



The Capital Crescent Trail

Spring 1996

Vol. VIII No. 1

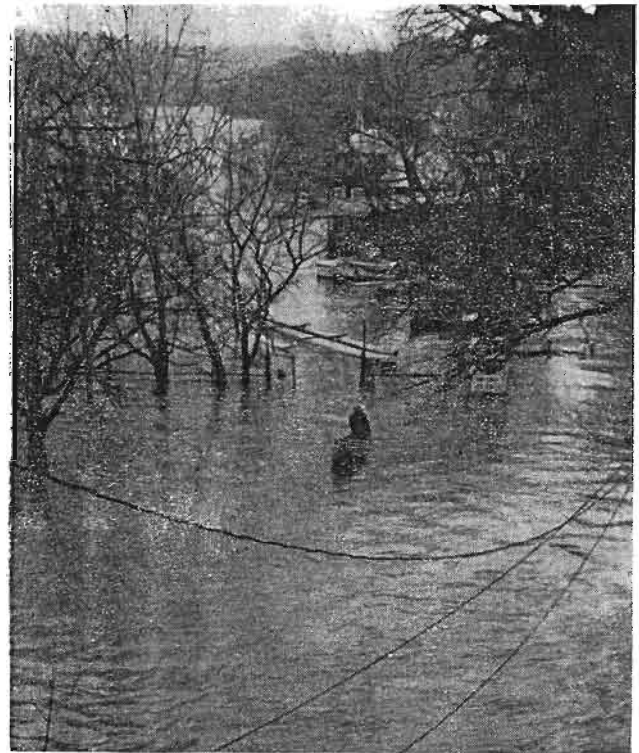
We Survived the Flood !

During the Blizzard of 1996 we suffered minor injuries in comparison with those incurred by the C&O Canal (see insert).

Though the trail was flooded, it was left intact though a bit sandy.



Southern entrance to trail. The Capital Crescent Trail flooded in water. Photo: Chris Brown



Canoeing on the Capital Crescent. At the southern entrance to the trail by the Washington Canoe Club (taken from Key Bridge). Posts to the right of "Do Not Enter" sign mark beginning of trail in Georgetown. Photo: Chris Brown

**REACH THE CAPITAL
CRESCENT TRAIL BY:**

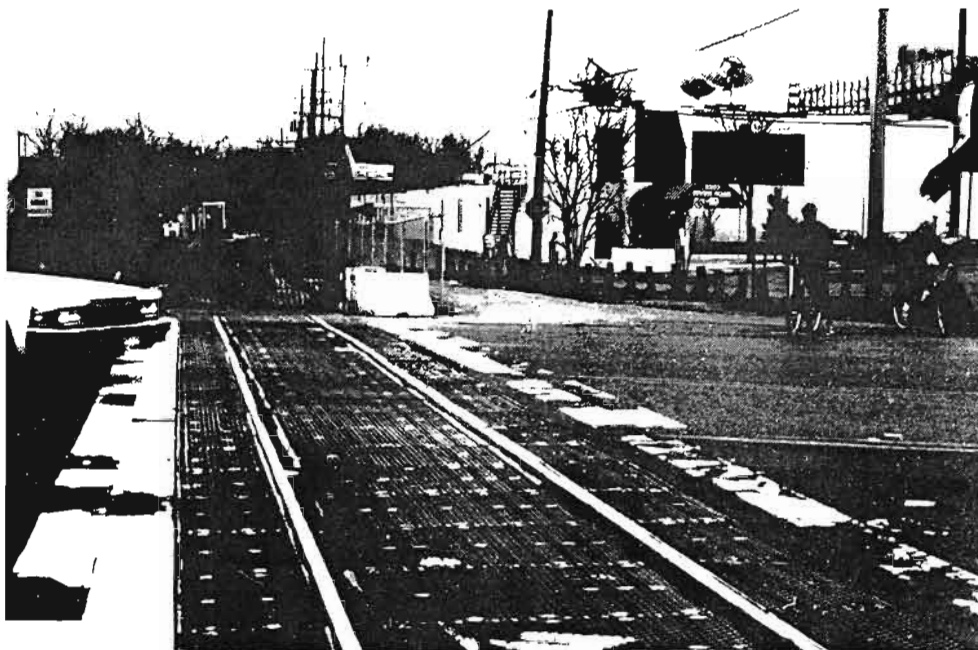
The CCT Information Line
(202) 234-4874 to hear a recording of
events or to leave a message.

