

THE CRESCENT

THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

Summer 2002

Vol. XI No. 8

“Friends at the Trail” Recognized at CCCT Annual Meeting

Several individuals and groups that made a special contribution to the Capital Crescent Trail were recognized at the June 10 annual meeting.

“Unsung Heroes” of the Capital Crescent Trail were recognized and honored at the Coalition’s annual meeting held at the Elm Street Park in Bethesda.

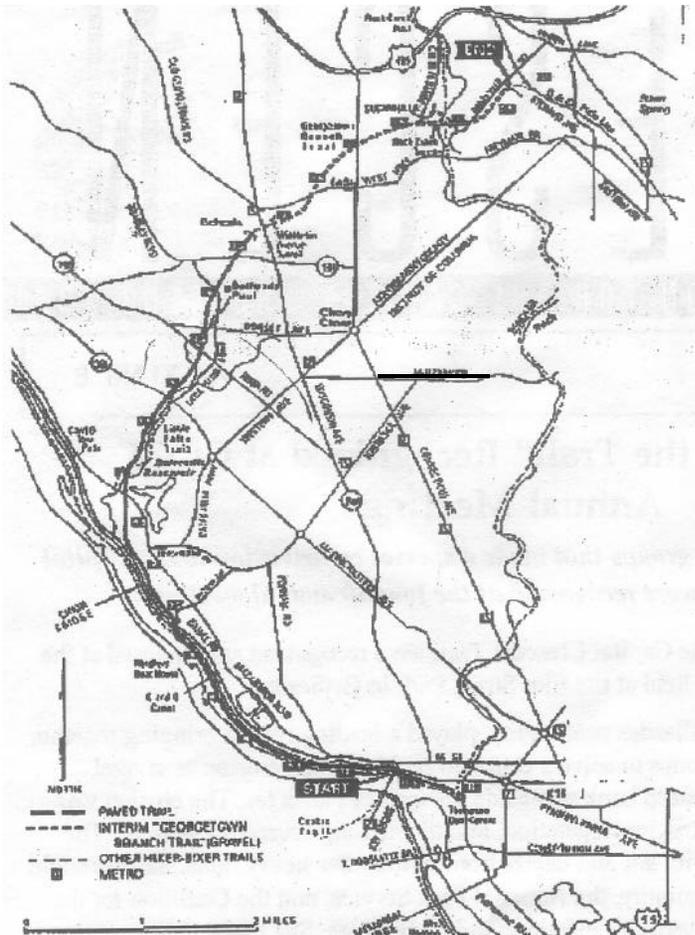
Sally Strain, of the Palisades community, played a leading role in bringing together several different interest groups to solve a common problem- the erosion at several informal “goat trails” on a steep bank alongside the trail in Palisades. The erosion was destabilizing the slope, destroying vegetation, and threatening several large trees. The trail was regularly awash with silt and debris from runoff after heavy rains. Sally brought together the Palisades Community, the National Park Service, and the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail in a series of meetings and discussions. She had the diplomatic touch, the patience and the persistence that was essential for getting these diverse groups to agree on a common plan and to execute it. The result is a beautifully landscaped slope, replanted with native species, stabilized in a way that has stopped the erosion and that has increased the safety and convenience of trail users.

CCCT also wishes to acknowledge several others who also made big contributions to this effort. **Paul Hagen**, of the Palisades Community, worked tirelessly with the Palisades Citizens Association and organized the volunteer work parties that did much of the planting and landscaping. **Jack Koczela**, also of Palisades, was a tireless booster of the trail with many ideas and much enthusiasm. **John Noel**, of the National Parks Service, developed a stabilization design that was sensitive to the community issues and supervised construction. **Matt Berres** of the Potomac Conservancy, provided support, in particular regarding raising and managing funds for the re-vegetation. **Lou Aronica**, Conservation Chairman of the Maryland Native Plant Society, provided guidance regarding selection of appropriate plant materials.

But it was Sally Strain who brought the orchestra together and kept it playing in harmony. For that reason, we believe she deserves this special recognition and thanks.

