CHRESCENT

CAPITAL

Summer 2000

Vol XI No. 2

CRESCE

COUNCIL VOTE GREEN LIGHTS TRESTLE FUNDING

FOR

Vote is a victory for grassroots campaign organized by CCCT

By Scott Hall and John Campanile

The Montgomery County Council budget meeting on May 16 was yet another close vote for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT). Like the February 1998 vote concerning the Wisconsin Avenue tunnel, this issue was not without its share of controversy and suspense. But when it was all over, we were delighted to learn that a 5-4 majority had voted to appropriate \$1.3 million to rebuild the Rock Creek trestle, an old railroad bridge that will link the Georgetown Branch/Future Capital Crescent Trail between Bethesda and Silver

Spring. Councilmember Isiah Leggett, a longtime supporter of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, was joined by Members Nancy Dacek, Howard Denis, Steven Silverman, and Michael Subin in voting for funding.

COALITION

The Council vote represents the culmination of months of intensive lobbying by the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, including an "Open the Trestle" rally held adjacent to the trestle in Rock Creek Park on April 29. A number of volunteers and community leaders supported our efforts to link the two sections of the Trail that would free Trail users from having to use a long, hilly detour through Rock Creek Park. These included the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Coalition, the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy, and many other civic and neighborhood groups. Our members and supporters spent countless hours



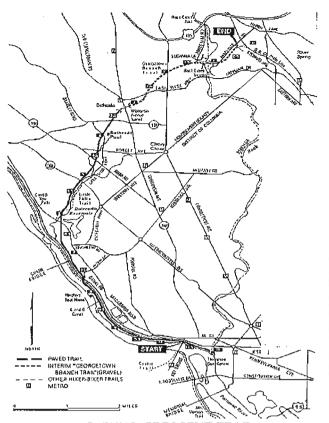
County Executive Doug Duncan addresses trail supporters at the Coalition's "Open The Trestle" rally.

over recent months gathering petition signatures, distributing fliers and information leaflets, planning and attending our rallies and hikes, and contacting Councilmembers. In addition, a number of trail supporters came to witness the vote holding signs that read "Please Open The Trestle." We deeply appreciate the efforts all of our supporters made to win this crucial vote.

Find out more! Visit: www. cctrail.org

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



4800 Block, Bethesda Avenue

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for trail updates and
events.

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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: john_campanile@paramount.com.

Coalition Board Members for 2000-2001

The following Board of Directors has been nominated for election at the June 2000 Annual Meeting of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail. The Board elects its officers at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting, and it is anticipated that the ones listed below will be endorsed.

Officers:	At-Large Members:
Officers.	

Pat Baptiste Wayne Phyillaier CHAIR Henri Bartholomot VICE-CHAIR John Dugger Scott Brewer [OPEN] **SECRETARY** John Campanile TREASURER Ernie Brooks Douglas Engle

Isacc Hantman Jennifer Longsworth David Putnam

ASST. TREASURER Charlie Wellander Scott Hall

During the annual meeting, the Coalition recognized the following individuals for their outstanding contributions in 1999/00 to the Coalition, especially for supporting our efforts to rebuild and reopen the Rock Creek Trestle, part of our ongoing goal of building a first-class Capital Crescent Trail:

> **Douglas Duncan, Montgomery County Executive** Betty Ann Krahnke, Montgomery County Council Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Council Meir Wolf, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Coalition

"Retiring" Board members Victoria Cordova and David Sproul were also recognized for their distinguished service to the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail.





Former Councilmember Betty Ann Krahnke and County Executive Douglas Duncan receive awards during CCCT's annual meeting.

DIAL UP TRAIL CONDITIONS AND EVENTS

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
- Coalition meeting dates
 Membership information
 Other me
 Inactive
- 4. Obtain a CCT map
- 5. Volunteer activities
- 6. Other messages
- 8. Trail hotline & events



continued from page 1

Once reopened, the trestle over the Rock Creek stream valley will, for the first time, open a direct and level pathway for users of the Trail to travel between the two downtowns along a four-mile stretch that currently uses a detour to bypass the damaged and unpaved trestle. But the debate on funding to rebuild the trestle became entangled in a controversy surrounding the proposal to build a transitway in the same right-of-way with the Trail. Some supporters of the transitway see the trestle as an obstacle to building the rail line, arguing that once the trestle is in use, the public will fight building light rail alongside the Trail. They also say that the trestle rebuild is a waste of money because it will likely have to be torn down to build a new bridge that will carry the rail and a trail if the rail line is built. But the Coalition argued that it could take six to ten years to resolve the many issues and neighborhood concerns before construction of the rail line can begin. Recent discussions with the Maryland Mass Transit Administration suggest that an ongoing study of the alternative "Purple Line" transit alignment options may further delay a final decision on the Bethesda-Silver Spring light rail proposal. Until then, in the Coalition's opinion, trail users should have full use of the Trail with the trestle.

