



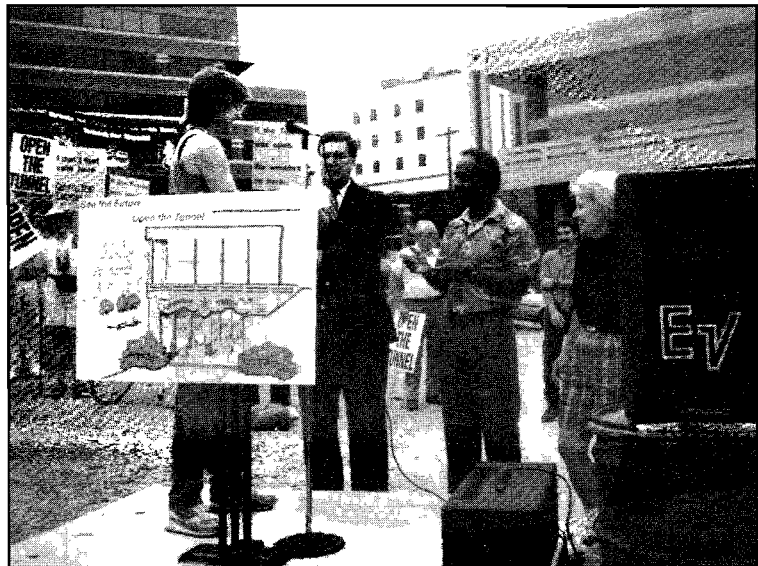
Fall 1997

Vol. X No. 1

## Coalition Hosts "Open The Tunnel" Rally

If the sentiments of over 100 enthusiastic trail users showing up bright and early on a rain-threatening Saturday morning could be reduced to a single phrase, it might be *"If you open it, we will come!"*

In the nine years since Montgomery County purchased the right-of-way for the old CSX Railroad right-of-way, the Wisconsin Avenue tunnel running beneath the Air Rights and Apex Buildings in downtown Bethesda has remained an unopened link in what has since become the Capital Crescent Trail. That tide may have turned on September 20 when a determined group of Coalition members, area residents, and other Trail supporters - walkers, bikers and skaters, many with their kids in tow - gathered at the Reed Street entrance of the tunnel to protest the County Council's refusal to fund tunnel restoration. The rally was organized by the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT), and supported by the Greater Bethesda/Chevy Chase Coalition and by a citizen group led by Pam Browning.



*Pam Browning (on podium) gives County Executive Douglas Duncan the 8,000-plus signatures she and many other trail supporters collected in a petition drive to open the Wisconsin Avenue tunnel. Standing with Duncan are Council members Isiah Leggett and Betty Ann Krahneke.*

Following opening remarks from CCCT Chairman John Dugger and County political leaders, Chevy Chase resident Pam Browning, an avid petitioner for the tunnel's opening, presented County Executive Douglas M. Duncan with 8,000 signatures she and many other trail supporters have collected in favor of the tunnel. The petition drive began last May after the County Council voted 6 - 3 against funding to restore and open the tunnel. The cost of about \$180,000 includes asphalt paving, fencing, interior lights, mirrors, TV cameras, alarm buttons, and intersection improvements at Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues. CCCT believes that it will be done for less.

In addition to County Executive Duncan's presence, three council members attended the rally, two of whom voted for tunnel funding last May: Betty Ann Krahneke (R-Dist. 1) of Chevy Chase and Isiah Leggett (D-At Large) of Burtonsville. Parks and Planning Commissioner Pat Baptiste was also there. Council member Nancy Dacek (R-Dist. 2) of Darnestown voted in support of tunnel funding last spring.

But the big news for Trail supporters is that two opponents to funding have now changed their minds. Isiah Leggett shared the news with rally participants that Michael Subin (D-At Large) of Gaithersburg now favors opening the tunnel. Neal Potter (D-At Large) of Chevy Chase, who attended the rally, has since declared that he also favors opening. "I will vote for it. I am convinced the security issues can be handled," he told the *Bethesda Gazette* in its October 8<sup>th</sup> edition.

If any one of the remaining opponents changes his or her mind, there will be six on the Council in favor of the tunnel initiative. That would be enough support for an emergency appropriation this fall (see accompanying article).