OR

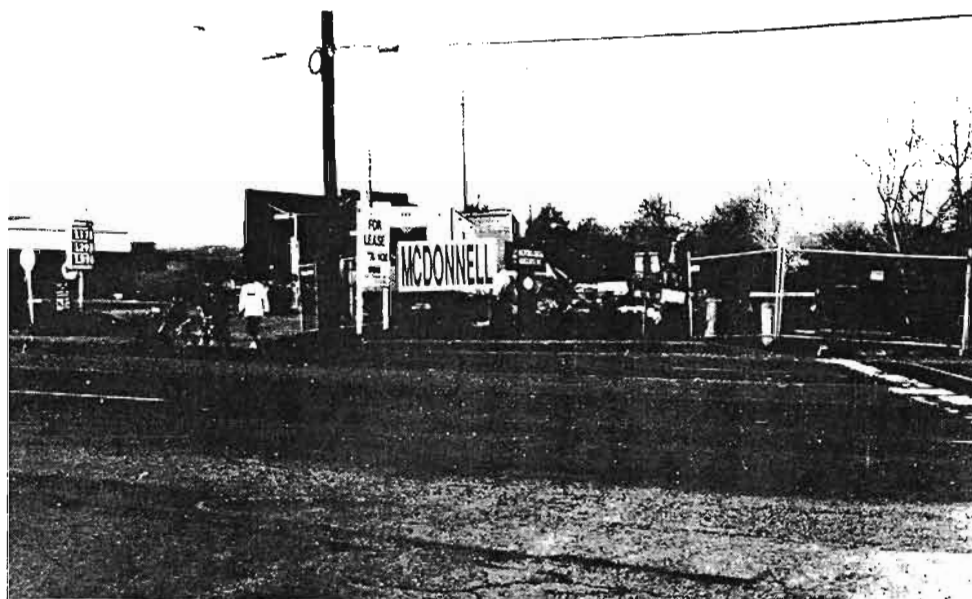
INTERNET:
EWBROOKS@OASYS.DT.NAVY.MIL

River Road/Dalecarlia Bridge

Work on the bridge was not completely abandoned during the blizzard. The current estimated time of completion is set for mid-June.



Piles of dirt wait to be moved to make way for bridge on southern side of River Road.
Photo: Maria-Louisa Yon



Temporary fencing obscures progress being made to make way for construction on northern side of River Road. Photo: Maria-Louisa Yon

Arizona Avenue Bridge Completion In Sight

by Ernie Brooks

As many of you know, the Arizona Avenue Trestle Rehab was scheduled for completion on December 1, 1995, again after many delays. Weather was not considered to be a factor for extension of that original deadline (perhaps, in part, because weather is not generally a problem for construction through November). However, early in this second attempt at construction, the FHWA realized that some additional work would be required.

This involved replacement of some structural members across the top of the trestle which had deteriorated far more than was thought when the contract was written. This change order resulted in a contract extension which pushed the job into the winter - specifically, the Winter of '96.

Since it wasn't the contractor's fault that the work was pushed into this prolonged period of bad weather, the FHWA had no choice but to extend the contract completion date even further. The paint removal and repainting has moved along at a reasonable pace, and is nearing completion. There are a couple of additional changes made by the FHWA that will extend the contract by a couple of weeks - additional paving to match the existing paved trail to the final bridge deck (seems the contractor who originally paved the trail in '93 didn't know the ultimate deck elevation), and application of a graffiti resistant paint to the trestle. The current contract deadline is April 14th, but if we have more bad weather, that could slide again.

Wisconsin Avenue Tunnel

by Scott Hall

The CCCT Board wants to express its thanks to the many Coalition supporters who responded so generously to our year-end fundraising campaign concerning the Wisconsin Avenue "tunnel." Thanks to your donations, we now have a solid core of funding we can use to develop information that will demonstrate both the feasibility and desirability of opening the tunnel to connect the existing Georgetown-Bethesda trail section to the interim trail being developed between Bethesda and Silver Spring this summer.