The vote came just weeks after two out of three members of the council's Transportation and Environment committee – Blair Ewing and Derick Berlage – recommended against the project. In addition, John Porcari, head of the Maryland Department of Transportation, sent a letter to the council asking it to wait until more studies of the rail line are done rather that rebuild the trestle and thereby hamper the council's transportation goals. But Leggett, the only transportation committee member to support the

project, was able to persuade enough members to open the trestle for trail use while the debate over the transitway continues. Two trolley supporters, Council President Michael Subin and Steven Silverman, both D-At Large, voted to support trestle rehabilitation but emphasized that their votes were not votes against the proposed \$250 million project to link Bethesda and Silver Spring via a light rail transitway. Both members sent a joint letter to Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening after the May 16 vote making it clear they support light rail despite their votes for the trestle.

The County Council's vote to renovate the Rock Creek Trestle represents a tremendous victory for the Capital Crescent Trail and the trail users in our community. However, we should recognize that the proposed Bethesda-Silver Spring transitway will continue to have an enormous influence on our efforts to complete the Trail into Silver Spring and to connect it there to the proposed Metropolitan Branch Trail. The Coalition has a long-standing policy



CCCT Board member Doug Engle (2nd from left) explains trestle design to rally participants.

of neutrality regarding the transitway, principally because the County and State continue to say that the Trail will be part of the ultimate use of the corridor irrespective of decisions on the transitway. We will continue to maintain that efforts to complete the Capital Crescent Trail should not be held hostage to the transitway deliberations.

Funds for the completion of the Final Major Investment Study/Environmental Impact Study (MIS/EIS) for the proposed transitway were recently approved by the state legislature. The Coalition believes that

A Creek Runs Through It - The Rock Creek trestle



Montgomery County Councilmembers Howard Denis and Isiah Leggett.

the Preliminary MIS/EIS done in 1996 is seriously flawed because it does not adequately commit to a high quality trail alongside the proposed transitway. The Coalition will continue to demand that any proposed transitway in the right-of-way must also accommodate a trail having the same high standards we have fought for on other parts of the Capital Crescent Trail.



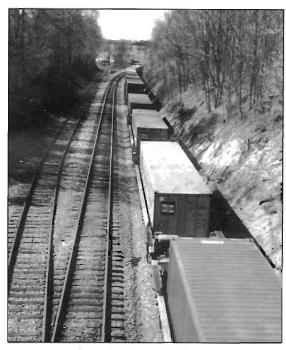
Rails-To-Rails Conservancy President David Burwell.

The Last Green Mile

Study to develop plans for completing the Trail into downtown Silver Spring. By Wayne Phyillaier

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) has selected Lardner/Kline Landscape Architects in Alexandria to perform a six-month, \$200K study ("Trail Facility Planning Project") to develop a blueprint for completing the Capital Crescent Trail's final mile into downtown Silver Spring. The approximate one-mile section of the Metropolitan Branch Trail from downtown Silver Spring to the D.C. boundary at Takoma Park will also be studied.

The preferred alignment for the final mile of the Capital Crescent Trail, as support by the Coalition and documented in all relevant Master Plans, is alongside the CSX railroad right-of-way all the way into the Silver Spring Metro Station. But there are significant right-of-way issues, neighborhood concerns, and transitway compatibility issues that need to be addressed by this study before the trail can be built on this alignment. We believe this study will show that several key parts of the final Capital Crescent Trail can be built on the preferred alignment now. But several sections of the final Trail will likely be shown not practical to build until the transitway issue is resolved because of design interferences with the proposed transitway. Upon completion of this study, the County will be ready to begin building those sections of the final Trail that are judged to be compatible with future transit use of the corridor. The timing could not be better – the trestle over Rock Creek Park is expected to be open for Interim Trail



The Tracks of the Trail

From the Talbot Street Bridge in Silver Spring, the long-abandoned Georgetown Branch Rail Line "branches" to the left of the CSX mainline.

use in early 2002, and the heavy use the trestle will bring to the Trail in Silver Spring will make a good quality trail into Silver Spring even more desirable.

