



The Crescent

THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

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Montgomery County/Minkoff deal for the River Road trail plaza and parking lot to be terminated.

The Office of the County Executive has announced it is terminating the agreement with Minkoff Construction Company that allowed Minkoff to continue to park on the CCT right-of-way in exchange for Minkoff funding and building a trail rest plaza and parking lot. It has been nearly nine years since the County began negotiations with Minkoff on this agreement, and trail users never received any benefit while Minkoff continued to park on Trail r.o.w. The termination of this agreement was reported in a feature story in the February 1st Bethesda Gazette (a link to the article is available on the CCT web site, www.cctrail.org).

The CCCT proudly takes the blame for being foremost among the "certain parties" that Mr. Minkoff alluded to in the Gazette article who swayed the County Executive to terminate the agreement. CCCT sent a letter to Doug Duncan in Sept. 2005 asking him to end the failed agreement with Minkoff and to block Minkoff from continuing to use the public property as a private parking lot for Company vehicles. In October CCCT joined with the Citizens Coordinating Committee for Friendship Heights (CCCFH) to again call for termination of the Minkoff agreement and to propose a new public-private project to develop the River Road Park and Trail Plaza. In a joint letter to the County Executive, CCCT and CCCFH offered to make substantial contributions to developing the CCT right-of-way as a park - and not as a parking lot as planned under the arrangement with Minkoff. More calls and emails from CCCT to the County Executive and County Council have followed. We are now pleased that County Executive Doug Duncan has agreed to terminate this agreement. Further, the County Executive has clearly indicated to CCCT that there will be no consideration to allowing any Minkoff parking on the Trail r.o.w. in the future.



A green buffer can soon replace the row of parked vehicles along the trail at River Road.

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THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

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CCCT is a non-profit citizens' group promoting development of the 11.2 mile rail-to-trail conversion from Georgetown, D.C. to Silver Spring, MD for multi-purpose, recreational use.

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We request that all submissions for *The Crescent* be sent to the post office box or e-mail noted below.

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.cctrail.org
for trail updates and events!

A NATURAL ADDITION TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL — Summer 1993

The Capital Crescent Trail

Rail Removal Kicks Off Work on D.C. Part of Capital Crescent

By Chris Brown

As a kickoff to National Trails Day, new director of the National Park Service Roger Kennedy — in his first official act — helped remove the first rail from the proposed Capital Crescent Trail.

The June 3 ceremony marked the official beginning of construction on three miles of the trail within the District of Columbia.

Kennedy spoke about the strong partnership that had brought the trail to this point and praised the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail.

Assisting Kennedy at the ceremonial rail-lifting near Fletcher's Boat House were state and local officials as well as numerous Coalition volunteers.

Flushed by CCCT leaders Chris Brown (far left) and Tom Barrett (far right), National Park Service Director Roger Kennedy uses a golden crow bar to lift the first rail from the proposed Capital Crescent Trail. (Photo: Maria Iannuzzi)

A Message From the Chair
Progress, Progress, Progress!!!

All Capital Crescent Trail supporters have reason to celebrate this spring! After years of effort, we can now view tangible evidence that there will be a trail in our lifetime. The rails and ties have finally been removed on a section of the trail in Bethesda, with final development of this section expected for this summer. Give yourselves a collective "pat on the back."

Over the years, we really have made a difference in getting the trail on the ground. Initially, some fast work and one generous man gave the people of metropolitan Washington an opportunity to improve our community.

After the national company abandoned the corridor, there was a threat that the land would be parcelled into several choice sites for development, and the remainder would have continued to be an unofficial garbage dump for a few irresponsible homeowners and businesses adjacent to the trail. The immediate challenge was to find funding to buy the property. The purchase was in jeopardy because of Congress failed to appropriate money in time to pay for the D.C.

Continued on Page 3

The first 20 years of CCCT's campaign to establish and develop the Capital Crescent Trail will be celebrated on June 12th.

See page 8 for more details, and visit our web site for more information, www.cctrail.org.

TRESTLE OVER ROCK CREEK PARK
Opened in May 2003, making the connection into Silver Spring possible without dipping down to Creek level. Following an intensive campaign by the Coalition, the Montgomery County Council voted \$1.3 million to rebuild the trestle. The Coalition paid \$75,000 of the additional funds needed to help build observation decks.

TUNNEL UNDER WISCONSIN AVENUE
Opened in 1998 following a campaign by the Coalition for the County Council to fund the \$900,000 needed for a trail in the tunnel. The Coalition spent \$45,000 for better trail lighting and routing.

HISTORY SURROUNDS THE TRAIL
A guide to points of interest along the Trail can be found on the Coalition website, www.cctrail.org.