Transitway Study

by Scott Hall

The Coalition is concerned about the lack of serious effort by State and County transportation officials to adequately plan for and incorporate the Capital Crescent Trail into the proposed Bethesda-Silver Spring Transitway/Trail Project. State transportation planners have repeatedly rebuffed attempts by the Coalition to document the trail's potential to augment transitway usage by increasing bicycle/pedestrian access and to provide badly needed bike/ped transportation facilities in the DC Metro area. In addition, the State refuses to acknowledge available sources of Federal transportation funding that could be used to develop the trail component.

The Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA) is currently finalizing its Draft Major Investment Study/Environmental Impact Statement for the Bethesda-Silver Spring Transitway/Trail Project which is necessary to qualify the project for Federal funding. MTA plans to issue the study this spring for public review and public hearings on its findings. The

(continue on page 4)

Transitway Study (continued)

Coalition has consistently commented on the lack of attention to the Capital Crescent Trail in all study documents produced to date and will continue to press the fight.

The Coalition has remained neutral about the proposed transitway/trail project because of assurances by State and County agencies that the trail will be built in the corridor regardless of whether or not the transitway is developed. However, current alternatives for the transitway could threaten the trail's future existence or viability. These proposals include potentially forcing the trail off the corridor by double tracking the transit system, forcing the trail out of the Wisconsin Avenue Tunnel or onto streets in Silver Spring, and failing to ensure a good connection to the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

Moreover, the MTA has refused to identify or document available Federal funding sources for the trail's development maintaining that it is strictly a local responsibility.

On a related note regarding removal of tracks and ties; the Department of Transportation has estimated that final bids will go out the first week in March.

The contractor is to be chosen the first week of May.

March for Parks to be Held on C&O and the Capital Crescent Trails

On Saturday, April 20, the National Parks and Conservation Association is sponsoring its annual March for Parks to raise money and demonstrate community support for the restoration of the C&O canal. As this newsletter goes to press, plans are being made to hold the march along the canal towpath between Georgetown and Fletcher's boat house, and to include the stretch of the Capital Crescent that parallels the towpath. This is a great opportunity to don your CCCT tee shirt and get out and show support for the trail while helping to raise money for the C&O restoration. If you're interested, please call Jay Chamberlain at (202) 223-6722 ext. 125.

Off With The Tracks

Funding Secured for Trail Map/Poster

This winter Alex Tate of Equator Graphics donated his time toward drafting a beautiful strip map of the Capital Crescent Trail for users.

In addition to Alex Tate's contribution we are very grateful for receipt of the following donations towards this effort: Westmoreland Citizens Association, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and Valerie Kirkpatrick. The map is being produced jointly with the Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service.

The map is expected to be in circulation before the end of the summer.

Attention Trail Users!

We want to encourage you to be the eyes and ears of the trail. Boardmembers 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.

Capital Crescent Memorabilia Sought:

During 1996 we will be celebrating our 10th year Coalition anniversary. If you have any memorabilia, pictures, diagrams, maps or other pieces of history that you would be willing to lend or give to the Coalition for a celebration please contact us at (202) 234-4874.

Capital Crescent Volunteers Read On!

Many people have expressed a desire to take more of a passing interest in the activities of the Coalition. At the last CCCT meeting the board addressed the issue by developing a study group to evaluate how to make better use of volunteers. Watch for details in the next issue and don't be surprised if we contact you in the interim.

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"
he'll process your request.

Editor:

Margaret Marchak

Contributing Editors:

*Ernie Brooks
Jay Chamberlin
Scott Hall*

Special Contribution:

G. Fred Stork

Design:

Jane Garrett

Distribution:

*Ellen Jones
Washington Area Bicyclist
Assn.*

Battered Bridge: The Rock Creek Trestle

by G. Frederick Stork

The following is part one of a two part series; the second of which will be published in the next issue of The Capital Crescent Trail.

Many hikers and bikers go under this high, one-track trestle bridge over Rock Creek north of East-West Highway in Chevy Chase. Few, however, have any idea that it is over a century old, that it has survived several fires, one of which enveloped the entire structure, that it suffered great damage in a major storm and that it played a part in a death.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad spur from Silver Spring to the Georgetown waterfront, now known as the Capital Crescent Trail, began in a curious period of small-scale local railroad buildings in the 1890s. The best source of information on this activity is a detailed, carefully researched book by Herbert H. Harwood, Jr., entitled "Impossible Challenge: the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in Maryland," published in Baltimore in 1979.

