The Capital Crescent Trail

A NATURAL ADDITION TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL SPRING 1991

Despite the cloudy weather, more than 50 enthusiastic CCCT supporters showed up on May 18 to hike five miles of the trail from the Bethesda Pool to the Silver Spring Metro station. The hard work of CCCT's Trail Corridor Stewards Committee, which has consistently cleared the trail of fallen trees, weeds and other debris, made the hike an enjoyable one. (Photo by Henri Bartholomot).

CCCT: A Capital Commuting Link

By Jennifer Longsworth

The Capital Crescent Trail will fill a big gap in recreational opportunities at a time when lower Montgomery County has a shortage of park areas. Everyone needs a close-to-home place where the only sounds are those of the birds chirping, children playing and people walking, talking, biking or wheeling.

In addition to the exciting recreational benefits, the trail will provide another resource to the community: a transportation alternative for local needs. The trail will offer a direct path to the local grocery store or library and will serve as a daily commuting route to work or as a shortcut to two Metro stations.

The trail could ease problems that create a demand for highway expansion, which in turn increases congestion, development and pollution. The rising cost of parking, the difficulty in finding spaces, congested roads and soaring gasoline prices, make an alternative to the automobile a desirable feature of the trail.

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$80,000 Set For Trail Design, Plan

The Montgomery County Council took an exciting first step toward getting the Capital Crescent Trail on the ground when it approved $80,000 to plan and design parts of the trail.

"This is quite a victory for the trail," said CCCT Chairman Henri Bartholomot, noting that the Council has been struggling to bring spending in line with an anticipated decline in revenue. "We are very pleased that the Council decided to approve these funds for the trail."

The County Park and Planning Department will use the money, approved May 15, to develop a concept plan for the trail from Bethesda to the District line and to create actual design and construction plans for the section from Bethesda Avenue to Little Falls Parkway.

This marks the first time the Council has funded design and planning work in anticipation of getting a trail on the ground.

Councilmember Betty Ann Krahne and Peggy Fitzgerald-Bare, a staffer for Bruce Adams, were at CCCT's May 18th rally to underscore the importance of this new development. Each made a short statement in support of the trail and the Coalition's efforts.

CCCT plans to work closely with the Park and Planning Department to see that the funds, which will become available July 1, are put to the best possible use.
HELP WANTED: CCCT VOLUNTEERS

The Capital Crescent Trail won't just happen. It needs the support of dedicated volunteers—like you.

We are launching a new volunteer program, and whether you have one hour or 100 hours to donate, we can use your help!

If you have already indicated an interest in volunteering for the Coalition, Margaret Marchak will be getting in touch with you in the near future.

If you haven't yet gotten involved, perhaps some of the opportunities listed below will be of interest to you. We have indicated what the job entails and the approximate amount of time it will involve.

Call the office at 202-234-4874 to volunteer—we look forward to hearing from you!

Community Outreach

Legislative Liaison (2 hours initially, 4 hours/month): Track Montgomery County legislation relating to trail; work with chair to coordinate letter-writing and testimonies.

Bureaucratic Liaisons (4 hours/month): Work with specific officials in Montgomery County or the National Park Service, tracking the trail's progress and relaying the concerns of CCCT.

Speakers (4 hours initial training, 4 hours every 2 months): Work with our consulting firm speaking to community groups.

Information Coordinator (5 hours/week initially until information compiled, as needed thereafter): Work with our consulting firm to pull together a resource packet to address community concerns.

Tables Coordinator (several hours/month in Spring & Summer): Coordinate CCCT representation at various community events.

Table Sitters (2-3 hours/month): Answer questions and collect names at outdoor community events.

Store Liaison Coordinator (10 hours initially, upkeep thereafter): Contact list of friendly stores to be sure they have CCCT literature in stock. Deliver brochures, posters, etc., as needed.

Table Sitter (1 hour/month): Contact neighborhood store to ask if CCCT materials can be posted, keep store stocked.

Slide Show Speakers (4 hours every 3 months): Present slide show to organizations as requested, answer questions of group.

Fundraising

Raffle Ticket Sellers (anywhere from 1 hour/week to 15 hours/week until October): Sell tickets and provide information at retail outlets in D.C. area.

Writers (once a year): Write a fundraising letter (membership, acquisition or appeal) on the Coalition's behalf.

List Recruiter (10 hours in August): Contact area organizations to see if they will lend us their mailing list.

Win Great Prizes!

Coalition Launches '91 Raffle

The Coalition's biggest and best raffle ever is now underway!

More than 25 excellent prizes will be given away in this year's raffle, including a Miyata Triple Cross Bicycle, an exercise bike, rollerblades, two nights at a bed-and-breakfast, an airplane flight for two, a tent and an ice cream party for your office.

Tickets are selling for a mere $2 each or three for $5 and the drawing will be held October 30. Buy your own tickets early and often, and make plans to sell them to friends, family and co-workers.

You can also join other CCCT volunteers, who will be setting up tables outside of some D.C. area retailers to sell tickets to the general public. Over the last three years, CCCT volunteers have sold thousands of raffle tickets this way and have had lots of fun doing it.

Prizes also will be awarded to top ticket sellers.

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail depends on income from this raffle for its survival, so please plan to buy and sell lots of tickets!

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Stay cool this summer with a CCCT T-Shirt

The new CCCT T-shirt, a heavy-weight 50/50 poly/cotton blend, features a scene along the Capital Crescent Trail in black ink with a yellow sun rising over the tracks. Available in adult sizes small, medium, large and extra large. Price: $11.75, including postage and handling.