The Coalition has proposed a new Interim Trail alignment that uses those parts of the final Trail alignment that appear feasible to build now, and connects those sections using several short stretches of quiet neighborhood streets or local trails. The Coalitions' proposed Interim Trail would be mainly off-road and would have grade separated crossings of busy streets, representing a great improvement over the current Interim (Georgetown Branch) Trail which continues into Silver Spring on busy Brookville Road and Second Avenue. That unpleasant and dangerous on-road section can soon be replaced by a new Interim Trail that is safe and fun to use – all the way into downtown Silver Spring. The Coalition has presented its recommendations to M-NCCPC, and will be offering its ideas and trail experience to Lardner/Kline.

A message that's worth repeating...

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. You can do your part: Carry a plastic grocery bag with you when you're out on the Trail and take your trash with you. It will make the volunteers' efforts easier.

An Open Letter to Washington D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams

June 10, 2000

Dear Mayor Williams:

We are writing to urge you to take measures to protect the Metropolitan Branch Trail, an important commuting and recreation facility.

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail is an all-volunteer, nonprofit group committed to completing the Capital Crescent Trail from Georgetown to Silver Spring, and connecting it in Silver Spring to the Metropolitan Branch Trail to form a regional trail network. We have 1600 members and over 30 affiliated organizations. Much of the Capital Crescent Trail is in the District of Columbia. Many of our members are D. C. residents.

The Metropolitan Branch Trail offers to the District and to Maryland many benefits from a 7.7 mile car-free greenway between Union Station, Silver Spring and Hyattsville; a route which will be important to bicycle commuting, which has become increasingly important as streets become more congested with cars. It is planned to connect to the Capital Crescent Trail in Silver Spring to form a continuous, 24 mile "bicycle beltway" through Bethesda and Georgetown and across the National Mall. The plan for a "bicycle beltway" has generated much excitement in the region. When complete it will be one of the nation's best recreational tourism attractions as well as a tremendous asset to local residents for recreation and bicycle commuting.



Montgomery County and CSX Railroad have signed a memorandum of intent for the County to purchase this CSX property at Georgia Avenue for a fire and police station. It sits alongside the proposed right-of-way for the Metropolitan Branch Trail and is considered to be a critical section of that trail between Silver Spring and Takoma Park. Under current proposals, the Met Branch and Capital Crescent Trails will meet at the Silver Spring Metro Station.

In 1998 Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton arranged for a congressional appropriation of \$8.6 million for land acquisition and trail construction. But some of the preliminary drawings developed by WMATA for the proposed Red Line Metro station between Union Station and Rhode Island Avenue show the station would obliterate the proposed Metropolitan Branch Trail. There is room for both the trail and the new metro station in the corridor. But Metro planners and District Department of Public Works planners must coordinate to assure that both the trail and the subway fit together. A failure to coordinate now may result in the Metropolitan Branch Trail being assigned to an on-road alignment on busy streets and intersections at the New York Avenue area. This would essentially destroy the Metropolitan Branch Trail and seriously compromise the regional commuting and recreational trail network.

The Metropolitan Branch Trail is also a primary provider of bike/pedestrian access to the proposed new Metro station. The loss of easy bike/pedestrian station access by compromising the trail will reduce ridership at that station and will detract from the desired transit oriented development in that area. It is in the best interests of both WMATA and those seeking to redevelop this part of D.C. to have a continuous Metropolitan Branch Trail, well integrated into the Metro station.

We ask you to use your office to make transit and trail work well together at the proposed new station. Our Coalition supports the request by the Washington Area Bicycling Association that a high-level meeting be convened between the city and Metro, and that a professional project manager with trail development experience be hired to make the Metropolitan Branch Trail a reality.

Sincerely, Wayne Phyillaier CCCT Chair

Along The Trail ...

5 Years Ago...

The Montgomery County Council, by a vote of 9-0, authorizes \$391,000 for the development of the Georgetown Branch interim trail from the Wisconsin Avenue tunnel in Bethesda east to Silver Spring (Stewart Avenue). Letters of support from CCCT supporters are instrumental.

10 Years Ago...

A National Geographic Magazine article on Greenways includes a photo of CCCT's clean-up activities along the Trail.

The CCCT Trail Committee divides the Trail's right-of-way into 11 sections and assigns a steward to maintain each one.

20 Years Ago...

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan details Montgomery County's interest in a potential trail along the thenoperating Georgetown Branch rail line. The last train runs to Georgetown five years later (1985). CSX files notice of abandonment of the line with the Interstate Commerce Commission in April 1986.

140 Years Ago...

Aqueduct for city water supply completed from Great Falls to Georgetown, following present day MacArthur Boulevard; Dalecarlia filtration plant added in 1925.

More Memories...

Part of an occasional series of personal stories about the history of the Capital Crescent Trail. Chevy Chase resident David Orem provides this recollection.