*Continued on page 6*

## From The Chair

### Towards a First-Class Trail

The Coalition — its members and its Board — have much to be proud of in the rally on September 20 to open the tunnel. So do the other groups supporting the rally — the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Coalition and the tunnel partisans organized by Pam Browning. The large number of people present — several hundred waving signs and banners — and the strong political participation — County Executive Duncan, Council Members Betty Ann Krahke, Isiah Leggett, and Neal Potter, and Parks & Planning Commissioner Pat

Baptiste — showed the level of enthusiasm for making the relatively small investment needed to open the tunnel now. Opening the tunnel will serve all Trail users — but it will be very important to the communities east of Wisconsin Avenue, and particularly their children, for whom the closed tunnel creates a major obstacle to access to Bethesda and to Trail enjoyment.

We must now recognize that fairness dictates a campaign to reconstruct the trestle over Rock Creek Park as our next priority — the trestle will be an enormous benefit to citizens of Silver Spring for pleasure and for commuting, and will open up a variety of interesting connections to all Trail users.

Please stay with us while we take advantage of momentum to get a first-class trail through to Silver Spring.

*John Dugger*

#### THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL BOARD MEMBERS 1997/98

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#### REACH THE CAPITAL CRESCENT BY INTERNET

For those of you who prefer to "surf the net" you can reach the Capital Crescent Trail through Ernie Brooks [ewbrooks@oasys.dt.navy.mil](mailto:ewbrooks@oasys.dt.navy.mil) he'll process your request.



*The Crescent* is published three times a board year (June-June) by the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT), P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20824, phone (202) 234-4874, [ewbrooks@oasys.dt.navy.mil](mailto:ewbrooks@oasys.dt.navy.mil). CCCT is a non-profit citizen's group promoting development of the 11.2 mile rail-to-rail conversion from Georgetown, D.C. to Silver Spring, MD for multi-purpose, recreational use.

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Editor: John Campanile

We request that all entries should be sent to the post office box listed above. Submissions should be sent on 3.5" diskette or via the internet to [john\\_campanile@paramount.com](mailto:john_campanile@paramount.com).

# Happy Trails Night at the Austin Grill

*Better biking through better dining!*

**AUSTIN GRILL**  
*"best you ever ate"*

Join your fellow bikers, joggers, rollerbladers, and strollers for a night of excellent dining at one of Bethesda's best restaurants - a night that will benefit the Capital Crescent Trail!

On MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH, from 5:30 p.m. on, the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail will host HAPPY TRAILS NIGHT at the Austin Grill in Bethesda. You'll get a chance to chat with some of those fun folks who you see on the Trail. And the restaurant has graciously agreed to donate 30 percent of all proceeds for the evening to the Coalition's efforts to improve the Trail. That's right -- the more you eat, the more you help the Capital Crescent Trail!

All diners will be eligible for cool door prizes -- great stuff donated by CITY BIKES in Adamas Morgan. The usual array of excellent Capital crescent Trail paraphernalia will be available for purchase -- and board members have made a one-time only pledge: No speeches!

So bring the family, bring your appetite, and bring your checkbook - as we use great Southwest cuisine to help extend the trail toward the great Northwest Branch.



The Austin Grill is located at the corner of Woodmont Avenue and Elm Street in Bethesda, one block east of the CCT Bethesda trailhead (7278 Woodmont, 301-656-1366). For more info call Phil Lerman at 202-895-3116.

PLEASE DESIGNATE  
THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL  
IN THE UNITED WAY/COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN (CFC) OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA  
CCCT's CFC NUMBER IS 7221  
Please include us in your CFC contributions or pledges by filling in our designation number on your contribution/pledge form.



## **Parking at River Road**

The Minkoff Company is making available on an interim basis parking on the property adjacent to the Trail on the north side of the River Road Bridge during weekday working hours. Permits will be issued permitting parking for three hours during the day, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Permits may be obtained from the Minkoff office, located just off River Road within yards of the bridge's north ramp, during normal business hours, weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Minkoff Company hopes, when property issues with the county are resolved, to post signs authorizing parking for Trail use without permits at other times. For more information, call 301-652-8711.

