

THE CRESCENT

THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

Spring 2002

Vol. XI No. 7

CCCT Donates \$75,000

**for the Rock Creek Trestle Observation Deck;
Donation is \$20,000 more than originally pledged last fall.**

By Wayne Phyllaier, for the CCCT Board

On February 21, 2002 the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) signed a letter agreement with Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Coalition (GBCCC), and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) to add an observation deck to the Rock Creek Trestle rehabilitation

project. The three non-profit organizations gave checks to Montgomery County to fund 2/3 of the additional cost, with DPWT funding the balance. Our contribution was crucial since the observation deck cost far more than the County had available for the project. CCCT gave \$75,000, GBCCC gave \$55,000, and WABA gave \$2500. This is the largest financial donation the CCCT has ever committed to the Trail, far exceeding the previous record-holder of \$45,000 committed to improve trail lighting in the Wisconsin Avenue tunnel. Thanks to our generous members, we had a successful end-of-year fund raising effort and are able to make this contribution.

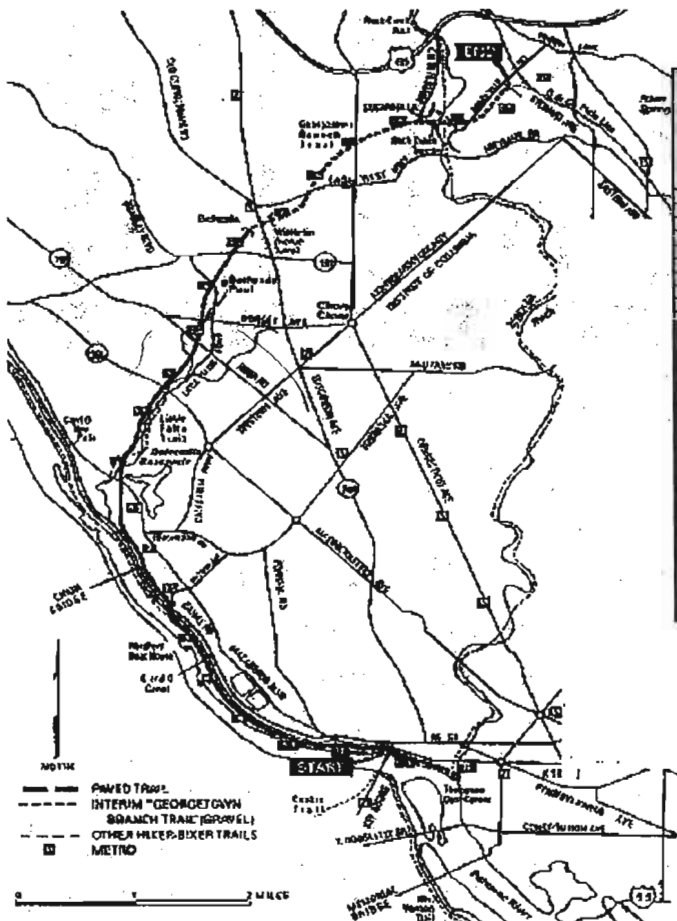


Room for a view -- Center span overlooks will give trail users spectacular views of Rock Creek.

Trestle construction is expected to begin in August 2002. Completion is expected in April 2003, in time for next year's peak spring season. Much of the historic wood and steel substructure will be retained for architectural purposes. The

superstructure will be replaced by two prefabricated bridge spans that are 12 feet wide with a wood deck. The observation deck will be at mid-span, between the two prefabricated bridge spans, and about 70 feet directly over Rock Creek. It will be approx. 30 feet long and 22 feet wide, and will offer a place for trail users to enjoy the view of the Rock Creek Stream Valley without standing in the flow of trail traffic. We expect that this will become one of the best-known and popular park features in the region. This project stands as an example of how local government and civic organizations can work cooperatively together for better parks and trails.

**"Bells & Whistles" safety events are coming!
See our events calendar on page 7.**



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

Visit our website:
www.cctrail.org
for trail updates
and events.

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Design:

Jane Garrett

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CONTACT THE CCCT:

contact@cctrail.org

OR

202-234-4874

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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: jcamp213@fox.com.

Safety Awareness Events, Signs for Increased Trail Safety

The CCCT will hold several "*Bells and Whistles*" events this Spring to raise awareness of the need for trail users to give warning when passing. During the events the Coalition will install free bells on bicycles lacking them (as requested by owners) and provide whistles to rollerbladers. The first two events will be on Sunday, April 14, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and Saturday, April 27, 10 to 12 a.m. at the Bethesda kiosk/rest stop. **Girl Scout Troop 1106** of Olney will provide volunteer support for the April 14 event as part of their community service program.