Louie Maxwell's memories of his boyhood reminded me of my experiences along the old B&O Railroad - from about the same time period. I grew up on Williams Lane and we ran in a gang of boys. The oldest was a boy named Jimmy Varella, whom Louis will remember, I'm sure. One fine summer day, Jim said that we were all going up to the railroad to look for stuff. Jim said that sometimes you could find "neat stuff" along the tracks. We walked up to the Lake and then started out along the tracks looking for neat stuff. I found that with a long stride, I could step on every other tie but some of the younger kids had to step on each one to keep up. It wasn't easy and I didn't find any neat stuff

In time, we came to the trestle. It looked enormous but Jim said we were going to walk across it. Someone said "But what if a train comes?" and Jim said we'd be across by then and not to worry. We started out onto the trestle. Here, you could look down between the ties. You had to carefully step on every one and make sure your foot didn't get stuck between them. Our anxiety level began to rise but Jim just kept on going. About half way across, someone said, "I think I hear the train!" We all listened. I couldn't hear anything. Jim said, "This is the way the Indians did it," and he got down on all fours and put his ear to the rail. We all tried that too and, yes, we could hear something in the rail. We panicked! "Let's go!" Jim said, "The Train's coming!" and started off at a run for the other side.

We ran as fast as we could, being careful to step on a tie and not between them, which made running look more like hopping or skipping, and finally the last of us, the youngest ones, came across and joined the rest of us in the bushes where we all dove, expecting a fire-breathing monster to be just a few feet behind. We lay there in the bushes but no train came. We waited and waited, which gave us a chance to catch our breath. Finally, Jim said the train must have stopped, so we climbed down the bank and found our way home along a path by the creek. No one wanted to go home by walking back across the trestle but when we got home, our story changed - we told the girls and anyone else who would listen except our parents, how the engine was "right behind us - ringing the bell and blowing the whistle! It was really close!" What a great story.

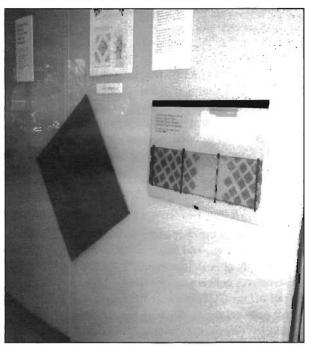
Dave Orem Chevy Chase, Maryland

Have a story to share? Send or e-mail them to the CCCT (see page two for address).

Arts Trust Chooses Local Artist for Tunnel Display

The Public Arts Trust of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County has chosen a Bethesda artist to bring luminous color to the somber darkness of the Wisconsin Avenue/CCT tunnel. Sally Callmer, whose "Penguin Rush Hour" mural graces a wall at the Silver Spring Metro, will create a bright, curving rainbow to span the length of the tunnel. Entitled "Prismatic Passage," Callmer will construct her sculpture from aluminum screening, which she will cut into 1,400, two-foot squares, and paint them the seven colors of the spectrum magenta, violet, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. She will attach the squares sideways on both sides of the 10-foot tall, chain-link fence lining the tunnel. As trail users pass through the tunnel, the colors will evolve from one color to the next, achieving the illusion of passing through a prism. The trust will spend \$15,000 on the artwork, which will be completed by the end of September.

There were four runner-ups to the tunnel artwork competition, each of whom will receive \$1,000. They were: Betsy Damos of Washington, D.C., who proposed weaving colored fabric through the fence; Malcolm Hally of Rockville, who wanted to hang historic banners; Megan Marlatt of Orange,



Sally Callmer's winning design for the Wisconsin Avenue Tunnel arts project.



To promote safety and courtesy, along with the "Open the Trestle" petition drive, the CCCT held two "Bells & Whistles" this Spring. Board members **Wayne Phyillaier**, **Pat Baptiste** and **Doug Engle** work the table at this one.

Virginia, who wanted to draw animal and human figures on the tunnel's pathway; and Deirdre Saunder of Potomac, who planned to hang painted found objects on the fence to resemble animal and human figures. The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail was one of five contributors to the funding that awarded the runners-up. The tunnel was built a century ago for trains that ran along the Georgetown Branch rail line, but became part of the "rails-to-trails" Capital Crescent Trail a decade ago when the County purchased the right-of-way for the Trail over a decade ago. The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail succeeded two years ago in persuading county officials to re-open the tunnel for trail users. Despite the presence of lighting, much of which was

Callmer, who graduated from Walt Whitman High School and has a fine arts degree from the University of Maryland, hopes to find a benevolent landlord in downtown Bethesda who will donate space for a temporary studio where she can construct the pieces nearer to the tunnel than her home.

paid for by the Coalition, the overall feel of the tunnel remains large and dark. The challenge for artists was to create a sense of art that would not disappear in such an

enormous space.