# Groups Unite Behind Alternative Plan for Rock Creek Park

Alliance Calls for Park "Seven Days a Week!"

A broad alliance of environmental, recreation, and park advocacy groups, including the CCCT, have proposed an general management plan for the future of Rock Creek Park. Responding to park officials' initial planning scenarios, the 21 organizations presented an alternative that focuses on protecting the park from automobile commuter traffic and other environmental hazards, while preserving threatened historic and recreational facilities.

The National Park Service is currently preparing its general management plan that will guide decisions in Rock Creek Park for the next 15 years. Last June, park officials announced four planning options, or scenarios, for the park and solicited comments from individuals and groups. One scenario would not change current policy — the focus would be on maintaining the park as it has evolved thus far. The other three would in varying degrees reduce traffic, improve trails and eliminate popular recreational facilities such as the stables and community gardens.

The alliance's proposed plan, dubbed "Alternative Scenario 2-1/2," draws chiefly on measures found in the National Park Service's own Scenarios 2 and 3 and emphasizes environmental protection, education and recreation. In addition to limiting commuter traffic and preserving recreational facilities, the groups call for measures to address chronic park problems such as erosion, water pollution, run-down trails, barriers to public access, and decaying historic features.

The groups' proposal would close about 10% of the park's roads, affecting only portions of Beach Drive already closed on weekends. The plan would discourage daily commuter traffic along Rock Creek while facilitating cross-park traffic, scenic driving, and motor vehicle access to features within the park. The Park Service is expected to propose its recommended general plan early next year.

The Board of the Coalition has reviewed this plan and considers that its implementation would result in a great asset to all our citizens using parks and trails. The Capital Crescent Trail would connect from Silver Spring or Chevy Chase to a fine route to downtown Washington free of automobile traffic and available 7 days a week, not just weekends. For recreation, a circuit trip of 22 miles on the Capital Crescent and Rock Creek trails would also be available everyday without conflicts with automobiles on narrow Park roads.

**ACTION ALERT:** *CCCT members are asked to contact park officials to express their support for Alternative Scenario 2-1/2. Leave a voice message at 202-282-1008, or send written comments to: Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, 3545 Williamsburg Lane, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008; fax, 202-282-7612.*

For more information, call the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), 202-872-9830, or visit their web site: [www.waba.org](http://www.waba.org).

## Scouts To Improve Trail Access

Daniel Jeffs, a senior at Gonzaga High School, plans to improve access to the Capital Crescent Trail from the Palisades area of the District, the area just south of the Dalecarlia Reservoir and immediately adjacent to the Trail. Jeffs' project will cap his efforts to earn his Eagle Scout badge as a member of Troop 1946.

The access trail is at Norton Street and Potomac Avenue, N.W. One of two access trails in the neighborhood, the 400-foot trail is now hazardous because it is overgrown with underbrush, eroded, and obstructed with debris.

Jeffs estimates the cost for improvement to the trail will be \$450 for materials, and about 200 hours of labor. He has submitted a proposal to the Palisades Community Fund for the \$450 funding, and plans to use his fellow scouts and other friends as volunteer labor.

He has recently submitted a request for approval by the U.S. Park Service in Sharpsburg, Maryland. The access trail and the Capital Crescent Trail in D.C. are in the C&O Canal National Historic Park. When approval comes through, he'll work with the Palisades Citizens Association to explain his plans to neighbors and others interested in access to the Capital Crescent Trail.

## **CCCT Supports Bethesda Trolley Trail**

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The Coalition has written to Montgomery County Councilmember Isiah Leggett supporting the construction of trail bridges for the Bethesda Trolley Trail across I-270 and I-495, and keeping the Trail on the original north-south right-of-way alignment (the "Master Plan Alignment") between Rockville and Bethesda. Councilmember Leggett is the chairperson of the Transportation and Environment Committee. Last August, the Council indicated a preference for the master plan alignment of having the trail cross Tuckerman Lane and then I-270 via a bridge, and run along Fleming Road.

The CCCT believes that the Bethesda Trolley Trail is a critical link in the development of an interconnected network of non-motorized bicycle/pedestrian transportation facilities in Montgomery County. The Trolley Trail will provide an important connection between Rockville and Bethesda not presently connected other than by motor vehicles. The CCCT also believes the area to be served by the Trolley Trail desperately needs an off-road bicycle/pedestrian route since current alternatives (Rockville Pike and Old Georgetown Road) are extremely dangerous.