Jack Hayes, of East Bethesda, was recognized for the contributions he has made to the Trail in his community. He has provided essential initiation and leadership to acquire the materials and labor to improve the local access path between the trail and Kentbury Drive near mile 2.5. He worked with the adjacent neighbors to obtain their acceptance and support, and enlisted the local Boy Scout troop to do the fence reconstruction, shrub selection and planting and path re-grading. Jack also took the lead to install three trailside benches in the area, and supervised another Boy Scout project to remove non-native invasive vegetation from the Trail.

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



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

THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL
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We request that all entries should be sent to the post office box listed above. Submissions should be sent via e-mail to: jcamp213@fox.com, or by mail to CCCT.

**COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL
STATEMENT OF AFFAIRS FOR THE YEAR 2001**

The By-Laws of the Coalition direct that the Chair submit to the Board in April and to the membership in June a Statement of Affairs

The Coalition has made notable progress in our goal of completing the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) during this year. Our most significant efforts were directed toward **opening the trestle over Rock Creek Park for Trail use**. In June 2001, Montgomery County signed a 1.2M\$ contract for the reconstruction of the trestle. This was a direct result of a successful advocacy campaign by the Coalition. The project funds only permitted reconstruction with a minimal 12' wide deck. This is less than the minimum 14' AASHTO recommended design guideline and also less than the other bridges on the CCT. Because the trestle is approximately 70' above the scenic Rock Creek stream valley, trail users will stop to take in the view and will cause dangerous and unpleasant conflicts with purposeful through trail cyclists on a narrow bridge deck. In July the Coalition began an effort to explore options to address this problem. Several engineering options were explored with Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT). An "**observation deck**" near the trestle mid-span was chosen as the most desirable option. The observation deck will provide 5' wide viewing areas along an approx. 30' length on both sides of the trail. It will provide a park scenic attraction while also improving trail safety. The Coalition then led an effort to secure the additional funding needed for the project, and in February 2002 gave \$75,000 to Montgomery County. This, together with \$55,000 donated by the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Coalition and \$2500 donated by the Washington Bicyclist Association (WABA), represents 2/3 of the additional cost of the observation deck and enabled the County to issue a contract amendment to include the observation deck in the trestle design. Detailed design of the trestle with observation deck is now underway and ground breaking is expected in August 2002. When completed, the trestle will be one of the strongest scenic attractions in the Montgomery County park system.



A new trail link in the works - Crews have begun work on constructing an access path from Bradley Blvd up to the Capital Crescent Trail. Work is expected to be completed later this summer.

Continued on page 4.

CCCT Statement on Transitway

Montgomery County is considering and the Maryland Mass Transit Administration is developing plans for a proposed light rail Georgetown Branch Transitway between the Silver Spring and Bethesda Metro Stations. Also being considered by the County and State is a longer distance "Purple Line" which might supplant the Georgetown Branch Transitway. If either light rail is built in the Georgetown Branch right-of-way a four-mile section of the CCT will run alongside an active transitway.

The CCCT Board of Directors actively monitors these developments. The Board has agreed, for various reasons, to neither support nor oppose the Transitway at this time. Some people believe the trail can coexist with light rail while others believe the trail would be too seriously harmed by light rail. The issue is very complex and is a difficult one for many organizations and individuals. Most important to the CCCT Board is its desire to maximize our ability to help realize a first class hiker-biker trail within the Georgetown Branch right-of-way continuous from Silver Spring to Bethesda. Furthermore, that trail should be integrally connected at Bethesda to the existing Capital Crescent Trail and at the future Silver Spring Transit Station to the Metropolitan Branch Trail. Taking a position for, or against, transitway at this time will cause divisions within the CCCT and compromise our standing with key County and State decision makers.

We will continue to follow transitway decisions and plans very closely and will continue to advocate for development of the best possible trail in any plans that are developed. If transitway plans emerge that do not recognize the importance to the community of a good trail in the right-of-way, then CCCT will vigorously oppose such proposals.

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The Coalition continued its efforts this year to secure commitments from Montgomery County for completion of the rest of the Trail. The priority is on getting a **local access trail from the Interim CCT to the Lyttonville/Rosemary Hills neighborhood** as soon as possible; so that the Interim CCT can be taken off of dangerous Brookville Road shortly after the trestle is opened. The Coalition **made** presentations to four neighborhood groups, sent letters to the County Executive and the County Council, and gave public testimony at the County Council CIP Budget Hearing. While some progress was made in raising awareness of the need and importance of local trail access at Lyttonville, we failed to get this project into the FY03 Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) budget. But the foundation has been laid for a successful effort in the next CIP budget cycle two years from now, and the Coalition will continue in its efforts.