Signs are appearing on the CCT to help promote courteous and safe trail behavior (see photo). The Montgomery County Department of Parks installed signs this winter with three different messages at intervals along the section they manage between Bethesda and D.C. The National Park Service plans to install signs of the same design at intervals on their section in D.C. this spring.



Art in Bethesda Tunnel Damaged by Vandals

By Issac Hantman/CCCT Board

Like many in our community, the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT) Board and its membership are saddened by the destructive attack that occurred in early March on the wonderful artwork project, "Prismatic Passage," designed and erected by Bethesda artist Sally Callmer. This beautiful set of 1400 colorful panels had lined and beautified the fences along the Capital Crescent Trail in the tunnel under the Air Right's Building in Bethesda. The damage from this most recent attack was considered too severe to be repaired, and the Bethesda Arts Council has decided to have the art removed. The loss is particularly heartfelt since CCCT had contributed labor and funds to the project.

We believe it is important to note that destructive vandalism is not limited to this tunnel and has occurred in many outdoor places in Montgomery County; for example, a beautiful statue in nearby Elm Street Park was severely damaged about a year ago. Other than this recent vandalism to Sally's project, the Air Right's Building Tunnel has **PROVEN** to be safe; there have been no reports of crimes or problems against persons. Our challenge for the future is to find the right type of project to improve the aesthetics of the tunnel passage while not attracting the destructive attentions of a few vandals.

We look forward to working with others in the community to realize this goal. If you have suggestions for future projects in or around the tunnel, please share them with us by leaving a message at our hotline, 202-234-4874, or by email at contact@cctrail.org.

CCCT CONTINUES EFFORTS TO INCLUDE INTERIM TRAIL FUNDING IN COUNTY'S FY-03 BUDGET

The **FY 2003 Capital Improvement Programs'** Budget Request recommended to the Montgomery County Council does not have any funding for completion of the Silver Spring access to the Interim CCT or the Metropolitan Branch Trail. If this decision stands, the off-road part of the Interim CCT will continue to end abruptly at Stewart Avenue in Lyttonsville (just off Brookville Road), meaning that nearby residents will continue to have inadequate access to the Trail. In addition, the only development by the County over the next 6 years could be short sections of the Met Branch that might be part of the Silver Spring Transit Center and the Montgomery College Takoma Campus extension.

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail is urging the County Council to insert funding in the CIP budget to build an access trail between the Interim CCT and the Rosemary Hills Recreation Center, as recommended in the County's *Trail Facility Plan*. This link will permit trail users to continue to downtown Silver Spring on quiet residential streets that are much safer than the current interim route on busy Brookville Road. This access would also allow a route to the new Gwendolyn E. Coffield Community Center.

The County Council's decisions are ongoing as this newsletter goes to print and the final FY-03 budget will be approved in the early June. **It will be two years before the next CIP budget is considered.** Because of its vital importance to local residents, the CCCT will continue its ongoing efforts to monitor Council actions and will work to secure FY-03 funding.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND THE LATEST UPDATES ON THE PROPOSED ACCESS TRAIL THROUGH ROSEMARY HILLS, VISIT: <http://home.earthlink.net/~wphyilla/trail1w.htm> YOU MAY LINK TO THIS SITE THROUGH THE CCCT WEB SITE: www.cctrail.org
Click on the News & Events page.

FEEDBACK

The Purple Line Debate

Does the fact that the County Council and Governor Glendening's pledged support for the Inner Purple Line mean the end of the Trail? The news coverage did not make any mention of this.

Grace Palladino (via e-mail)

I live on the CCT at Connecticut Avenue. It looks as like the new "purple line" will be on the CCT. What have you heard?

John Whaley (via e-mail)

The proposed Inner Purple Line would be built along the same alignment through Bethesda-Chevy Chase as the alignment long proposed for the Georgetown Branch Transit way/Trail, where the trail is today. It is proposed to build the transit way and trail alongside each other on the surface.

The CCCT has been and will continue to follow these proposals. The right-of-way is at least 60 feet wide and wider along much of the corridor's length (90 feet wide in the area of Connecticut Avenue), so it does appear that there is room for both a double-tracked transit way and a trail within the row. But the transit way will require clearing an approximate 60 feet of trees along the r.o.w., which will of course result in losing the park-like character of the corridor.

