



THE CRESCENT

THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

Fall 2000

Vol. XI No. 3

Trestle on Track for a Spring 2002 Opening

On August 16, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail representatives met with Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) staff to discuss plans for opening the trestle over Rock Creek Park for trail use. DPWT is planning to do the trestle rehabilitation as a "design-build" project, meaning that a construction firm will handle the design and implementation as a contractor to the Department. The DPWT staff want to get a contract in place before the end of this fiscal year June 30, 2001. Design and construction could be completed by Spring 2002.

DPWT is planning to specify that two 12-foot wide prefabricated bridge sections be used to replace all of the existing wood structure. The DPWT staff do not feel comfortable using the current wood structure, mainly out of concern about kids climbing on it and liability if it should fail. CCCT asked if the DPWT could specify a 14-foot width and a preference for an asphalt or concrete deck, with the 12-foot width and wood deck DPWT is proposing as a fallback only if necessary to come in within budget. In response, the DPWT staff expressed concerns about whether the wider width and asphalt or concrete deck will be possible, given the length of span. As for using a new steel support substructure to reduce span length, DPWT is concerned that any new substructure would trigger a time-consuming permit requirement because of the resulting construction in Rock Creek Park, which is administered by the National Parks Service.

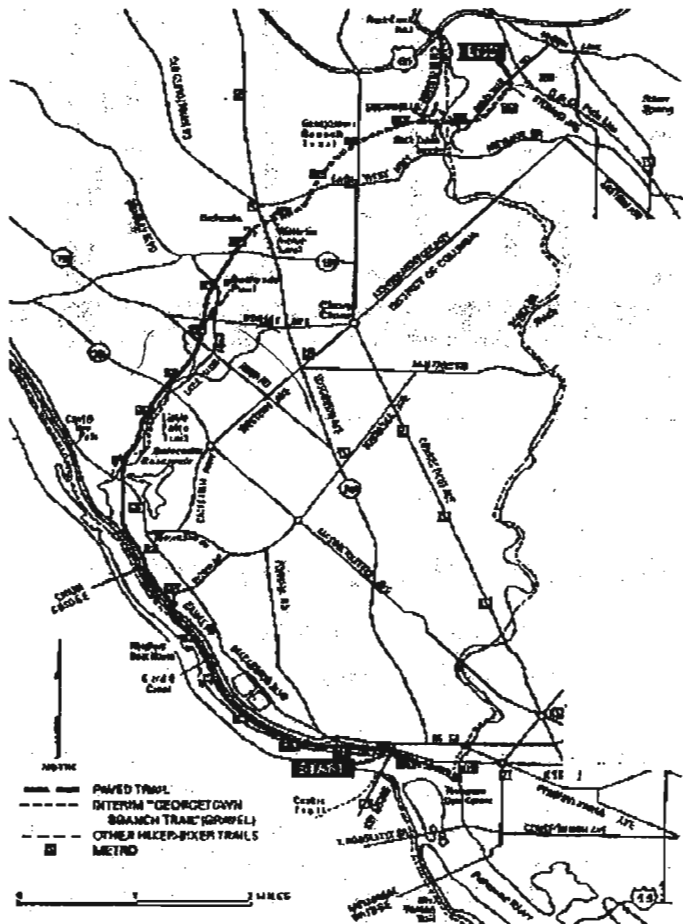


From the treetops, the deck of the Rock Creek Trestle.

DPWT does not plan to correct the "blind curve" on the Rock Creek Trail below the trestle as part of the project, partly out of concern about the project's budget and the permit process. Instead, DPWT recommended that the County's Parks Department address that as a separate project to avoid putting the trestle project at risk.

**Find out more! Visit:
www.cctrail.org**

continues on page 4



CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL
District of Columbia & Montgomery County, Md.

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www.cctrail.org
for trail updates
and events.

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. 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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We request that all entries should be sent to the post office box listed above. Submissions should be sent on 3.5" diskette Word 97 or lower, or via e-mail to: john_campanile@paramount.com.

ALERT TO MEMBERS:

Capital Crescent Trail Closed for a Marathon on Sunday, November 5.