The Coalition continues to protect and enhance the completed parts of the CCT on behalf of our members and trail users. During this year Coalition representatives, together with WABA, met with National Park Service representatives to advocate for an attractive and effective **trail connection between the CCT and the Rock Creek Hiker/Biker Trail** through the proposed Georgetown Waterfront Park. The Coalition collaborated with the **Palisades Citizens Association** to develop plans for re-vegetation around the new stairs for the local access trail to their community, and donated \$300 to help them purchase plant materials. We discussed and revised plans with the **Westbard Mews neighborhood association** to ensure their trail access ramp near River Road would not compromise trail safety. We met with the **Sachs neighborhood association and County Planners** to advocate for protecting Trail aesthetics and access at the Bethesda trailhead in the plans for redevelopment of Parking Lot 31. We met with **Federal Realty** representatives to explore options for future landscaping improvements along the Trail at their theater project at the Bethesda tunnel. We contacted **County Council members** to urge support for the County Executive's CIP Budget proposal to procure property at the end of Pearl Street for a trail access ramp. We alerted **Montgomery County DPWT** to the potentially dangerous traffic/trail conflict that would arise if they built a traffic circle at the intersection of Jones Bridge and Jones Mill Roads.

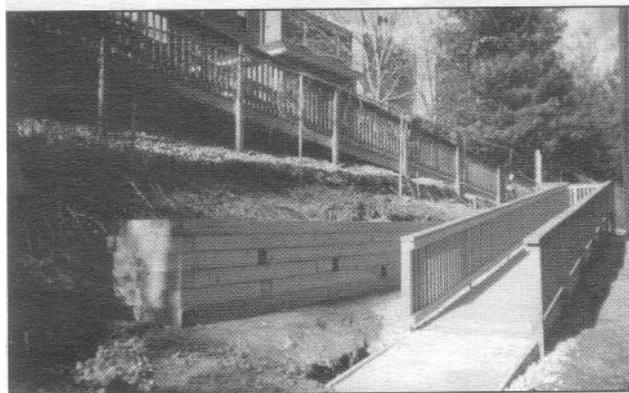
We continued our program of promoting safety on the Trail by using our newsletter, our website, and the bulletin boards at the map kiosks along the trail to spread safety messages and safety tips. We held several "**Bells and Whistles**" safety events on the Trail during the year, distributing free bells and whistles to those who desired them to promote the idea of giving warning when passing. After nearly five years of advocating for more safety signs on the Trail as a partner on the interagency trail management team, our efforts were finally rewarded this winter when the Montgomery County Parks Department erected **trail safety signs** between Bethesda and D.C. The National Park Service announced its intention to erect safety signs this season on its D.C. trail section.

The generous support of our members has allowed the Coalition to make its **largest financial contribution to development of the CCT** in its history and still remain in sound financial health. The end-of-year fund raising effort was very successful, and together with reserve funds enabled us to make the \$75,000 donation for the trestle observation deck while maintaining our other program services for members and also preserving adequate net assets for the coming year. Our membership base remains strong, exceeding **1600 members**. We continue to have an able and strong Board. The opening of the trestle next year will open the Trail to Silver Spring, and will present us with an outstanding opportunity to broaden public support to complete the Trail.

Respectfully submitted,
Wayne Phyllaier *CCCT Chair*



Fresh Fields has agreed to donate a water fountain for the River Road parks project once construction commences later this year. As reported in the CCCT spring newsletter (p. 6), Montgomery County agreed to give nearby Minkoff Construction the right to use parking spaces adjacent to the River Road bridge in exchange for trail enhancements, including landscaping and benches. With the donation of a water fountain by Fresh Fields, another enhancement will be added to the future park.



trail access ramp.

Members' Feedback

Take a Hike!

I hope to walk on the Trail for a benefit event. How steep are the hills on the Trail? Can you suggest which end is best to start? I plan to walk the complete Trail (11 miles) and then turn, have lunch, and walk the 11 miles back.

Thank you for your help and suggestions.