Quantity ______ Size(s) _______ Total Price ________

Name ________________________________

Address ________________________________

City _______ State ______ Zip ______

Send check payable to CCCT, P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20824
Trail Guide in the Works

By Gretchen Schwartz

Dedicated to providing specific information about the trail corridor, several members of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail are creating a new CCCT Guide. It will include historical events along the trail, scenic views, observations of plant and animal life, location and status of access points, as well as connections to other trails.

To give you a taste of this guide, here's an excerpt from all the information we have already compiled. It's on the section of the trail corridor in the Palisades area from Arizona Avenue to Norton Street.

Location: ADC's Street Map of Washington, D.C. and Vicinity; Map 8, Grid coordinates J8, J7, H7 and H6.

This portion of the Capital Crescent Trail starts on the north side of the trestle crossing over the C&O Canal and Canal Road near Arizona Avenue. The trail then follows the bluff of the Potomac Palisades, and climbs a steep hillside parallel to the C&O Towpath. Wildflowers and birds are abundant in the spring and summer, and there are nice views of the canal in the fall and winter. There is a fox den alongside the trail, and the occupant has been seen running along the trail on several occasions.

Access: There are several easy access points along this part of the trail, providing good connections to other trails.

There is a footpath on Arizona Avenue that leads to the trail. You can find it a short distance from the traffic light on Canal Road. There is also a short, steep (and somewhat slippery) footpath starting at the wooden fence at the corner of Potomac Avenue off Arizona Avenue. Both of these footpaths end at the trestle.

Two more footpaths provide easy trail access from Potomac Avenue. One is located at the end of Norton Street (H6); the other is across from Manning Place (H7). The trail also can be easily reached from Canal Road and the C&O Towpath at Chain Bridge, a few feet to the left of the traffic light. It is another footpath that leads up to the trail.

A parking lot is located near the intersection of Chain Bridge and Canal Road (on the bridge side). Buses also stop along MacArthur Boulevard from 6:30 a.m.-11:30 p.m.

Jennifer Longsworth talks to Doug Engle, coordinator of the Trail Corridor Stewards Committee, while carrying her bike along the trail during CCCT's recent hike. The trail is not yet ready for bicycling. (Photo by Henri Bartholomot.)

This section of the Capital Crescent Trail is a nice area for hiking, thanks in large part to the Trail Corridor Stewards Committee. Unlike my first hike along the abandoned rail line—memorable for the tall weeds, spider webs and garbage—the corridor is finally fulfilling my expectations of a trail. It has taken months of hard work by many people, but now most of the route is clear and walkable.

On a recent walk, a friend and I were able to enjoy the views, watch for birds and other wildlife and wonder about the trail's history.

If you have any experiences (or photos) from recent visits to the trail, please share them with CCCT for possible inclusion in the guide.

June 30: Trail Stewards Committee working in Palisades area. For more information call Doug Engle at 703-641-0039.

July 28: Trail Stewards Committee working in Chevy Chase area. Call Doug Engle.

July 29, 7 p.m.: CCCT Board Meeting, Bethesda Library.

August 26, 7 p.m.: CCCT Board Meeting, Bethesda Library.

Consultants Provide CCCT Free Services

The environmental consulting firm of Hoffman, Williams, Lafen and Fletcher will be offering pro-bono community outreach services to the Coalition for the next year.

Founded to conduct community outreach for controversial scenic river projects, the Silver Spring firm now has expanded into rail-trail development work. The firm recently completed a study of rail-trails in Illinois. Hoffman, Williams, Lafen and Fletcher will help CCCT to develop a plan detailing the tasks required to achieve community support for trail development. In conjunction with CCCT and its volunteers, the consultants will work with neighborhood contacts and civic associations.

As the Coalition increases its attention to trail design and development issues, the consulting firm's expertise and resources will be invaluable. Any CCCT supporters interested in assisting with community outreach should call the office at 202-234-4874.
A Capital Commuting Link

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How do we get people out of their cars and using an alternative means of transportation?

One solution is the bicycle. It is one of the most efficient forms of transportation, and one that is used by a growing number of people. Recent studies show that approximately 1 percent of Washington-area commuters use their bikes as a means of transportation compared to 71.6 percent who drive to work alone.

Development of the Capital Crescent Trail will invite more bicycle commuting. The trail will offer a flat, pleasant, off-road experience, close to several libraries, the Bethesda swimming pool, Metro stations, recreation centers, playgrounds and business centers. Furthermore, the Capital Crescent Trail will provide a missing link in Washington's bicycle facilities.

When the Capital Crescent Trail is complete, bicyclists will be able to hook up in two locations with the Rock Creek Trail, as well as with the C&O Canal, the Mt. Vernon Trail and the Washington & Old Dominion rail-trail. In the future, it may also connect to the proposed Metropolitan Branch trail, which will follow another abandoned railway from Union Station to Silver Spring.

Other areas around the nation and the world have successfully integrated bicycles into their transportation network:

— In Eugene, Ore., 40,000 people use the city's network of bikeways annually.
— Denmark boasts that 20 percent of all personal trips are made by bike.
— In England, at least 15 percent of residents in 25 towns (with more than 25,000 people) bike to work.
— Japan has a 14-story bicycle garage and China has a 15-lane expressway, with only one lane for cars.
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Although the Capital Crescent Trail will not change Washington's commuting habits overnight, it will provide one more alternative to motorized transportation.

The Capital Crescent Trail will provide the missing link in Washington's bicycle facilities.