THE "GEORGETOWN BRANCH TRAIL" IS THE TEMPORARY NAME FOR THE FUTURE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL, AND HAS THIS NAME ONLY UNTIL A DECISION IS MADE AS TO WHETHER OR NOT A TRANSITWAY WILL BE BUILT ON THAT SEGMENT.

For a detailed four-color map of the Capital Crescent Trail with the historical perspectives, send a self addressed stamped envelope to

CCCT, Box 30703
Bethesda, MD 20824

For a more detailed map see the website: www.cctrail.org

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

The Interim CCT will wash away in Silver Spring - unless we move the Council to act now.

The Interim CCT was commissioned in 1996 to provide a safe, inviting off-road trail connection between Bethesda and Silver Spring. The Trail was heavily used in Bethesda neighborhoods immediately. The Silver Spring section was cut off from the rest of the trail by the Rock Creek stream valley and was little used. Then the Rock Creek Trestle opened in 2003 and a much improved on-road trail route into downtown Silver Spring opened in 2004. Trail use started to increase dramatically in Silver Spring. But now the vision for this trail is being cut short - because of the chronic erosion problem in one short trail section east of Rock Creek.

In February the CCCT sent a letter to County Executive Doug Duncan describing the deplorable condition of the Trail east of Rock Creek and requesting funding in the next Operating Budget to repair and stabilize this part of the trail. We pointed out that only an approximate half mile section of this 4+ mile long trail needs to be paved to stabilize against erosion, and the cost for a permanent repair is less than the cost to frequently regrade the crushed stone surface to keep the trail safe and usable. We were encouraged when Councilmember Nancy Floreen, the Chair of the Transportation and Environment (T&E) Committee, sent a memorandum to the County Executive also strongly requesting funding for this purpose. But our letter went unanswered, and the County Executive has now released his FY07 Operating Budget request with NO FUNDING TO REPAIR THE INTERIM CCT. Only \$50K is allocated to DPWT to maintain and repair the over 100 miles of trails and side paths DPWT must maintain countywide.

Under the County Executive's proposed budget the tremendous potential of the Interim CCT to be a safe and inviting off-road connection between downtown Bethesda and Silver Spring will continue to wash away. Residents of Silver Spring neighborhoods are left to speculate as to why the County's commitment to build a first class Interim CCT does not appear to extend beyond Bethesda.

The County Council has the power to fix this budget. The Council T&E Committee has taken the Operating Budget up for review, and the full Council will vote on the budget in May. The T&E Committee has already taken measures to fix major flaws in the Executive's proposed Capital Budget to the benefit of trail users (i.e. recommending restoring funding for the Rock Creek Trail bridge over Viers Mill Road and for completing the Matthew

Henson Trail). **T&E Committee Members Floreen, Leventhal, and Perez can be especially helpful and will respond if we let them know how important repairing the Interim CCT is to us.**

The CCCT testified to the Council in support of the Interim CCT at the April public hearings. But numerous emails from trail supporters to Council Members can have a greater impact. **Please take a few minutes to help us - and send a brief email to let the Council know you want them to support funding to maintain our county trail system and to repair the Interim CCT. An email sent to Council President Leventhal will be circulated to the entire Council. Residents of District 5 should also send an email to Councilmember Perez letting him know that you are a constituent and you want his support for an Interim CCT in Silver Spring that is as good as that in Bethesda. We should also thank Councilmember Floreen for the help she has already given on this issue and encourage her to continue the fight.**

To reach the full Council, email Council President Leventhal at: county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov

Councilmember Perez can be reached at: Councilmember.Perez@montgomerycountymd.gov

Councilmember Floreen can be reached at: councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov



The crushed stone trail surface has completely washed away near the Silver Spring end. An approximate half mile section of the trail badly needs repair.

Montgomery County/Minkoff deal

continued from page 1.

Trail users should know that the benefit to the public under the failed agreement would have been far less than the 22 parking spaces and the \$325K payment for a trail plaza that Mr. Minkoff suggested in the Gazette:

Under the agreement all but 5 of the 22 parking spaces "allocated for trail users" would have been reserved for Minkoff's exclusive use five days a week, and would have been available to trail users only on weekends. Further, we have no practical way to enforce a "trail use only" parking policy there on weekends. This is a busy commercial area where competition for parking is intense. In practice trail users would have found very few spaces available to them. Minkoff's proposed development of his adjacent property would only make competition for these few parking spaces more intense. Mr. Minkoff also failed to point out that the cost of the trail plaza and water fountain would be far less than the \$325K cost of the agreed construction. Much of the cost of the proposed project was for the extensive curbing, paving and drainage needed to build a parking lot on this park land – which would have principally benefited Mr. Minkoff and not the public.