Georgetown, as an important port and the terminal of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, would benefit by railroads across the formidable Potomac into the growing south and northward into Maryland. In 1891 the B and O took over a short line running along what is now K Street to connect with the eastern terminus of the C and O Canal.

In 1892 the Rock Creek railway completed a long trolley line from Dupont Circle north along Connecticut Avenue to the present Columbia Country Club just north of East-West Highway. Here the company built a carbarn and power house and dammed Coquelin Run to create the lake that gives us the name of Chevy Chase Lake

area. Washingtonians for many years would ride the trolley to the lake for a picnic and recreation as we visit Great Falls by car or bicycle today.

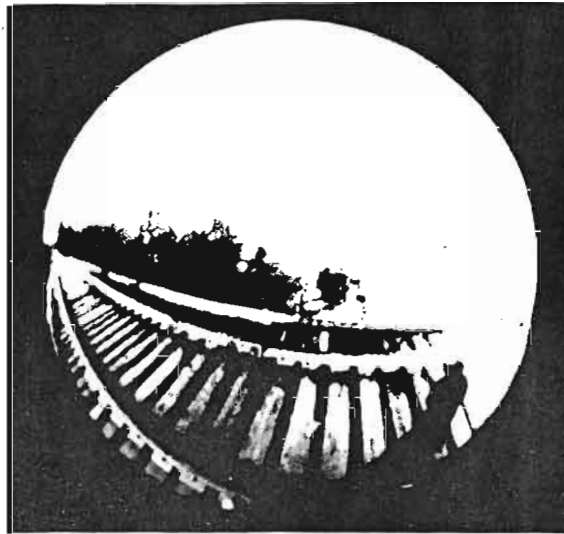
Also in 1892 a railroad was built westward from Silver Spring to Connecticut Avenue and connected with the trolley line. The most interesting feature on this short single-track spur was the trestle bridge over Rock Creek east of Jones Mill Road. This full-timber structure, advertised as the longest on the B and O system at the time, was 1,400 feet long and 67 feet high. In 1904 it was shortened to 281 feet by filling in on each side and in 1928 was strengthened by inserting a steel girder to support the central span.

It was not until 1910 that the crescent was completed by extending a leg to bring materials for the Lincoln Memorial. For nearly three-quarters of a century this little railroad line stayed in business by carrying coal, sand, wood and building supplies for the growing city and suburbs. But many small railroad operations had to give way to the cheaper and more flexible transport by truck. In 1985 the change occurred on our little backyard line. In 1988 Montgomery County bought the Maryland segment of the right of way. Since then the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and many citizen groups have worked to develop a hiker/biker trail while certain county leaders maneuvered to keep open the option of using the Silver Spring-Bethesda section for light rail transit as well as recreation.

Next Issue: *Unfortunate Happenings On and Around the Rock Creek Trestle*

(see pictures on page 7)

(Battered Bridge cont'd)



This fisheye lens photo of March 1986, a year after railroad operations ceased, gives a graceful curve to the straight track and shows it still in good condition. Photo: G. Frederick Stork

The one-track trestle bridge over Rock Creek in Chevy Chase as it looks today. The picture was taken from the bicycle path on the east side of the creek with the camera facing northwest. Photo: G. Frederick Stork



This picture taken with a quintuple filter shows the artistic possibilities of an interesting subject like the trestle. Photo: G. Frederick Stork

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: L XL (sorry no size small or medium) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15. Individual Membership; subscription to <i>The Capital Crescent Trail</i> and action alerts for one year. |

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 1996

All contacts can be reached through the CCCT Hotline (202) 234-4874. Be sure to say that you need to get in touch with the contact person listed for the event in question.

| Date | Event | Contact |
|------------|--|------------------------------------|
| March 9-12 | National Trails Symposium (Hike, Sunday, March 10, 1:00 p.m.) | Chris Brown |
| March 18 | Board Meeting | Scott Hall |
| April 20 | March For Parks | Jay Chamberlin (202) 223-6722 x125 |
| May 13 | Board Meeting | Scott Hall |

Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
 P.O. Box 30703
 Bethesda, MD 20824

Forwarding and Return Postage Guaranteed, Address Correction Requested

| |
|---|
| Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Permit #4468 Wash. D.C. |
|---|