Trail Safety

I was so happy to see you address the issue of trail courtesy and safety in your most recent newsletter. I walk three days a week and am continually horrified by the dangerous conduct of many bikers. While they do give warning, they do not realize that it may take an average human a few seconds to process that warning. I cannot tell you the number of times I have witnessed them "thread the needle," meaning ride at top speed between two sets of oncoming walkers (sometimes four bodies across), endangering multiple lives. The bikers seem to feel that if they give warning we walkers should jump into the bushes and clear the trail so they do not have to slow down (or heaven forbid wait to pass). Their speeds are excessive so close to slower travelers and their impatience is dangerous. If a person were hit at high speed by a biker it would do serious damage.

This is not an isolated incident - it happens almost every time we walk and it makes me furious! Please keep up the appeal for more courteous behavior from bikers-the trail is not only for their racing pleasure!

Ashley Quamme

PARC Plans

I have been a member of the Crescent Trail Coalition for several years, and support the trail as a path for runners, bikers, walkers, etc., and NOT as a lobbying organization to close Rock Creek Park road to traffic during the week. In fact, I strongly oppose [the People's Alliance for Rock Creek Park's (PARC)] plan and have contacted my representatives concerning my views. I prefer the Coalition to use all funds and opportunities to keep the proposed light rail off the CCTrail (which I believe will kill the trail), rather than divert your efforts by supporting potentially divisive political issues that may not represent your membership's interests, and risk losing members who like the Trail but have opposing views on the Rock Creek issue.

Traffic in the entire region is impossible. Biking to work is impractical for most, and closing any major artery won't make the situation any better. Hundreds of thousands commute by Rock Creek each day, and on the occasions when Rock Creek is closed (as it was last spring due to an oil spill in the zoo tunnel, or due to flooding), the overflow on adjacent streets turns them into veritable parking lots.

The whole PARC proposal seems unrealistic, but that is only my opinion. My main objection is using membership funds to obscure your purpose. Please be FOR the Trail, and don't be diverted from the basic objective of completing the Georgetown Branch, finishing the Trestle, and getting the entire Trail fully paved and available for all the current and potential users.

Thank you.

L. Stalter

A Note of Thanks and Encouragement

Well, it certainly was a pleasure to see my letter to CCCT "in print" [*The Crescent*, Spring 2000, p. 8]. It gives one a good feeling to know that such a good cause is going forward.

I have also joined the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy and received their book with over 10,000 miles of trails in 50 states. I now have my "work" cut out for me. It will be fun to ride as many of these trails as time and distance permits on my faithful 6-speed bike.

I also wanted to thank you for adding the sentence, "To our young readers, please don't ever do this!"

So to all of you folks, keep up the <u>good work!</u> I am looking forward to the day we can ride the Capital Crescent Trail with no side street detours.

Lou Maxwell Jackson, Mississippi

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		
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Make check				P.O. Box 30703, Bethes	da, MD, 20824	
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We	are an all-volunteer	organization	I am interested	in volunteering, contact	me for:	
		Advocacy	EventsTrail Ma	intenance		
We do not share our CCCT is exempt from	r membership list with an om federal taxation under	ry organization ex r section 501(c)(3	ccept our affiliate organi) of the IRS Code and i	additional contrib- zation, the Washington Are s qualified to receive tax-d	ea Bicyclist Asso eductible contrib	ciation.
VISIT OU	R WEB SITE, WITT	<u>v.cctrail.c</u>	<u>DRG,</u> FOR ACTION	I ALERTS and TRAIL	. UPDATES.	

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All events are rain or shine, unless noted. To confirm any CCCT event, call the Events Hotline, 202-234-4874, box 8, or on our WEB SITE: <www.cctrail.org.>

CCCT MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Mondays, - July 10, August 14, September 11, 7:00 p.m. in the Bethesda Regional Library, Arlington Rd. Closest Metrorail: Bethesda. Bike parking indoors.

Guests are welcome!

Wednesdays and Sundays thru September, SUMMER CONCERTS AT THE ROW. Free concerts on Bethesda Row, in front of Barnes & Noble book store (adjacent to the CCCT trail head at Bethesda Avenue). For schedule, contact Bethesda Urban Partnership, 301-215-6660; www.bethesda.org.



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Our appreciation to all of our members and friends for supporting our efforts to open the Rock Creek Trestle.



Next Stop: Silver Spring!