

# THE CRESCENT

THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

Fall 2001

Vol. XI No. 6

## CCCT Pledges \$55,000 for the Rock Creek Trestle

*Montgomery County officials, responding to a pledge organized by the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, have agreed to build a scenic overlook on the Rock Creek Trestle; Pledge represents the largest financial contribution by the CCCT.*

*By Wayne Phyllaier, for the CCCT board*

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail has been leading a strong advocacy campaign to open the trestle over Rock Creek for Trail use. The trestle is vital to joining the Chevy Chase and Silver Spring sections of the Georgetown Branch Trail (aka, the future Capital Crescent Trail).



*Survey stake marks the start of the construction phase for the Rock Creek trestle.*

We are very pleased that the Montgomery County Department of Public Works & Transportation signed a design-build contract with Cherry Hill Construction in June 2001. The contract calls for the existing trestle superstructure to be replaced by two prefabricated bridge sections. The two bridge sections will be supported by the existing steel substructure. Much of the current wooden truss substructure will remain for architectural purposes. The bridge deck will be wood, with a 12' clear width. The contractor has begun work, and the trestle will be opened by the end of January 2003.

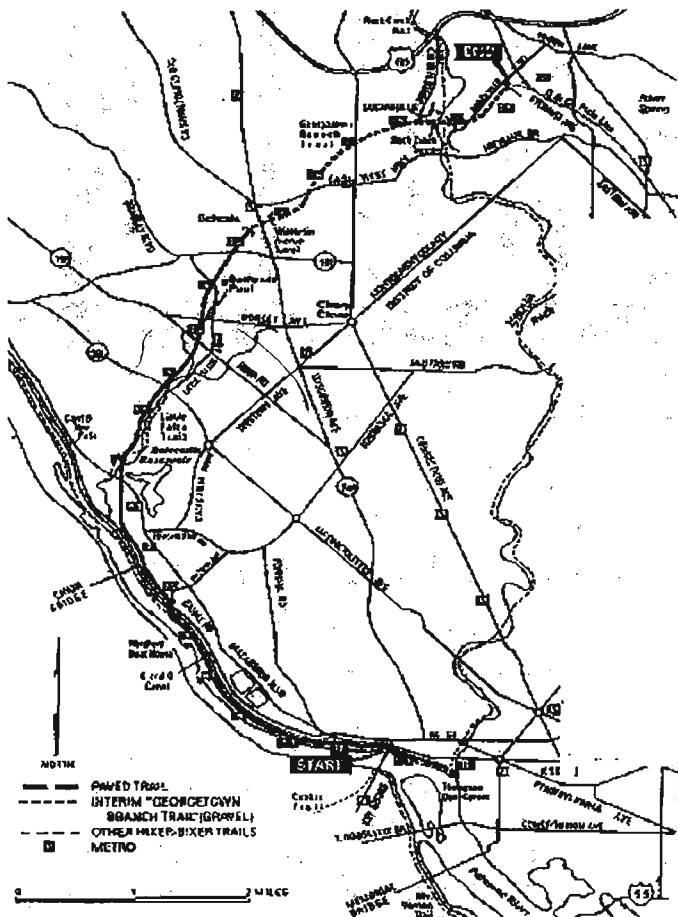
CCCT asked DPWT to provide as good a quality bridge as possible, within its allowable budget. Unfortunately, the funds appropriated for the bridge permitted a contract for a bridge deck that is only 12' wide. Other bridges on the CCT are at least 14' wide, the minimum width recommended by the nationally recognized AASHTO standards for a shared use trail. This substandard bridge width will create conflicts between trail users on the trestle during busy periods unless some action is taken. Trail users will wish to stop and take in the view at mid-span, and will obstruct other trail users if there is no safe place to pull over.

DPWT has been very helpful in working with us to explore possibilities for removing this likely conflict. A solution that is affordable is to provide a scenic or observation deck at mid-span to provide trail users a safe place to take in the view. The contractor has prepared a preliminary design that would have an approximately 30' long by 22'

*Continued on page 6*

### Trail funding decisions are being made now!

It's time to let public officials know that you want the Capital Crescent Trail finished and maintained. See page 3.