CCCT has consistently taken the position that it is not appropriate to use publicly owned parkland to create a parking

lot that principally benefits private interests. The County should not be hanging "For Rent" signs out on its public parks. This is especially true for the Trail at River Road, where park use is high and green space is scarce. With Minkoff parking removed from the area, asphalt can be replaced with trees, shrubs, and grass to provide a natural screen and buffer between the trail and the adjacent commercial area.

CCCT stands ready with our friends in the Citizens Coordinating Committee for Friendship Heights to make significant contributions to help the County develop an attractive trail plaza in a natural setting at River Road. CCCT has a strong history of providing significant support for other amenities on the trail – the \$75K CCCT contribution for scenic outlooks for the trestle over Rock Creek Park proves we can come through for a worthy project.

We have recently met with Montgomery County Parks & Planning personnel to begin to form a public/private partnership in order to plan and build the River Road trail plaza project – as a park and not as a parking lot.

For ongoing updates of the River Road park, visit our web site: www.cctrail.org.

"Let no one say, and say to your shame –

All was beauty here, until you came."



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, and there are no trash receptacles along the CCT.

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.

Safety on the Trail

For almost twenty years, the Coalition has led efforts to create this wonderful greenway and to achieve the best possible amenities to make the Trail safe and attractive. As part of our commitment, we regularly sponsor "Bells & Whistles" events throughout the year. One will be held on **Saturday, April 29, 10am until 12 noon** — Look for us at the Bethesda trail head.



Why "Bells & Whistles"? We hear from parents with small children, walkers and joggers, elderly people, some of whom are hearing-impaired who tell us stories of bicyclists and rollerbladers who pass without giving any audible warning. "Bells & Whistles" is an event meant to address those

concerns. Besides being required by law in Montgomery County and D.C., warnings are important for safety, are the courteous thing to do, and are appreciated by those being overtaken.

The Capital Crescent Trail has been an enormous success and with the advance of warmer weather and longer days can be very crowded with users of all sorts. Toddlers and children present a whole new set of concerns, as their actions can be unpredictable.

TRAIL SAFETY AND COURTESY MEANS:

- **ALL USERS** should stay to the right side of the trail except when passing.
- Passing other trail users to their left, allowing at least two feet clearance.
- Always look ahead and behind before passing.
- Give an audible voice or bell warning at least two seconds before passing.
- Travel at reasonable speed in a consistent and predictable manner.
- Keep all pets on a short leash (required by law).
- Move off the trail when stopped to allow others to pass.
- Yield to others when entering or crossing the trail.
- Use lights and reflectors after dusk or before dawn.

Where can I find water, food, and rest rooms along the CCT?

Water is available on the CCT at various places:

- A water fountain in Rock Creek Park at Ray's Meadow - 100' south of where the trestle bypass of the Georgetown Branch (Interim) Trail turns off of the Rock Creek Hiker/Biker Trail toward Freyman Drive.
- A water fountain at the rest stop at the Bethesda trailhead just below Bethesda Ave. near mile 3.5.
- A water fountain at the rest stop at mile 6.5 which is about ¼ mile north of the D.C. line.
- At Fletcher's boathouse at about mile 8.0 (although at Fletcher's you will have to leave the trail and go to the rest rooms or to the picnic area to find a fountain).
- A water fountain is located at Jack's boathouse just past the end of the trail in Georgetown.

There are restaurants and other food sources near the trail in Silver Spring, Bethesda and Georgetown, and also at the major road crossings at Connecticut Avenue and at River Road.

There are no public rest rooms directly on the Trail. There are public rest rooms convenient to the Trail at Fletcher's Boathouse, near mile 8.0.

BIKE TO WORK DAY MAY 19TH

Join us for Bike to Work Day as the CCT is once again front and center for this annual event. Groups will be biking to work on the CCT from Bethesda to D.C. (led by CCCT board member Jennifer Longworth), and there will be bike convoys from Silver Spring to Bethesda and Bethesda to Silver Spring.

There will be "pit stops" for cyclists to gather to start their rides near the CCT in both Bethesda and in Silver Spring.

You can learn more and register for the event at www.waba.org.





Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail ANNUAL REPORT 2005

The bylaws of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT) call for an annual statement of affairs to be made available to the CCCT Board and membership by April of each year.

The CCCT was very active throughout 2005.

The CCCT continued to be the principal source of trail information for the public. The Coalition website provided detailed trail maps, trail access and parking information, safety tips, and general news of interest to trail users. Website visitor counts of over 200/day were routine. CCCT distributed thousands of trail brochures in 2005 from information boxes at seven locations along the trail. These brochures contained a trail map, important trail etiquette and safety information, and contact numbers. The CCCT telephone hotline provided current information on trail events and trail conditions. CCCT volunteers answered dozens of questions and requests that were placed through the hotline or the website each month. Hundreds of copies of the detailed folding color map, with a historic perspective, were distributed free to all who requested copies. Our three 2005 editions of the Crescent Newsletter were mailed to over 2400 supporters – with information on trail conditions, news of trail developments, and encouragement for safe and courteous trail use.

