



The Capital Crescent Trail

Spring 1995

Vol. VII No.1

Coalition Donation for Bethesda Avenue Access

By Scott Hall

On behalf of its membership, the Coalition recently donated \$5,000 to the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission to build an information kiosk and other trail amenities at the Bethesda Avenue Access. The donation of \$1,000 was a seed grant to the Coalition from the Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program to help in developing new, action-oriented greenway projects.

Anyone interested in making a donation to the Coalition to support these and other pro-trail activities, should write us at: P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20824 or call the telephone hotline at (202) 234-4874.



Board member Ernie Brooks hands over \$5,000 check to Davis M. Richardson, Patricia S. Baptiste, and Ruihann Aron.

Bridge Over Risky River Road

By Scott Hall and Margaret Marchak

The Board of the Coalition for Capital Crescent Trail has been leading efforts to get a bridge built for the section of the trail over River Road. Quite concerned about this dangerous crossing in Bethesda, the Coalition lobbied hard to get the Maryland State Highway Administration to give Montgomery County \$550,000 in Federal funds to design and build the bridge. The Board has also led efforts to ensure that nationally-recognized standards for safety and accessibility are used in bridge design (i.e., five percent grade, 4-ft. width, slip-resistant surface). The Board also supports stairway access from River Road.

The Coalition lobbied for these design components at a public meeting held on bridge design on

February 8. We are happy to report that the final decision, made at the February 27 meeting of the Montgomery County Parks Commission, includes all recommended design components though there is still one hurdle to cross before the bridge design will be considered complete.

The coalition has been advocating a bridge width of 14 feet to handle the heavy flow of bicyclists, walkers and runners through this portion of the trail.

However the State Highway Administration has approved only a 10-foot width, and the wider bridge is expected to cost approximately \$90,000 more than the current funding for the project (only a portion of the \$90,000 is

attributable to the width). The county parks department will be asking the State Highway Administration to append its current application for \$90,000 in additional funding and to remove the current width constraint. We are asking trail supporters to lodge their support by writing a letter to MDOT Secretary, David L. Winstead, asking him to approve the additional funding and to approve a wider, safer, width of 14 feet. His address is:

Maryland Department of
Transportation
P.O. Box 8755
BWI Airport, Md. 21240-0755

Arizona Avenue Trestle Standstill

By Scott Hall and Margaret Marchak

Work on the Arizona Avenue Trestle is at a standstill after the contractor hired by the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) defaulted and the contract was terminated for non-performance. Less than 20 percent of the planned bridge renovation work has been completed and the FHA must now find a new contractor to finish. Staff from the National Park Service have indicated that the work may not be completed before September 1995. Meanwhile, frustrated trail users have not been able to get across this key link in the trail and must use a roundabout detour (directions follow) to get from the DC portion of the trail to the Montgomery section. Until the issue is resolved the CCCT Board recommends using the following detour.

From the District: get on to C&O Canal Tow Path at Fletcher's Boathouse, go under ARIZONA AVE. BRIDGE continue along NORTH on the tow path; at approximately 1.5 miles, cross the canal at lock 5, take spiral trail bridge over Canal Rd., and dirt trail up to Brookmont area; take a left onto RIDGE DR., it curves to become MARYLAND AVE. in 4 blocks; cross BROAD ST., continue EAST and take a RIGHT onto MACARTHUR BLVD. Go SOUTH up hill and take a left at traffic LIGHT (MARYLAND AVE. and SANGAMORE RD.) to LITTLE FALLS TRAIL (not marked); go under CCCT trail underpass to intersection with CC trail (green sign which says "Washington/River Road").

From Capital Crescent Trail: look sharp for LITTLE FALLS TRAIL (not marked) to LEFT, a few hundred yards before tunnel. (You know you are at the correct intersection when, at its entrance, you turn around to see a green sign which says "Washington/River Road.") Go under Capital Crescent overpass and up to intersection at MACARTHUR BLVD. and SANGAMORE RD. Take a RIGHT onto MACARTHUR BLVD. Take next LEFT onto MARYLAND AVE.; cross BROAD ST. and continue onto RIDGE DR. (it curves to left). Just after 61st St. look sharp on the RIGHT for sign which says "Footpath to C&O Canal Lock 5." Go down this dirt trail over spiral trail bridge over CANAL RD. and take a left onto C&O CANAL TOW PATH. Go approximately 1.5 miles and get on Capital Crescent Trail at Fletcher's Boat house.

Interim Trail Task Force Sends Report to County Council

By Ernie Brooks

Last fall we reported that the Montgomery County Council had voted in favor of a resolution to institute an Interim Trail Task Force. The task force was established to study usage options for the 3.2 miles of the Capital Crescent Trail from Bethesda to Silver Spring. (See *The Capital Crescent Trail*, Fall 1994).

The task force began meeting in late September and sent its report to the Council in early December, 1994. The group was chaired by CCCT Board Member, Henri Bartholomot.

The following is a summary of the interim task force's recommendations to the Montgomery County Council.

Bethesda Central Business District:

The task force recommended that the trail extend as far as possible between the intersection of Bethesda and Woodmont Avenues in downtown Bethesda and Stewart or Kansas Avenue in Silver Spring, with on-road connections to downtown Silver Spring. Subject to legal and financial concerns, the majority of the task force recommended that the County remove the rails and ties, now located in the corridor, and install a bluestone (or optionally, a wood chip) surface. The legal question raised, was whether removing the rails and ties would impair the County's legal posture in the three existing court cases involving the right-of-way. Cost issues revolve around whether a bluestone trail surface would trigger extensive (and costly) stormwater management measures. If this is the case, a wood chip surface may provide a less costly option. A minority of the force expressed their preference for leaving both rails and ties intact, for the time being, and adding bluestone or wood chips to mask the ties.