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

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*CCT River Road bridge, September 17, 2001*

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for trail updates  
and events.

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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](mailto:john_campanile@paramount.com).

## Trail Funding Decisions Are Being Made Now!

*Now is the best time to let your public officials know you want the Capital Crescent Trail to be finished and maintained.*

County Executive Doug Duncan is now preparing the budget request for the six year Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) for FY03-08. In January he will submit his proposed budget to the County Council for consideration and approval by late spring. Both the Executive and the County Council are requesting citizen input now. It will be two years before the CIP budget will be considered again.

CCCT has written to county officials requesting strong funding for the Capital Crescent Trail. Early informal responses from some officials were positive, but more recent responses have been noncommittal. County officials are expecting a very tight budget year. CCCT will continue to testify and write in support of strong funding. But input from individuals is extremely important – public officials watch their mail closely to gauge the level of “grass roots” support, *i.e.* votes, for any issue. This will be especially important in this tight budget year where many interests are competing for limited funds.

When the trestle is opened in a little over a year, the Interim Trail will be continuous to Stewart Avenue, at Silver Spring’s doorstep. But there are currently no funds programmed for further development of the CCT. At present the only access at the east end of the Trail at Stewart Avenue is a dangerous on-road route on busy Brookville Road. The Trail Facility Plan, which has recently been approved by the Planning Board, recommends taking the access route off Brookville Road immediately. To do this it recommends access trails to the Rosemary Hills Recreational Center along Lyttonsville Place and to Talbot Avenue from Stewart Avenue. Safety improvements are badly needed for the Jones Bridge Road trail crossing. These projects will give safe trail access to Silver Spring and should be implemented immediately. **If funds are not approved now, it will be much like building a parkway with no on or off ramps at its end – you can see it from the community but you can’t get to it.** Projects to complete the Interim Trail into downtown Silver Spring should follow, as outlined in the Trail Facility Plan.

Please write in support of strong funding for parks and trails, and especially for funding to continue developing the Capital Crescent Trail. Letters are more effective than e-mail, but any contact will help. Let your officials know how good parks and trails are central to our quality of life, and that they deserve strong support in the budget. Point out that the access trails will cost a small fraction of the investment that has been made in the rest of the Trail, and that without them Silver Spring is effectively denied access to the Trail. Ask them to take the next step and give the citizens of Silver Spring safe access to the superb regional trail that is now at their doorstep.

**Note:** Send a copy of your letter or e-mail to the CCCT; see page 2 for addresses.

### Contact:

**Mr. Doug Duncan**

County Executive  
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Rockville, MD 20850

phone: 240-777-2500

fax: 240-777-2517

e-mail: Douglas.Duncan@co.mo.md.us

**Mr. Blair Ewing, President**

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Rockville, MD 20850

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e-mail: county.council@co.mo.md.us



This fall, please designate

### **The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail**

In the 2001 United Way/Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) of the National Capital Area.

**CCCT's CFC number is 7221.**

**Our thanks for supporting the Trail and the CCCT!**

## Feedback

Our summer issue's article on trail safety ("*Trail Advocates Plead for Good Behavior*," page 6) has generated an unusual number of responses from CCCT members. These are a few samples.

### Excessive Speed = Serious Injuries

I read with interest your recent article about dangerous bike riding on the CCT. Too-fast riding on the trail near pedestrians and verbally abusing them is certainly a problem. Another one is walkers three abreast even for slower riders like me, especially when riders coming the other way are passing and crossing the middle line. The most scary riding I have encountered is bikers passing me on the right especially when doing so without verbally signaling. I am more than willing to move over to the right edge of the pavement - although sometimes these riders are off the pavement. I have a good rearview mirror, but can only see bikers approaching me on the left side.

The other dangerous behavior is bikers passing from behind on the uphill grade and getting into the wrong lane. A person on the downhill grade has no warning that he/she is going to be hit by someone who is unseen. Last year, I was injured while suddenly avoiding such a passer on the CCT. I ride the CCT with extreme caution when it's crowded. On these days, I often find it more attractive and relaxing to ride a not-too-heavily traveled highway. Even riding Connecticut Avenue in the early weekend hours is more pleasant. At least, cars don't try to pass on the right and usually do not go over the middle line coming from the opposite direction.