While the Coalition believes that the County should make every effort to address the legitimate concerns of affected neighborhood groups and residents regarding the development of the Trolley Trail, we strongly opposed proposals to shift the Trail's alignment from the old trolley right-of-way and away from these neighborhoods. We do not agree that development of the Bethesda Trolley Trail will increase crime and decrease property values. Experience with the Capital Crescent Trail shows that many early neighborhood opponents of the Trail have since become some of its strongest supporters.

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation has worked diligently to bring this project to fruition, and have enjoyed substantial levels of public involvement and support. Comments in respect to the Bethesda Trolley Trail should be sent to the Chair of the Montgomery County Council:

**The Honorable Marilyn J. Praisner**  
**Montgomery County Council**  
**100 Maryland Avenue**  
**Rockville, MD. 20850-2371**

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## **Designation of the CCT as a National Recreation Trail**

The CCCT Board has formally requested the Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission and the Superintendent of the C & O Canal National Historic Park to designate a segment of the Capital Crescent Trail as a National Recreation Trail (NRT) as authorized under the National Trails System Act. The Capital Crescent Trail would become part of the National Trail System and would gain favorable publicity as a nationally recognized facility meeting needs for outdoor recreation and commuting alternatives.

The CCCT has nominated the seven-mile section of the Trail from Bethesda Avenue in Bethesda to its terminus in Georgetown as an NRT. The four-mile interim trail from Woodmont Avenue to Silver Spring would not be included due to the ongoing study of that segment for the proposed transitway. In the future, should the Bethesda-Silver Spring section of the Capital Crescent Trail (the "Georgetown Branch Trail") be permanently developed as a trail, with or without transit, the NRT designation could easily be amended to include that segment.



## Coalition Hosts "Open The Tunnel" Rally

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Just prior to the rally, Montgomery County Police unlocked the fence that blocks access to the tunnel and allowed rally participants to walk a short distance inside. For most, it was their first excursion into the 1000-foot tunnel with its tall, graffiti-riddled concrete walls that was once home for the area's homeless and a frequent target for vandals after the trains stopped using it. A walk-through last January convinced County Executive Duncan to support the tunnel initiative, which he made clear during his remarks at the rally. The CCCT hopes that rally participants who ventured into the tunnel will contact their council members and urge them to OPEN THE TUNNEL!

### ***WHAT CAN YOU DO?***

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail thanks all those who have supported our Open The Tunnel campaign. Your continued support is important to let the County Council know that this issue is not going to go away. Here are some steps you can take:

- Write, call or fax key members of the Montgomery County Council to express your thanks/solicit their support for the tunnel initiative.

#### ***Thanks for your support:***

Nancy Dacek  
Betty Ann Krahne  
Isiah Leggett  
Neal Potter  
Michael Subin

#### ***Please Open The Tunnel:***

Derick Berlage  
Marilyn Praisner (Council President)

Address: Montgomery County Council  
Stella B. Werner Office Bldg.  
Rockville, MD. 20850

Telephone: 301-217-7907  
Fax: 301-217-7989

- Become a member of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail - look for the membership form in this newsletter or in our new brochure in information boxes along the Trail.
- Call the Coalition telephone hotline (202-234-4874) to get updates on issues under consideration by the County Council.



*CCCT Chair John Dugger addresses rally participants.*



*Trail supporters were given the opportunity to walk inside the tunnel during the rally.*

### **Litter Begets Litter**

The Trail from Georgetown to Jones Mill road is beautiful and has happily been nearly litter-free. The National Park Service and the Montgomery County Department of Parks and of Transportation have no regularly scheduled clean-ups of the Trail, due to personnel limitations. Sometimes inconsiderate trail users drop litter along the Trail, and that spoils the effect.

It bears repeating: Litter begets litter. Considerate people who pick up the small amounts of litter do a great service to the beauty of the Trail, and are much appreciated. Carrying a plastic grocery bag with you on the Trail makes this easy.