Coalition volunteers staged several safety awareness events on the trail during 2005 – mounting bells free on bikes of those who requested them, giving free whistles to runners and rollerbladers, and distributing brochures with safety rules and tips. The Coalition was a financial sponsor of the May 2005 Bike-to-Work Day and Coalition volunteers led two group rides on the CCT to promote trail awareness for bike commuting.

The CCCT provided amenities to make the CCT easier and more pleasant to use. Two new trail side map cases, with 3' x 4' color maps, were purchased and installed on the eastern section of the Interim CCT in 2005. These maps were placed where they can best help trail users find the new on-road Georgetown Branch Trail connection into downtown Silver Spring that opened in late 2004.

The CCCT's role as the primary organization to represent the interests of CCT users continues to become ever more important as trail encroachment pressures grow from all sides. The CCCT has an able eleven person Board that represented trail users and gave testimony at meetings with community groups, developers, government agencies and key political representatives. Important issues the Coalition addressed in numerous meetings and hearings in 2005 include the National Park Service Environmental Assessment on the size of the proposed Georgetown Boathouse, Mont. Co. Park Division task force studies on safety modifications for the Little Falls Parkway trail crossing, developer's plans for a new Bethesda Post Office facility at Arlington Blvd., developer's plans for the Bethesda Parking Lot 31, Mont. Co. DPWT plans to reconfigure the Woodmont/Bethesda Ave. intersection, and the Maryland Transit Authority Bi-County Transitway alternatives analysis focus group meetings. All of these issues continue to be active, have a strong impact on the Trail, and will require CCCT to be very active to protect CCT interests in the coming year.

The financial strength and support base of the CCCT continued to grow in 2005. CCCT now has over 2400 contributors. Our total financial assets are now at approx. \$128,000.

Our financial assets make CCCT well positioned to provide substantial trail amenities in the near future. In 2005 CCCT joined with neighborhood groups to convince the County Executive to set aside the failed agreement with Minkoff Construction Co. to build a parking lot and trail rest plaza at River Road. We now have an opportunity, and a challenge, to develop this area as an attractive park and trail rest plaza. We are proposing that this be a joint effort, with CCCT, the Mont. Co. Parks Division and local neighborhoods working closely together. CCCT stands willing and able to make a substantial financial contribution as leverage to get this project underway.

Our large membership gives CCCT the strength it will need in the next year for important advocacy issues. The priority budget issue for the CCCT in 2006 is obtaining Operating Budget funding

to repair and stabilize the Interim CCT in Silver Spring. An approximate 1/2 mile long trail section regularly sustains severe storm water erosion damage, making that section unsafe for use for many classes of trail users. In 2005 CCCT explored options to fix this problem and identified a cost effective solution. In 2006 CCCT will make every effort to convince our County Executive and Council to support this work. Having a strong 2400 membership base will open doors to elected officials so we will have a good opportunity to make our case.

The CCCT reaches its 20 year anniversary in 2006 with the good health needed to face the challenges ahead. There is still much work to be done to complete the Trail and to make it more pleasant to use.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Gray, CCCT Chair (acting)

Now you may donate/renew with your credit card via the CCCT web site!
Visit www.cctrail.org to use our secured method.

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:

- \$10 Basic Individual
- \$30 Contributor
- \$60 Path Finder
- \$100 Patron
- \$200 Trail Blazer
- \$500 Benefactor

A DETAILED FOUR-COLOR MAP OF THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL WITH HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES IS AVAILABLE AS A FOLDING POCKET MAP.

**Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:
Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
P.O. Box 30703
Bethesda, MD 20824**

THIS MAP IS FREE TO ALL NEW MEMBERS.

Make your tax-deductible contribution checks payable to: The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail.

Mail to the address above. Or, visit our web site to donate/renew with a credit card.

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

Membership is good for one year from the 15th day of the month that you join.

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.



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Save June 12th on your calendar - for our



CCCT will mark completion of 20 years of service to the Trail at a special annual meeting on June 12, 2006, beginning at 6:00pm, at the Chevy Chase Town Hall, in the Leland Center.

**More information will be posted as we complete our plans -
but you can expect a great evening as we celebrate our rich history.**

All CCCT supporters and friends are welcome, and we will have free food and drink.

More details to follow; visit our web site www.cctrail.org, or call our events line, 202-234-4874.