The task force recommended that the interim trail cross roads at-grade at three locations; Bethesda and Woodmont Avenues in Bethesda, Connecticut Avenue, and Jones Mill Road just south of the intersection at Jones Bridge Road. As a starting point for the interim trail, the task force suggested that trail users be directed to the traffic signals nearest each of these crossings, using the most direct route possible.

Wisconsin Avenue:

The group recommended that the trail be installed in the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue, that lighting be provided in the tunnel, and that a ramp be installed to provide access to the Elm Street Park just east of the tunnel. The task force also suggested opening the section below the East-West Highway bridge. State Highway Administration staff have said that it is feasible to keep the trail open while the bridge is being reconstructed.

Rock Creek Trestle Issue:

The task force advised opening the trestle over Rock Creek for interim trail use, if feasible. Though the trestle would provide handy access to the trail for Silver Spring residents and provide trail users with access to Silver Spring, its price \$200,000-\$600,000, appears to be a costly consideration. The task force suggested one possible source of funds for this might be the federal ISTEPA program which has already helped fund completed sections of the Capital Crescent Trail.

Continued on page 3

Interim Trail Task Force Sends Report to County Council

continued from page 2.

Silver Spring Access:

On the east end of the trail, the task force recommended connecting the right-of-way to downtown Silver Spring. The suggestion advocates usage along specific roads north of the corridor starting at Stewart Avenue.

The task force recommended that the county also try to procure permission from CSX (current owner of land east of Capital Crescent Trail) to extend the trail eastward along a quiet nub of the Georgetown Branch. The report suggests making connections from there south of the right-of-way at Kansas Avenue.

Columbia Country Club Concerns:

Columbia Country Club has expressed a number of concerns about the 1/3 mile section of the trail that runs through its property. The Club's Board of Directors has said that it wants the County to settle the ongoing court cases with them before proceeding with this section of the interim trail. The Club has stipulated that the trail be installed in a recess or trench, with fence and screen plants along both sides through their property. (The CCCT Board has opposed the trenching for cost and design reasons.) The Club has urged the task force to let the County and Club negotiate a resolution of these issues. While these negotiations are underway, the task force recommended that the County not install this section of the interim trail, but proceed with the remaining sections. At the same time the task force urged the Club and County to reach prompt accord on the interim trail.

Interim Trail Cost:

The task force estimated the cost of the trail to be \$70,000 (apart from the cost for opening the Rock Creek Trestle and the section through the Columbia Country Club). The task force pointed out that usage of the funds from the County's bikeway budget may help open the interim trail within the coming year. In addition, some of the groups represented on the task force and communities adjacent to the trail have offered to provide funds or other assistance with the installation and maintenance of the trail.

The county DOT is now firming up the task force's price estimates.

The CCCT Board expects the Montgomery County Council to act on this issue by this summer.

Off With The Tracks *

Kiosk Thanks

Shortly before we went to press we received a thank-you letter from the Chair of the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, Willman Hussmann, extending thanks for our recent donation (see p.1) He assures us that the money will be used as we wish and a plaque commemorating the CCCT will be placed at the kiosk.

Watch for Audrey this spring...

Audrey Rasmussen has volunteered her time toward distributing a survey on the trail to gather ideas for improvements, recruit volunteers and solicit contributions for the coalition. Watch for her!

Attention Trail Users!

We want to encourage you to be the eyes and ears of the trail. Board members are on the trail every week, but not every day. If you find anything interesting happening on the corridor while out riding or know of any issues which might impact the trail, positively or negatively, give us a call at (202) 234-4874 and leave a message at #6. Thanks, we look forward to hearing from you.

** Editor's Note: It occurred to me shortly after we went to press with the Fall 1994 newsletter that we ought to add a "with" to the phrase "Off The Tracks," and so here it is. Get it?*

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.

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YES! I WANT TO HELP CREATE THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100. Special Honor Membership; commemorative spike, your name in our annual report, action alerts for one year and subscription to <i>The Capital Crescent Trail</i> . | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30. Sustaining Membership; your name in our annual report, subscription to <i>The Capital Crescent Trail</i> and action alerts for one year. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$60. Sponsoring Membership, your name in our annual report, subscription to <i>The Capital Crescent Trail</i> , action alerts for one year and a T-shirt. Please circle size: M L XL (sorry no size small) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15. Individual Membership; subscription to <i>The Capital Crescent Trail</i> and action alerts for one year. |

I'D LIKE TO VOLUNTEER MY TIME I WANT TO HELP WITH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> trail clearance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> assisting with CCCT mailings | <input type="checkbox"/> event organizing |

I know of an organization that may join the CCT. The group is _____
 Name _____
 Address _____
 Telephone _____ (h) _____ (w)

Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
 P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20824 Telephone 202-234-4874

Calendar of Upcoming Events for Spring-Summer 1995

* All contacts can be reached through the CCCT Hotline at (202) 234-4874.

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|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 21 | 7 p.m. CCCT Board Meeting, Bethesda Library |
| March 24 | 6 p.m. "Map Making" evening. Contact: Chris Brown |
| April 22 | 9:00 a.m. Trail Hike. Meet at Bethesda Pool. Contact: Scott Hall |
| April 25 | 7 p.m. CCCT Board Meeting, Bethesda Library |
| May 23 | 7 p.m. CCCT Board Meeting, Bethesda Library |
| May 6 | National Trails Day: Work Trip/Wildflower Planting. Contact: Jennifer Pitt |
| June | MCCR Fun Run. Contact: Tom Willging (Call hotline for details) |
| June 19 | CCCT Annual Meeting/Elections. Contact: Margaret Marchak |
| July 29 | Circuit Ride: CCCT and Metro Branch. Contact: Audrey Rasmussen |

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