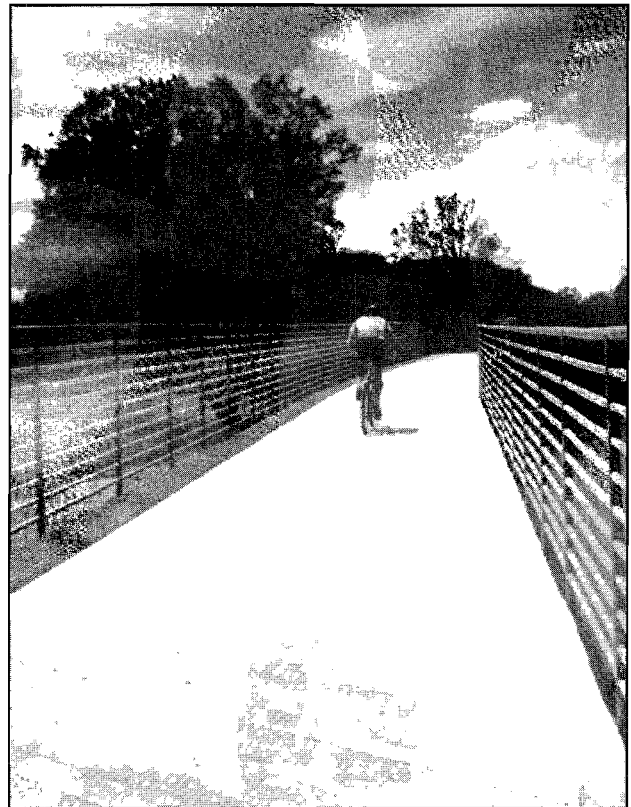
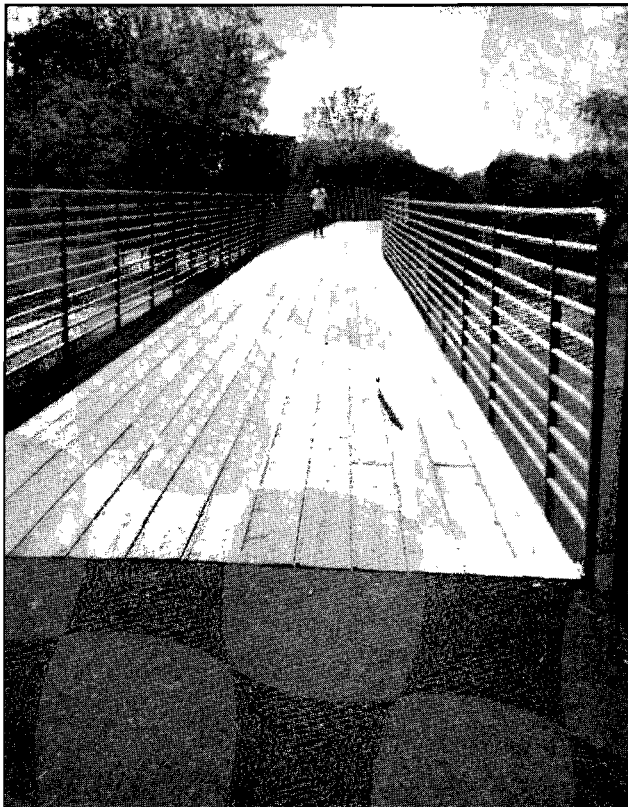
## Safety On The Capital Crescent Trail

The Capital Crescent Trail has been an enormous success, and is giving great pleasure to many bicyclists, rollerbladers, joggers, and walkers of all ages. Regrettably, we are getting frequent complaints from bicyclists with smaller children, walkers of all ages, and joggers that rollerbladers and bicyclists are causing them discomfort or fright by overtaking them at considerable speed without giving any audible warning. The Trail is used frequently by elderly people, some of whom are hearing-impaired, and smaller children, whose behavior may be unpredictable. Some who are new to rollerblading or bicycling are not totally confident or predictable.

It is vitally important that bicyclists and rollerbladers give an audible warning when overtaking slower moving traffic, whether by voice, bell, or whistle. Such warnings are required by law on the Trail both in Montgomery County and D.C. Warnings are important for safety and is the courteous thing to do, appreciated by those being overtaken. Please give such warnings and encourage others to do so. It will avoid accidents and may prevent the authorities from introducing speed control measures, such as speed bumps in residential neighborhoods.