The Georgetown Branch Trail and the Montgomery County section of the Capital Crescent Trail was reserved for the exclusive use of registered marathon racers on Sunday, November 5, from 9:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. The Montgomery Parks Foundation and the Montgomery County Road Runners Club hosted the race, called Montgomery County Marathon in the Parks. Runners entered the Georgetown Branch Trail at Jones Bridge Road and ran west through Bethesda on the CCT to a turn around at the D.C. line (Dalecarlia Reservoir), then returned on the Trail to the finish line in Bethesda. Anyone other than registered runners who attempted to use the trail during this time period was turned away.

The CCCT was not consulted when the marathon was being planned. We were informed the CCT would be closed only in recent months, long after event organizers were fully committed to the event. Our initial reaction was to be supportive of the event and to welcome the attention the event brings to the Trail. Runners and joggers are welcome users of the Capital Crescent Trail, and the Montgomery County Road Runners Club is a valued CCCT Affiliate Organization. But as we became more aware of all that was involved, we reluctantly concluded that closing the Trail for any special event is not an idea we should endorse, regardless of how worthy the organization or the cause. A very popular, multi-use, rail-trail in an urban environment, such as the CCT, has unique characteristics that make it extremely difficult to successfully manage a full closure. It is virtually impossible to get the word out widely enough so that large numbers of trail users do not come expecting to use the Trail, only to be turned away greatly inconvenienced and with no suitable alternatives. It is also virtually impossible to monitor and close all of the hundreds of informal

access points along the Trail length, to prevent non-participants from entering the Trail and creating numerous conflicts with racers.

We can learn much from the experiences and practice of the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail. The W&OD is the trail in the D.C. Metropolitan area most similar in character to the CCT. After several bad experiences with attempts to close that trail in its early years, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority follows a policy of almost never closing the W&OD Trail for special events. The only exceptions are for local festivals in Vienna and Herndon, and in those cases short bypasses are provided for trail users. Special events which do not close the trail are permitted on the W&OD Trail, provided their size and nature can be managed well enough to share the trail reasonably well.

In coming months the CCCT will be calling on the agencies that manage the CCT to develop a consistent shared-use policy for special events



A five-mile section of the Capital Crescent Trail will be closed November 5 between Jones Mill Road and the Dalecarlia Reservoir.

similar to that of the W&OD Trail. We believe the reality of the difficulties associated with any complete Trail closure will overwhelm the good intentions and best efforts of even the most worthy event sponsors.

Note from the Chair:

As this newsletter is going to press, the Director of Marathon in the Parks is coming forward to assert that he never told the CCCT Board the trails would be closed, and that trail users will not be turned away on race day. We stand on the record regarding what we were told, but welcome any movement away from closing the CCT for the race. However, 1000 competitive runners will cause an effective, if not formal, closure of the CCT. We will continue to ask the agencies that manage to CCT to develop a consistent special events policy that will not permit any event that seriously interferes with normal Trail uses.

- Wayne Phyllaier

continued from page 1

The County renovation contracting process is going to be very complicated because of the political, procedural, engineering and site issues affecting the process. Because there are interests that would like to see this effort falter, it is important to insure this important trail connection to Silver Spring is made by pushing DPWT to move forward expeditiously. CCCT is reiterating our common primary goal of getting a contract in place that commits funds by the end of the fiscal year, and completing a good rehabilitation as soon as possible and within budget. Within those constraints, we will work for a 14-foot wide deck, and for an asphalt or concrete surface.



The trestle's wood support beams and columns on its east side (left) and the steel support on its west end (right).

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 filing in our designation number on your pledge form.

.....
● **Let's Keep It Green - - and Clean!**
● The Capital Crescent Trail is beautiful and has been nearly litter-free. The National Park Service and the Montgomery County Departments of Parks and of Transportation have no regularly scheduled clean-ups of the Trail, due to personnel limitations. There are a number of unsung heroes who pick up litter on a regular basis, and they do a great service to the beauty and maintenance of the Trail. Those efforts are very much appreciated.
● Carrying a plastic grocery bag with you when you're out on the Trail and taking your trash with you makes their efforts easier.
●

CORRECTION:
The photo caption on page 6 of our Summer 2000 newsletter should not have used the term "abandoned." The caption should read as follows (with the correct term underlined):
"From the Talbot Street Bridge in Silver Spring, the former Georgetown Branch Rail Line "branches" to the left of the CSX mainline."