The CCCT will lobby to keep the trail in the corridor, continuing from Bethesda to Silver Spring. If the transit way does go forward, we will try to get the trail integrated into the design so that we will have the best possible trail under the circumstances of having to share the corridor with transit.

Wayne Phyllaier, CCCT Chair

Rock Creek access

I'm a resident of Jones Mill Road. When the trestle is finished, will people be able to use it to access Rock Creek Park, specifically the playground near Ohr Kodesh [at East-West Highway and Meadowbrook Lane], or will you have to cross all the way over the park and then double back?

Dana Stanley - Chevy Chase (via e-mail)

The trestle should open in about a year. But the contract only provides for opening the Trail from Jones Mill Road to Grubb Road, and there will be no access trail into Rock Creek Park. We are advocating, and the Department of Parks is considering, a project to build an access trail from the east end of the trestle down into the park, but it will probably not be scheduled for several years.

Until that access is built, the best way to get to Rock Creek Park from Jones Mill will continue to be the Susanna Lane/Rock Creek Trail trestle bypass that is now being used for the Georgetown Branch/Capitol Crescent Trail.

Trail Safety Still a Concern

I have just read the Fall 2001 issue of The Crescent. I am appalled at the accident stories [Feedback, page 4]. I ride the trail several days a week and I find the key problem is the sort of professional bikers who travel at extremely high rates of speed and do not signal when passing. I think we need BIG speed limit signs and overhead banners. We also need to post stories along the trail like the one involving the poor guy with the broken hip who will be nine months in recovery.

Bob Youker (e-mail)

Thank you for your thoughts. The CCCT has taken your suggestion to heart and has posted stories along the Trail, specifically in our bulletin boards at Dalecarlia and Bethesda.

Other steps are being taken by the CCCT to promote safe trail uses. On Saturday, November 3rd, we held another in our continuing "Bells & Whistles" safety events at the Bethesda rest area. We were joined by Olney Girl Scout Troop #1106, led by Troop Leader Kelly Groff, who brought their "homemade" safety signs. More safety events will be conducted as the weather warms up (see our Events page) – look for announcements to be posted on our bulletin boards and web site, cctrail.org, under "News & Events."

Early tunnel closures

I am frustrated by the early tunnel closings by the security company supervising the Wisconsin Avenue trail tunnel hours. I often ride home late in the evening on the trail. Tonight the tunnel was closed when I got there at 9:40 pm. I have seen the tunnel closed as early as 8:30. I call each time and complain to the security company and they clearly don't care. I complain to the Bethesda Government center and they do seem to care but are not really responsible. They forwarded my last complaint to the appropriate person and it was better for a little while. The tunnel is supposed to be open from 6 am to 10 pm. How can I get someone to address this issue? Who do I call?

Gunther Stern - Kensington, MD (via e-mail)

Mr. Stern:

Mr. John Thompson is the head of the Division of Highway Services, and his division oversees the security contract. He has been very responsive in the past to complaints that are brought to his attention. Ms. Gail Tait-Nouri is the Bicycle Projects Director at DPWT and likes to be kept in the loop on trail issues. I have forwarded your complaint to them. If you have problems in the future, you can contact Mr. Thompson directly for fastest response (dpwt_hwy.thompj@CO.MO.MD.US).

In addition to email, his Department also has a service hotline at 240-777-ROAD that usually works pretty well. If you contact DPWT directly about future problems, please also let us at CCCT know about it so we can be aware of the situation (202-234-4874, mailbox 8 or contact@cctrail.org).

“May I have the envelope please?”

I've been a commuter on the CCT since it opened. It's a national treasure as far as I'm concerned. Having ridden a lot, I've also seen a lot of unsafe behavior. How about a regular feature called “Boneheaded Move of the Month,” and invite readers to contribute. For example, at Dorset Avenue [in Bethesda] I watched helplessly as a bicyclist rolled through the stop sign and into an on-coming, slow-moving taxicab. He was mostly unhurt, but the poor driver was shaken. The take-home message: Heed the stop signs.

Another thought: Maybe a mild rumble strip approaching the stops to jar us daydreamers alert? Could it be done with a minimal affect on rollerbladers?

