 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt developed the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as part of his New Deal program to combat national economic difficulties. The Forest Service managed

l Historic Site



most of the projects in this area and CCC enrollees assisted forest managers with fire suppression, road construction, communication development, and administrative and recreation site construction. In late September 1933, 18 CCC enrollees set up Camp No. 1650 at Rand.

Workers at Camp Rand made many improvements to the site while stationed there. They built barracks and supporting structures, which housed over 200 CCC enrollees. They remodeled the Ranger's Residence, the Protective Assistant's Residence, and the Rand Ranger Station, which were on-site prior to the CCC's arrival. A garage,

woodshed, fire warehouse, barn, blacksmith shop, gas and oil house, and extensive masonry walls were also constructed by enrollees.

The barracks and supporting structures that housed the CCC are no longer standing, however, all of the other structures are still on site today.

Ranger's Residence, 1936

The work of Camp No. 1650 was by no means limited to site improvements at Rand. They built sections of the first truck roads in the canyon and built a 344-foot long cable suspension bridge over the Rogue River at Grave Creek, which was replaced in the 1960s by the existing bridge. According to Ranger L.J. Cooper, the work the CCC did on Almeda Road No. 340 was "pronounced

Grave Creek Suspension Bridge Built by CCC, April 9, 1936

by some as being the hardest construction job carried on by the Forest Service in the West." In addition, the Corps' enrollees battled fire on the rugged canyon slopes during the summer and fall months and collected wood ticks for the Rocky Mountain Laboratory to help with the study of Spotted Fever.

CCC Bulldozer Work on North Pier of Grave Creek Bridge, 1935

By August 1941, World War II was looming in the near future. With military and war-related industries beckoning, men quickly began to leave Camp Rand. Officials disbanded Camp Rand and the 80 men remaining were enrolled elsewhere. Within the Rogue River Canyon and across the country, development slowed as America turned its attention to war.

Camp Rand, May 27, 1935
Crews Loaded into Trucks Ready to Leave for Work

Recreation and Resource Protection Become the Focus at Rand

After World War II, tourism in the Rogue River Canyon increased, in part due to new roads that eased the area's isolation. Anglers, hikers, and boaters flocked to the river canyon. The Forest Service continued to oversee activities in the Rogue River Canyon from the Rand Ranger Station. In 1958, the Forest Service constructed a new residence and a bunkhouse for seasonal employees. In 1963, the Siskiyou National Forest moved the Galice Ranger District headquarters into Grants Pass. The Rand complex remained unused for six years, except for temporary leases of individual buildings to the State Board of Forestry and the Bureau of Public Roads.

In 1970, following passage of the Wild and Scenic River Act of 1968 and the subsequent designation of the Rogue River as Wild and Scenic, the BLM acquired the Rand site. Forest Service and BLM employees were present on site to issue float permits for the Wild Section of the Rogue River and to provide visitors with information until 1996. At this time, BLM employees took over all the responsibilities at Rand.

In 1999, the Rand complex was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Rand essentially remains the same as it was when the structures were first built. With the exception of the roadways in the river canyon, Rand is the primary remaining resource as-

sociated with the CCC in the area. In 1996, the visitor center was renamed the Smullin Visitor Center after William B. Smullin, a broadcasting pioneer who introduced commercial radio, television, and cable television to Southern Oregon and Northern California.

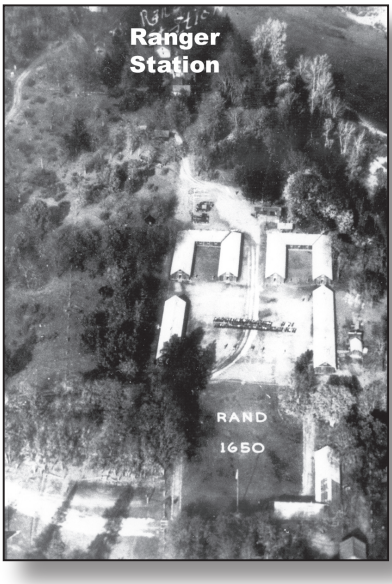
Over the years, the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River has seen increased use by a growing local population, as well as by tourists from around the world. The Rogue's national reputation for excellent salmon and steelhead fishing, as well as outstanding white water boating and rafting opportunities, attracts thousands of visitors each year. Fishing, float trips, camping, hiking, picnicking, swimming, jet boating, recreational gold panning, wildlife viewing, sight-seeing and more are enjoyed throughout the beautiful river canyon.

The designation of the Rogue as a National Wild and Scenic River ensures that it will be preserved in its free-flowing condition and the river and its immediate environments will be protected for the benefit of present and future generations. Furthermore, the Rand site, with its cultural and historic values, will

Inside Smullin Visitor Center, BLM Employees Issuing a Wild Rogue Float Permit, 2001

provide present and future generations with a glimpse into the past.

1930s Photos



Aerial photo of Civilian Conservation Corp, Camp Rand No. 1650, 1936

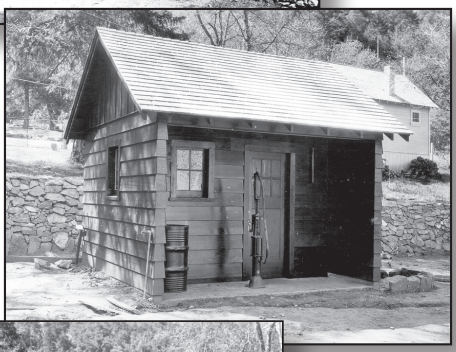
Truck Load of Camp Rand Enrollees, May 27, 1935

Archaeological resources are fragile and irreplaceable. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1976 protects them for the benefit of all Americans. Please don't erase the traces of America's past.

Rand Ranger Station Office, 1936

Fire Warehouse, 1936

Barn, 1936



Gas and Oil House, 1936

Retaining Wall Built by CCC, April 9, 1936

For More Information

Bureau of Land Management

Smullin Visitor Center at Rand
14335 Galice Road
Merlin, Oregon 97532
541/479-3735
May 15 - October 15
email: or110rr@blm.gov
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Medford District
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541/618-2200
email: or110mb@blm.gov
www.or.blm.gov/Medford

Other Brochures about the Rogue

Books about the Rogue River
Galice Hellgate National Back Country Byway
Hellgate Recreation Area
Rogue River Float Guide
Rogue River Ranch National Historic Site
Whisky Creek cabin National Historic Site

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