*Safety on the CCT*

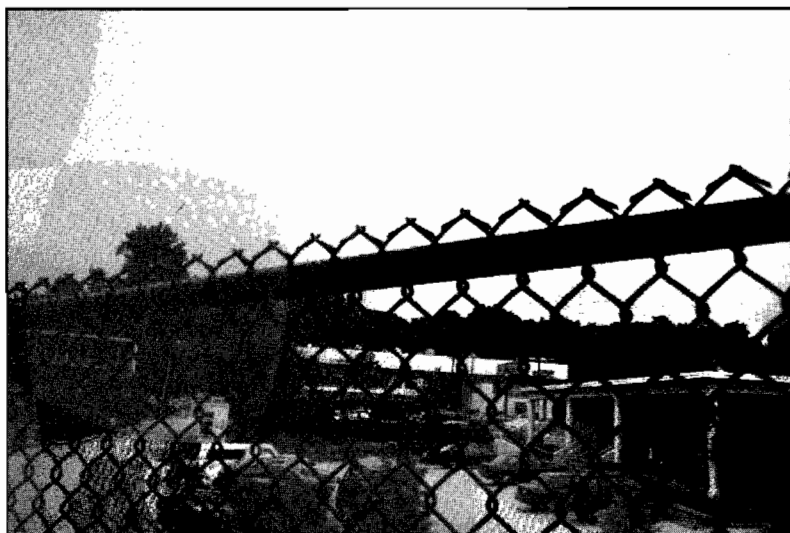
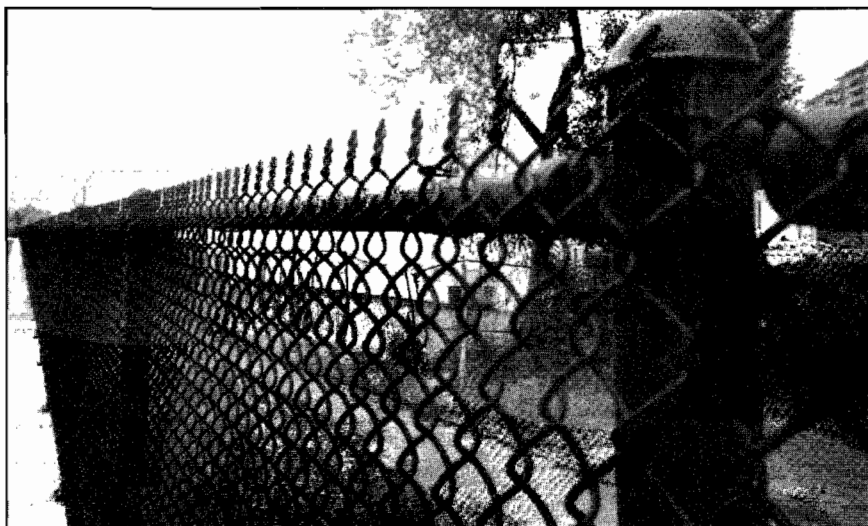
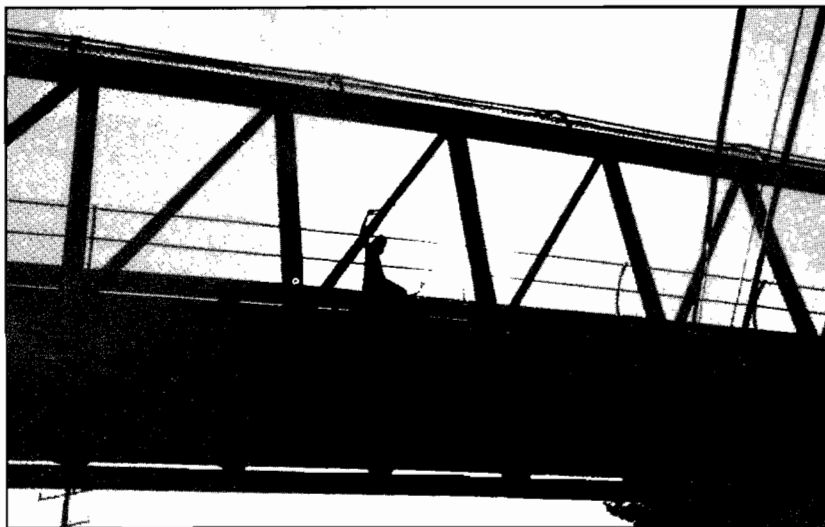


**Dalecarlia Bridge Redecked** -- Photo at left shows Dalecarlia Bridge deck earlier this summer with "tire trapping" gaps between the parallel-to-travel wooden planks. At right, the recently redecked bridge with diagonally placed wooden planks.