Ray Donnelly (via e-mail)

The CCCT rarely receives reports of accidents or instances of unsafe behavior along the Trail. Therefore we rely on our members and trail users to contact us regarding any instances involving user conflicts, accidents or unsafe behavior via the contact page on our web site [www.cctrail.org] or through our hotline, 202-234-4874, mailbox #8. But we would be remiss if we did not also suggest that trail users inform us of any “good Samaritans” along the trail. As we have stated before in the pages of this newsletter, there are a number of unsung heroes who pick up litter along the trail and they do a great service to its beauty and maintenance. Although we do not often mention these folks by name, we nonetheless very much appreciate their efforts.

Question regarding SS start of trail

Exactly where does the trail begin/end in Silver Spring. Normally when we do training walks for the Avon Breast Cancer 3-day we start in Bethesda, but I'd like to do a much longer walk and walk the entire trail. I live in Silver Spring (4 Corners) and would like directions or an address to where I can begin the trail.

Thanks, Virginia B Pereira (via e-mail)

Dear Ms. Pereira:

Check our website, www.cctrail.org, map page, to see the Silver Spring start/end of the trail. The “official” start of the Interim Capital Crescent Trail (also called the Georgetown Branch Trail) is in downtown Silver Spring, diagonally across the corner from the Silver Spring Metro Station at Colesville Road and Second Avenue (at the small “pocket park” immediately beside the McDonald's restaurant). Unfortunately, there are no trail signs there. The trail is on-road (on the sidewalk for pedestrians) for about 2 miles through Silver Spring and north Silver Spring neighborhoods before it reaches the start of the off-road section in Lyttonsville. From the start at Colesville Road and Second Avenue, go north along Second Avenue for three blocks to Spring Street where you will see the first trail route sign - look for “Georgetown Branch Trail”. The trail continues, following the trail route signs, on Second Avenue to Linden Lane in North Woodside, then left on Linden Lane one block to Brookville Road, then left on Brookville Road to Stewart Avenue just past the paper recycling center, then left on Stewart Avenue 1/2 block to the start of the off-road section of the Georgetown Branch Trail, to the right from Stewart Avenue. You will see the Future CCT mile marker, mile 0.32, at the start of the off road section. From this point just follow the trail to Bethesda. It will be off-road except for an approx. 1/2-mile signed detour around the closed Rock Creek Trestle. Total distance from downtown Silver Spring to Bethesda will be approx. 6 miles. If you decide to start in downtown Silver Spring, there are public parking lots in the area - the most convenient one is at Cameron Street and Second Avenue just one block north from the trail start. But I would suggest you consider starting where the off-road section of the trail begins at Stewart Avenue, just off of Brookville Road. There is on-street parking available along Stewart Avenue. If starting from downtown Silver Spring, We also suggest you consider using an unofficial route “shortcut” to avoid unpleasant Brookville Road. It also follows the route of the future Capital Crescent Trail more closely than does the present on-road temporary route. See the website at <http://home.earthlink.net/~wphylla/index.html> and go to the “trail connections” pages for CCT to Silver Spring and CCT through Rock Creek Park for more information on this unofficial route and the Rock Creek bypass.

A response to an inquiry made to the Washington Post's “Dr. Gridlock”:

Dear Dr. Gridlock:

In a recent letter a reader asked, “Whatever happened to bicycle bells?” Bicycle bells are still available, and are needed on today's crowded streets and trails more than ever.

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail has been promoting the use of bells for many years. Several times a year we have a “Bells & Whistles” event to promote safety on the Trail. During the event we mount bells on bikes free for those who want them, and we give whistles to in-line skaters.

We initiated this safety promotion event in response to the many complaints and accidents that result from cyclists passing walkers on the Capital Crescent Trail without giving warning. Cyclist and walkers must share that limited space on this popular trail, and cyclists need to use bells to pass safely and with courtesy.

Wayne Phyllaier

CCCT Chair

Note to trail users: Look for “Bells & Whistles” at the CCT's Bethesda rest stop, April 14, 27 and May 18.

More acts of senseless beauty:

On March 16 a group of volunteers from the **Palisades Community** planted, raked, and watered trees and shrubs along the slope between Potomac Avenue and the CCT. This re-vegetation project was performed in cooperation with the National Park Service and was financed by a grant from the Palisades Community Fund. **Paul Hagen**, of the Palisades Citizens Association CCT Task Force, organized the effort. This was a follow up to the fall planting day held last November.

CCT Volunteer **Judson Reed** spent many hours this winter preparing commemorative rail spikes for special honor memberships and awards.