Perhaps certain bicyclists are willing to risk a bike-to-bike crash or they believe everyone should watch out for them.

Janet L. Williams - (via e-mail)

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I just read your summer newsletter issue in which you printed two items related to speeding cyclists. Those may have been close calls but my story illustrates how serious the situation can be: I have a broken hip.

I'm a 59 year old experienced cyclist. On May 30, an unbusy Wednesday, at about 11:45 am. I was turning onto the Trail from Dorset Ave. heading toward DC. The next thing I knew I was in a rescue squad truck heading to Suburban Hospital. As far as I can tell, the other guy must have tried to pass me on the right at a high rate of speed, collided with me and sent me flying. He must have been going fast because it all happened so suddenly. Fortunately, he stayed around long enough to either personally call, or get someone else to call, the rescue squad but not long enough to talk to the police officer (who showed up quickly at 12:20) and identify himself. (The other cyclist wasn't hurt so the rescue squad didn't bother with him.)

So this totally avoidable accident resulted in a broken hip, a 3 day hospital stay with surgery, a long recovery period and cost me a substantial amount of money. Fortunately, the orthopedist thinks the recovery will be complete but might take 9 months. In the meantime, I'm still on crutches.

I wish I knew how to change bicyclists' behavior. The urge to ride fast on a smooth, level path is irresistible (I've also succumbed to that urge) and I don't think signs and lots of talk are going to have any effect. But if we can at least get people to NEVER pass on the right, and be extra alert as they pass on the left, it may spare someone else a tragic story.

Bob Bein - (via e-mail)

*Ms. Williams & Mr. Bein: On behalf of the CCCT Board, we are very sorry to hear about your injuries. Thank you for sharing the information with us. It seems as though the CCCT's long, flat straightaways and sightlines makes some feel as though they have a "license to" speed. We share your pessimism that we will be able to much change trail user's behavior. But we have to try, and perhaps we can use accident reports like these (and the suggestions offered in the letter that follows) to get people's attention.*

*For our part, the CCCT will continue to work with the Trail's managing agencies to address safety concerns and a common-sense approach to courtesy. Some of the safety-related signs that you see along the CCT have been placed there by Coalition volunteers. In addition, the Coalition periodically sponsors safety events along the trail by installing bells on bicycles and giving whistles to rollerbladers. Our objective in these "Bells & Whistles" events is to drive home the need for safe and courteous behavior on this or any other trail.*

*The CCCT has and will continue to advocate for the responsible use of this mixed-use, hiker-biker trail, and will pursue every opportunity to send that message to all trail users.*

*Wayne Phyllaier, Chair*

*John Campanile, Vice-Chair*

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Although I realize that the next issue of *The Crescent* won't be published until the end of the summer crunch, I wanted to offer some suggestions for CCT users. I have used the trail almost daily as my primary commuter route for two years, and I believe these observations can be helpful.

1. For everyone: Stay as far to the right as practical at all times. Move left to pass slower moving users, then promptly move right again. This is the same way we're supposed to drive on the Beltway, but no one does!
2. Runners: If you must use headphones, be sure you can hear others coming from behind. It does no good to signal by voice or bell if you can't hear me.
3. Rollerbladers: Use short, controlled strides. Using the centerline creates a hazard for everyone. Also, I know from experience that it takes less energy to maintain a short stride.

4. Bikers: The CCT is no place for Tour de France time trials. Fast riding invites collisions (*The speed limit on the CCT is 15 m.p.h., less when the trail is congested. – Editor*). Also, please don't try to shoot through those little gaps between trail users – it's alarming to everyone involved.

These are simple suggestions that could help the situation.

Matthew S. Cottle, Potomac, Md. - (via e-mail)

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## To Pave or Not to Pave

Thanks for providing such a nice website for the Capital Crescent Trail. When will the Georgetown Branch portion be paved between Bethesda and Silver Spring? While I understand the reasons for paving it, I also enjoy the "wild" state of the trail as it is today.