Fall 1997

The Capital Crescent Trail

## Along the Trail ...



### Details, Details . . .

*Some cutting here, a little crimping there, and what do you get? Safer fences! Crews worked on the River Road Bridge last summer eliminating the sharp points along the ramp fences (photo above) with a more user-friendly pattern (below). Crews also shored up the canopy mesh along the bridge's center span.*



### **Benches on The CCT**

Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail would like to thank Montgomery County Parks for the installation of benches along the Maryland Portions of the Trail (Bethesda to the D.C. line). Special mentions to Rachel Davis Newhouse, and to Gary Harmon and his crew for doing the heavy lifting on this project. In addition to the benches, a historic panel was recently installed at the north end of the Dalecarlia Tunnel by Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning The Commission. The Coalition will continue to work with the County's Parks Department to secure more amenities to the Trail, including a wayside display at the Bethesda Avenue trailhead and historical panels at other locations.

### **Weeds Be Gone**

Last summer, the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail touched base with Montgomery County Department of Transportation, the agency responsible for maintaining the Georgetown Branch Trail east from Bethesda to Silver Spring (aka "The Future Capital Crescent Trail"), regarding the increasingly heavy weed growth along this section of the trail. The photo shows a particularly bad spot west of Connecticut Avenue in serious need of a side-cutting mower. The onset of fall will cause many of these weeds to die back.



### **Nat Cap On CCT**

*The Capital Crescent Trail was one of three tours offered by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association in its annual National Capital Bicycle Tours on October 5. For many participants, this was their first ride along the Georgetown Branch section of the CCT.*



### ***“Wanna race?”***

*If you have a picture or two of Capital Crescent Trail wildlife, send it to The Crescent. Photos will be returned upon request.*

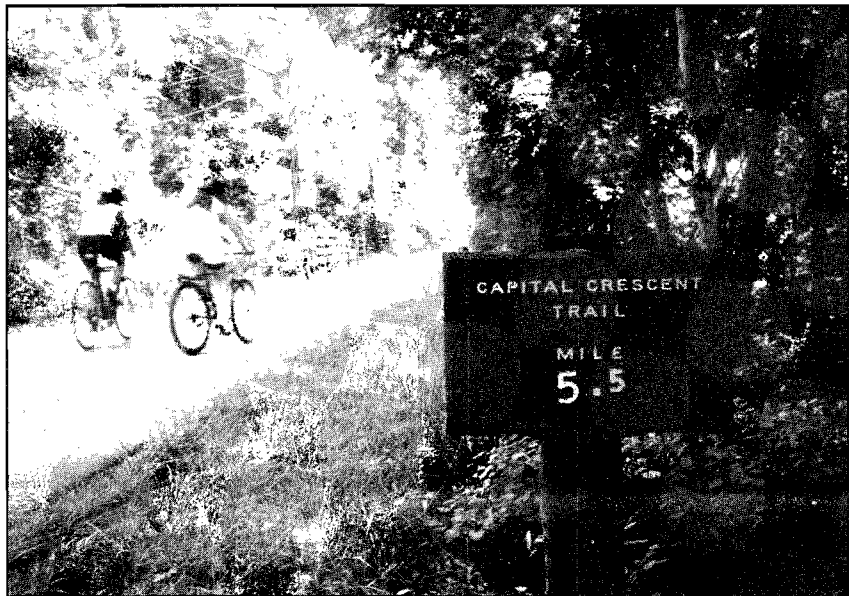
# The Bicycle Beltway -- Fall 1997

Compiled by Phil Lerman

Hey gang! Wanna take the best bike ride in town? It's a 22-mile loop starting at the Capital Crescent Trailhead in Bethesda. Only, you DON'T go down the Capital Crescent -- you go east, across town, to the Rock Creek Part trail, then south to Georgetown, and loop back UP the Capital Crescent! This is the bicycle beltway as it exists now; the REAL bicycle beltway won't be complete until the Capital Crescent Trail is completed to Silver Spring and the Metropolitan Branch Trail is completed from Silver Spring to Union Station. But that's why you're a member of the Coalition -- to help us get that done. The Coalition thanks you for your continuing support in getting a first-class trail through to Silver Spring. In the meantime, go out and have yourself a ride!