Last fall, members of the **East Bethesda Community Association** installed two new benches along the Georgetown Branch/Capital Crescent Trail; just east of the East-West Highway overpass and near the 2.5 mile-marker. Thanks to EBCA and **Betty Farber** for the funds, **Jack Hayes** for the installation, and **Helen Wieferich** and **Tony Czajkowski**.

More spontaneous acts of kindness occur on the CCT every month that go unrecognized. If you see someone doing something nice for the Trail, please let us know so we can recognize them. After all,

Acts of beauty are contagious!

Trail Improvements Set to Begin at River Road Bridge

Some three years after Montgomery County Parks officials drew up plans to give Minkoff Construction the right to use parking spaces on land adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail in exchange for trail enhancements, the project is about to begin.



Minkoff is located at 5223 River Road, steps away from the Trail's River Road bridge in Bethesda's Westbãrd neighborhood. The company obtained the right to park on the Trail's right-of-way under provisions provided in a lease agreement with the County. Without parking, Minkoff indicated that they would have to move their business. In return for the parking, Minkoff agreed to invest \$165,000 to design and build amenities for the Trail such as a water fountain, landscaping, and benches to create a pedestrian plaza. They will pave 11 parking spaces for employees, another 25 for company use and the public, and five spaces exclusively for trail users.

The project's timetable and lease agreement, worked out with the county's Planning Board, calls for Minkoff to have a design showing the scope of the project by April 5, 2002. The Coalition has and will continue to monitor the design process.



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 clean-ups 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, call the Events Hotline, 202-234-4874, box 8, or on the web: www.cctrail.org.

CCCT MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Lane, 2nd 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, April 8, May 12 and July 8 (Call 202-234-4874, mailbox 8, to confirm dates) 

Friday, May 3, Wash.Area Bicyclist Assoc. Bike-to-Work Day. Join hundreds of AM bike commuters for WABA's annual celebration of clean transportation. Ride on one of 16 "commuter convoys" (including the Capital Crescent Trail) to rally at Freedom Plaza downtown. Rally will have breakfast, entertainment, dynamic speakers and chances to win prizes. www.waba.org; 202-628- 2500.

Sunday, April 14, CCCT "BELLS & WHISTLES" SAFETY EVENT, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m., Bethesda Avenue kiosk/rest stop. Olney Girl Scout Troop 1106 will provide volunteer support.

Saturday, April 27, CCCT "BELLS & WHISTLES" SAFETY EVENT, 10 a.m. – 12 noon, Bethesda Avenue kiosk/rest stop.

Saturday, May 18, CCCT "BELLS & WHISTLES" SAFETY EVENT, time tba, Bethesda Avenue kiosk/rest stop.

Saturday, June 1, National Trails Day.

Monday, June 10, CCCT ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING and ELECTION, 6:00 p.m., Elm St. Park (adjacent to the east end of the Wisconsin Avenue tunnel). Playground available. Food and drink provided. Closest Metro: Bethesda.

Along the Trail...

5 Years Ago...

Over 100 bicyclists tour the entire 11.2 miles of the CCT. For many, it was their first time on the Bethesda-to-Silver Spring interim trail and an opportunity to bike the detours around the then-unopened sections of the Wisconsin Avenue tunnel and the Rock Creek trestle.

12 Years Ago...

CCCT members, with funds provided by the Rails to Trails Conservancy, put a wooden deck over the rails on the Arizona Avenue trestle, creating a surface satisfactory for bicyclists. In 1992 the National Park Service contracted with the Federal Highway Administration to rebuild the bridge and install a concrete deck, but it took four more years before the job was satisfactorily completed.

35 Years Ago...

The Rock Creek trestle is vandalized by arsonists, but remains structurally sound since the fire fed chiefly on the surface creosote, a wood preservative.

101 Years Ago...

Abner Cloud, a miller, built the Abner Cloud House in 1801 (photo at right). It was used as a family residence and for storage of grain and flour. His widow lived here until 1852. Located between Fletcher's Boat House and Canal Road, it is the oldest existing structure along the C&O Canal.



DIAL UP TRAIL CONDITIONS AND EVENTS

We can't be everywhere! 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 |

Newly installed Capital Crescent Trail map at Georgetown trailhead, courtesy of the National Park Service and funded by the CCCT. Another map was installed at Fletcher's Boat House.





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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** \$200, 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)

Thanks for your efforts on behalf of the Trail! Here's an additional contribution of \$ _____

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

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.