ACTION ALERT for the Metropolitan Branch Trail

The DC Office of Planning is conducting a Small Area Plan for Takoma, DC including the Metro property (park) in front of the station that Metro has agreed to sell for townhouse development. City officials need to hear from trail supporters on why we want/need the Metropolitan Branch Trail in this area.

The Metropolitan Branch Trail will ultimately be an eight-mile linear park and trail running parallel to Metrorail's Red Line from Union Station in Washington, D.C. to Silver Spring, Maryland, connecting to the (future) **Capital Crescent Trail**. Once completed, the Met Branch will become part of a 25-mile "bicycle beltway" which will include the Capital Crescent Trail and the National Mall in downtown D.C. Northeast Washington currently lacks a good commuting and recreational greenway and the Met Branch will fill this need.

The preferred alignment for the trail is adjacent to the railroad tracks from Takoma Avenue in Takoma Park to Vine Street in DC. This alignment will require a bridge over Piney Branch Road and a bridge over Carroll Avenue, and other structures. It will also require acquisition of easements to cross the back edges of four private properties, and design integration into the site plan created for the redevelopment of the Metro station property.

This alignment is preferred because an on street option will not work. Eastern Avenue does not have sufficient street width to accommodate any configuration of a bicycle facility (bike lanes, shoulders or wide outside lanes) that meets established guidelines. The street is only 26 feet wide between the curbs with approx. six-foot sidewalks on each side; and adjacent land uses make widening the road impossible.

Office of Planning Public Meetings are slated for Wednesday, October 18 and November 15 at 7pm — Site TBA.

For More Information, call Paul Meijer, Co-Chair of CMBT 202-726-7364 or WABA office 202-628-2500



Last summer, Montgomery County Parks coordinated graffiti removal operations at the Dalecarlia Tunnel. The CCCT met with Parks officials to discuss the best way to remove graffiti. Power washing was rejected as being potentially too damaging to the old mortar joints, so crews did their best with wire brushing. Other approaches to removing graffiti are being researched.

Along the Trail...

5 Years Ago...

Trail right-of-way is blocked by chain link fence installed at Dalecarlia facility in anticipation of bridge construction. CCCT, with help from offices of Senator Sarbanes, Congresswoman Connie Morella and other area officials, meets with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Dalecarlia to discuss reopening the Trail. Trail passage is restored within three days (October).

10 Years Ago...

CCCT organizes Trail Prep/Maintenance Committee to conduct regular trail clearing and litter pick-up, keeping the Trail open in the mind of the public despite lack of on-the-ground progress (December)

15 Years Ago...

Last trail runs to Georgetown as trucks replace rail for hauling coal to Georgetown heating plant.

108 Years Ago...

An all-wood trestle, 1400 feet long and 67 feet high, is built to carry the Georgetown Branch Line across Rock Creek (the Rock Creek Trestle is expected to reopen for trail use in the Spring of 2002).

Letters to CCCT

To: John Campanile, Editor
The Crescent

On behalf of the People's Alliance for Rock Creek (PARC), I feel compelled to respond to L. Stalter's letter (The Crescent, Summer 2000) questioning CCCT's support for weekday auto-free zones on upper Beach Drive in DC. CCCT is a valued member of our alliance and for good reason: When combined with Rock Creek Park's trails and roadways, the CCT forms a 23-mile loop that is virtually auto-free — but only on weekends. Imagine having a recreational resource like that every day of the week!

It's true that biking to work is impractical for many; one reason is that the only flat north-south route from Montgomery County to downtown DC has been turned into a high-speed commuter artery — even though it's a national park!

— Far from carrying hundreds of thousands of commuters daily as Stalter suggests, that windy, single lane of upper Beach Drive actually carries no more than 4500. That increment of traffic could easily be absorbed on neighboring arteries and Metro. In fact, in 1990, three times that volume was accommodated without incident when the Zoo Tunnel was closed for five months for repairs.

CCCT members should be comforted to know that the organization's funds aren't being "diverted" into the Rock Creek Park campaign. PARC raises its own money and receives only token support from member organizations like CCCT.