Thanks and congratulations on obtaining funding for the trestle,  
Steve Gass - (via e-mail)

*Mr. Gass: Thanks for your input. There are no plans to pave the whole Georgetown Branch Trail before the decision on the transitway use of the corridor is made. There is some discussion of paving a short section at the east end where the erosion problem is especially severe, as a "temporary asphalt" surface to stop the erosion. But even that is considered controversial and may not be done in advance of the transitway decision. That decision may be many years away. So the "wild state" you enjoy may be around for a while.*

## Another Water Source

I ran your trail today for the first time - Bethesda pool to mile 10.5, and back - and it was wonderful. Thanks - I'll be donating soon. I found another source of water you might want to list. At Jack's Boats there is a spigot with treated city water, near the little hut with the soda machines. As far as I could tell, except for the bubbler at mile 6.5 (Dalecarlia), this is the easiest access to water on the trail. It's great for refilling a water bottle, but not as good for mouth drinking as it gushes out.

Andy Beaulieu - (via e-mail)

## Improve Trail Access

I work at an organization right off the Trail — next to the Big Wheel Bike store in Bethesda (Arlington Road and Bradley Blvd.). A number of our staff use the trail to get to work and during the day - both as walkers and bikers. Unfortunately, the access to the trail from the rear of our building is very dangerous — a slippery slope full of tree roots and loose rocks. We have had several bad accidents, due to the condition of the slope.

How can we have a ramp or steps installed from the trail to the ground below to provide safe access? Our property management company would need to be involved but before I contact them, I would like to know what procedure I need to follow to get permission, from either the Coalition or Montgomery County Parks, and who to contact about this suggestion.

Thanks for any assistance you can provide in this matter.

Kathryn Dorko - Bethesda (via e-mail)

*Ms. Dorko:*

*The good news about access to the CCT from your building is that the Mont. Co. Parks Department has already taken this on. The County's project supervisor has had a good set of plans developed for two access ramps at that location - one from the north side of the Bradley Blvd. sidewalk, and another from directly behind the building. CCCT has seen those plans and finds them to be very attractive. MoCo Parks has applied for funding for construction, and we thought that funding would be available to begin construction very soon.*

*The bad news is we learned from MoCo Parks within the last month that the funding, ACCESS 2000 funding from the State of Md., has been cut from the budget. They are now seeking other sources of funding. The status is uncertain.*

*We will continue to follow this.*

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I'm planning to start commuting from Bethesda to D.C. this fall using the trail. I was wondering whether you had crime statistics for the trail and its use after dark. I'm used to nighttime commuting (I ride with high-energy halogen headlights and reflective doodads), but I'm new to the area and am unfamiliar with the trail's reputation.

Bill Huie - (via e-mail)

*We do not have any statistics on crime on the CCT after dark, but the general reputation is good for commuters. There are a fair number of commuters on the trail after dark, and the Parks Dept. has made an exception to its general rule of closing parks after dark. The biggest problem that the CCCT has heard about is avoiding bicyclists and runners who are not carrying lights/reflective clothing. But, if you have a good lighting system and use reasonable caution you should have a good commuting experience.*



*Rough access to the CCT from Bradley Blvd.*

Wouldn't it be great to have bike pools meet early mornings at the head of the trail in Bethesda to commute into D.C.? I would like to commute on bike or rollerblades for some time, but I'm concerned about safety. I'll bet others feel this way too. It would be a great if the Coalition sets up a program whereby people could hook up to commute together as a group. Please consider.

G. Buckley - (via e-mail)

*It has been considered, and implemented! But not by the CCCT – the Washington Area Bicyclist Association has a page on its web site (waba.org) called the Bicycle Commuter Assistance Program. However, if readers are interested in forming a "Capital Crescent Commuter Club", please drop us a message on our hotline, 202-234-4874, mailbox 8, or by e-mail: [contact@cctrail.org](mailto:contact@cctrail.org). ATTN: CCCT newsletter editor John Campanile.*

We welcome comments from our readers. Write or e-mail to The Crescent, c/o CCCT, P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, Md.; [contact@cctrail.org](mailto:contact@cctrail.org).

### **CCCT Pledges \$55,000 for the Rock Creek Trestle - continued from page 1**

wide deck near midspan directly over Rock Creek. This would give a 5' pullout area to either side of a center 12' wide through trail. With these "scenic pullouts," much of the conflict between recreational trail users stopping to take in the view and more purposeful through trail users will be removed. This will do much to compensate for the substandard width of the rest of the bridge span. Having a safe observation area will increase the attraction of the bridge itself as a park destination.