**S - Straight L- Left**  
**R - Right X-Cross**  
**TRO - To Remain On**

- 0.0 Capital Crescent Trailhead, Bethesda Avenue. GO RIGHT (east) on Bethesda Ave.
- 0.05 X Woodmont
- 0.1 X Wisconsin  
L and immediate R onto Willow
- 0.2 L on 47th
- 0.3 R into Elm Street Park 10 yards later, go  
L onto trail, R TRO trail (follow "Georgetown Branch" signs for next 2 miles)
- 1.5 X Connecticut
- 2.2 L on Jones Bridge Road
- 2.3 R on Susanna Lane
- 2.4 R onto Rock Creek Trail
- 2.6 R at T
- 3.2 X East-West Highway onto Meadowbrook Lane
- 3.4 R at stop sign
- 3.7 R at stop sign (over bridge)



- 3.8 L onto Beach Drive (Careful! Traffic!)
- 4.3 S at DC line -- begin Auto-free on weekends
- 7.0 S TRO Beach Drive
- 8.6 BR onto bike trail  
S at stop sign,  
S thru parking lot TRO trail
- 9.4 L over bridge TRO trail
- 10.4 BR before tunnel TRO trail
- 11.2 X Rock Creek Parkway
- 13.2 R at Virginia Ave into Parking Lot
- 13.3 L on driveway toward Potomac  
R at River  
R at sundial next to Sequoias, onto 30th Street
- 13.5 L onto K Street
- 14.1 S under archway -- begin Capital Crescent Trail
- 16.3 S at Fletchers Boathouse TRO trail
- 20.5 X Little Falls Parkway
- 21.1 Back to Trailhead

## Dial Up Trail Status/Conditions

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail has a "User Hotline" that provides regular, weekly updates on trail conditions. Call the CCCT at **202-234-4874, box "8"**, to hear the Hotline. CCCT members are encouraged to be the Coalition's eyes and ears and leave a message on the Hotline on trail conditions you've encountered, or on any issues which might impact the Trail. If you're new to the Trail, leave your name and address and we'll send you an information brochure. After reading it, we hope you'll support the Capital Crescent Trail and become a member of the Coalition.

## *Calendar of Upcoming Events*

- October 27*      *CCCT Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. Bethesda Regional Library, Arlington Road, Bethesda. Bethesda Metro.*
- November 10*      *CCCT Night at the AUSTIN GRILL, 5:30 p.m. 7278 Woodmont Avenue, Bethesda. Bethesda Metro (see article, page 3)*
- December 8*      *CCCT Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. Bethesda Regional Library, Arlington Road, Bethesda. Bethesda Metro.*
- January 5*      *CCCT Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. Bethesda Regional Library, Arlington Road, Bethesda. Bethesda Metro.*
- February 9*      *CCT Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. Bethesda Regional Library, Arlington Road, Bethesda. Bethesda Metro.*

## Yes! I Want To Help Complete The Capital Crescent Trail!

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \$100 \*. SPECIAL HONOR MEMBERSHIP

Commemorative spike, your name on our annual report, action alerts, and subscription to our newsletter.

☐ \$60 \*. SPONSORING MEMBERSHIP

Newsletter subscription, action alerts.

☐ \$30 . SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

Newsletter subscription, action alerts.

☐ \$15. INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Newsletter subscription, action alerts.

\* Gifts at these levels receive T-shirt. Circle size:

M L XL

Detailed four-color map of the Capital Crescent Trail with historical perspectives is free to new members.

Check one: \_\_New Member \_\_Renewing Member \_\_Additional contribution, \$ \_\_\_\_\_

All contributions are tax-deductible.

I know an organization that may join the

CCCT \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail

P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20824