Rock Creek Park is more than just a way to get to work. It's a place where tens of thousands of Washingtonians come to hear the birds and the rushing creek in the middle of our nation's capital. There's no need to sacrifice our sacred places so that harried commuters can enjoy their drive to work. We welcome the enthusiastic support we've received from CCCT members to help make Rock Creek Park a REAL park — seven days a week!

Rick Morgan
Coordinator
People's Alliance for Rock Creek
www.waba.org/wabadocs/parc.htm

You Can Go Home Again

I live in Denver and get to Washington, D.C. about once a month. I love the Capital Crescent Trail and the places that it takes me. It reminds me of home. During my week in D.C., I look forward to being on the Trail each and every day.

Jim Hill
Denver, Colorado

Walk the Walk

Thank you for mailing me the map of the Capital Crescent Trail. Last Saturday (October 7) I finally hiked the Trail, from Silver Spring to Thompson's Boathouse, then on to Hains Point, and along the Mall to the National Gallery of Art.

Quite an adventure for a 70 year old retiree!

Carl Croneberg
Silver Spring

Yes! I want to help complete the Capital Crescent Trail and make it safer and more pleasant to use!

Name(s) _____ (H) _____ (W) _____
 Address _____ Apt. _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-mail _____
 ___ New Member ___ Renewing Member

Individual Contributions:

- ___ **Basic Individual** \$10, includes newsletter subscription, action alerts.
- ___ **Sustaining** \$30, includes newsletter subscription, action alerts.
- ___ **Sponsoring** \$60, newsletter subscription, action alerts, and T-shirt (IF DESIRED), PLEASE CIRCLE Size M L XL)
- ___ **Special Honor Membership** \$100, recognition in our annual report, newsletter subscription, action alerts, and commemorative rail spike (IF DESIRED ___ YES) OR T-shirt (IF DESIRED, PLEASE CIRCLE Size M L XL)

NEW category! Organizational / Business Contributions:

___ **Basic**, \$200 (*Crescent* sent to up to 3 individuals; recognition in *Crescent*)

___ **Sustaining** \$500+ (*Crescent* sent to up to 15 individuals; recognition in *Crescent*, constant recognition on CCCT website with link.

Membership is good for one year from the 15th day of the month that you join.
 Make checks payable to: The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20824
 Detailed four-color map of the Capital Crescent Trail with historical perspectives is free to new members

We are an all-volunteer organization. ___ I am interested in volunteering, contact me for:
 ___ Advocacy ___ Events ___ Trail Maintenance

Thanks for your efforts on behalf of the Trail Here's an additional contribution of \$_____
 We do not share our membership list with any organization except our affiliate organization, the Washington Area Bicyclist Association.
 CCCT is exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code and is qualified to receive tax-deductible contributions.
VISIT OUR WEB SITE, www.cctrail.org, FOR ACTION ALERTS AND TRAIL UPDATES.

DIAL UP TRAIL CONDITIONS AND EVENTS

Be the Coalition's eyes and ears the next time you're out on the Trail – Call the CCCT Information Line at **202-234-4874** and press box "8." Leave a message on trail conditions you've encountered, or on any issue which might impact the Trail. The hotline message provides trail users with weekly updates on trail conditions and Coalition events.

If you're new to the Capital Crescent Trail, leave your name and address to receive a membership brochure and our latest newsletter. After consideration, we hope you'll support the CCT and become a member of the Coalition.

CCCT INFORMATION LINE, 202-234-4874

Use your touch-tone phone to access one of our mailboxes:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1: Background of the CCT | 5: Volunteer activities |
| 2: Coalition meeting dates | 6: Other messages |
| 3: Membership information | 7: [Inactive] |
| 4: Obtain a CCT map | 8: Trail hotline & events |

Montgomery County Parks has undertaken landscaping work along its portion of the Trail from Bethesda Avenue to the Maryland-D.C. line. New construction includes an information kiosk near the Bethesda Avenue trailhead, partially funded by the CCCT





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The East Bethesda Civic Association, led by resident Curtis Oliver with assistance from Boy Scout Troop 204, made improvements to the Kentbury Avenue access path to the Georgetown Branch/Capital Crescent Trail



Summer storms took their toll on trees. Heavy rains and winds felled this one, located near Connecticut Avenue, in July.