*The trestle wood substructure will remain for historic and architectural purposes.*

DPWT recognizes this is a desirable design change, but cannot carry all of the cost increase. But if the CCCT can come up with half of the additional cost, then DPWT can absorb the balance of the additional cost from internal funds. We have decided to rise to the challenge. We are reaching deep into our pockets to fund this project, and have asked several of our affiliate organizations to help as well. In an August 4, 2001 letter to DPWT, CCCT joined with the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Coalition and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association to pledge financial support for the observation deck. CCCT pledged \$55,000, GB-CCC pledged \$20,000, and WABA pledged \$2500, to be given to Montgomery County by March 2002. Together, these pledges represent slightly more than half the additional cost of the observation deck and are a convincing demonstration of our community support for this project. DPWT officials have accepted this pledge, and have ordered the contractor to include the observation deck in the design.

The trestle is 280' long and stands 70' above Rock Creek in Rock Creek Park. When it is opened for trail users it will replace a hilly and circuitous on-road trail detour. It will also provide good views of the Rock Creek stream valley

from above. It will be one of the most attractive and well-known features on the Capital Crescent Trail.

This commitment will be the largest financial contribution CCCT has ever made to any single Trail project – larger than the approximately \$45,000 we donated for improved lighting in the Air Rights Tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue several years ago. This trestle upgrade is important for both trail safety and enjoyment. Amenities such as these make the difference between a tolerable trail and a trail that we all can enjoy using and would not happen without your support. We are fortunate to have many generous members so that we are able to do this, but nonetheless this donation will seriously weaken our financial position. CCCT members will receive a fund-raising letter later this year. We are thankful for the many generous contributions we have received in the past and hope you will continue your support, so that CCCT can recover our financial footing and be able to continue providing these Trail amenities.

## **DIAL UP TRAIL CONDITIONS AND EVENTS**

**We can't be everywhere!** So 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 |

## Along the Trail...

### 5 years ago...

Trail bridges at Dalecarlia and River Road are completed and dedicated (December).

### 9 years ago...

First CCCT Triathlon held; starts at Potomac Avenue with a one-mile run to Fletchers Boathouse, two-mile canoe to Thompson's Boathouse, 14-mile bike ride to Connecticut Avenue via Rock Creek Park, and five-mile run/walk back to start. Sixteen start and sixteen finish, the winner completing the course in under three hours (October).

### 20 years ago...

Smithsonian Institution celebrates the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic John Bull steam locomotive by running one up and down the spur from Georgetown to Chain Bridge.

### 91 years ago...

Georgetown Branch Line completed from Silver Spring to Georgetown, carrying building supplies and coal to Capital Traction Company's central power house in Georgetown.

## Litter Begets Litter


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 cleanups of the Trail, due to personnel limitations.

Therefore, it bears repeating: Litter begets litter. 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.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All events are rain or shine, unless noted. To confirm any CCCT event, call the Events Hotline, **202-234-4874, box 8, or on the web: [www.cctrail.org](http://www.cctrail.org).**

 **CCCT MONTHLY BOARD MEETING**, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Lane, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Bethesda; location is one block west of Bethesda Metro, at the corner of Old Georgetown Rd. and Edgemoor. Meeting begins at 7 p.m.

**Mondays, October 8, November 5, December 10, January 14, February 11 and March 11**

**Sunday, November 18** – Second annual *Marathon In The Parks*. 2000 runners are expected to participate. The final miles of the marathon will be on the Georgetown Branch Trail and the finish line will be on Woodmont Avenue near Bethesda Avenue. The CCT will be open to all trail users during the race, but the Trail will be crowded with runners from mid-morning until early afternoon. Please use care and show courtesy to the marathon participants. Sponsored by Montgomery County Parks Foundation and the Montgomery County Road Runners Club; [www.marathonintheparks.com](http://www.marathonintheparks.com).



P.O. Box 30703  
Bethesda, MD 20824

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**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)

**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](http://www.cctrail.org), FOR ACTION ALERTS AND TRAIL UPDATES.**