

## OCTOBER MOUNTAIN STATE FOREST WASHINGTON, BECKET, LEE AND LENOX

### Historical Background

In 1896 William C. Whitney, Secretary of the Navy under President Cleveland, purchased 11,000 acres of land in Washington and the surrounding towns which he developed as a game preserve. At one time there were 24 houses and 30 barns and stables on the property, including a "honeymoon cottage" that Whitney built for his son, reportedly at a cost over \$200,000. After Whitney's death in 1904 the property was unused for a number of years. In 1915, through the efforts of Kelton B. Miller and Cortland Field Bishop, private funds were combined with public money to acquire the land as a state forest. An additional 1,000 acres was donated by Mrs. Richard T. Auchmuty, making it the largest state forest in Massachusetts. Improvements were begun by state crews who constructed roads to facilitate access, developed forest resources and established recreational facilities. This was one of the few state forests to have active public use prior to the 1930s.

CCC Camp S-52 (Company 125) was established at October Mountain in 1933 and was succeeded in 1934 by Camp SA-52 (Company 125). As at many other camps, the first priorities were road construction, fire hazard reduction and planting, building upon work already begun by state workers. Roadwork and forestry remained a priority for this camp which existed until 1935 and for Camp S-93 which followed it from 1936 to 1940. Camps under