Kathy C, MS Walk 2002, 3 DDC 2002, Walker No. 1803 -- (via e-mail)

Kathy:

Look at the website <http://bikewashington.org/trails/cct/cct.htm> at the bottom of the page for an elevation profile of the CCT. Since the trail is built on an old railroad line, the grades are very gradual except at the trestle detour in Rock Creek Park, where the on-road detour has a short, but steep, grade.

I am assuming you will want to turn around where the off-road trail ends at Stewart Avenue, and not continue along the approx. 2 mile on-road Interim Trail route into downtown Silver Spring. That final 2 miles is not especially interesting, and will turn the 11 miles into 13 miles. I would be inclined to begin and end at the Georgetown end, so that I would have the most scenic and down grade section to keep my spirits up near the end as I start to fatigue. If you do that, you may want to plan on having lunch at Rays Meadow in Rock Creek Park at the trestle detour just 1 mile from the turn around at Stewart Avenue. There is a table and water fountain there. The turn-around point at Stewart Avenue is in an industrial area and has no amenities.

If you are not carrying lunch, then your best bet is to get lunch in Bethesda. There are no restaurants near the Stewart Avenue end.

Have a good hike.

(Editor's note: Detailed four-color maps of the Capital Crescent Trail with historical perspectives are available for the price of a self-addressed stamped 37-cent envelope. Mail to: CCCT, P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, Md., 20824.)

Getting from point A to B

I live near the intersection of the Sligo Creek Trail and University Blvd. I'd like to bike to my office (near the intersection of Connecticut Ave and the CCT) but I'm confused on the state of the trail between Sligo Creek Trail/Silver Spring and the CCT. Is there a way for me to get from point A to point B without crossing major roads? I'm looking for the safest, not necessarily the fastest or most direct route.

Thanks!

Kevin K. - (via e-mail)

Kevin:

The Silver Spring Green Trail is programmed for construction, with completion around 2005, to provide an off-road connection between the Sligo Creek Trail and the CCT. But it will follow Wayne Avenue, and will be too far south on Sligo to provide a very direct route for you.

There is a route to connect between the trails, using quiet neighborhood streets, but it does require crossing Georgia Avenue. The route uses Crosby Road and Highland Drive through Woodside and Woodside Park. Since the CCT is still only partially complete, you also will want to use the "shortcut" on Grace Church Road and Talbot Avenue to avoid the nasty section of Brookville Road that the Georgetown Branch Trail uses. See my personal website, <http://home.earthlink.net/~wphvilla/> for maps and directions on this route. Go to the "trail connections" web pages for "Sligo to Georgetown Branch" and "Georgetown Branch to Silver Spring".

The most direct connection, if you are comfortable with a moderate level of traffic is to use Forest Glen Road to make the connection. From Sligo Creek go west on Forest Glen Road across Georgia, and continue on across Seminary Road/Capital View to turn right onto Newcastle Avenue just past the bridge over the beltway. Newcastle will take you down into the Rock Creek Stream Valley where you can take the Rock Creek Hiker/Biker Trail south to the Georgetown Branch Trail.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about any of these routes.

Wayne Phyllaier

Coalition Board Members for 2002 - 2003

The following Board of Directors has been nominated for election at the June 2002 Annual Meeting of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail. The Board will elect its officers at its July 8th meeting.

Pat Baptiste Ernie Brooks **John Campanile** John Dugger **Jennie Sue Dunner** Issac Hantman
Jennifer Longsworth **Andy O'Hare** David Putnam **Wayne Phyllaier** Charlie Wellander

Continuation from page 1 - "Friends at the Trail"

Many others worked on these projects with him, but Jack deserves special recognition and thanks as the one who brought it all together.

Ira Shesser, of Chevy Chase, was recognized for his contribution to our effort to get observation decks included in the trestle over Rock Creek Park. Ira has been a good friend of CCCT over the years, raising support in his community for opening the Bethesda Tunnel and for opening the trestle over Rock Creek. This year his support was crucial for CCCT to achieve its major goal of getting the observation deck. The cost for adding the observation deck to the trestle rehabilitation project rose to a level beyond CCCT's reach. Even though we were prepared to pledge \$75K to the effort, there still was a big gap. Ira worked through the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Coalition to secure the \$55K needed to close the gap. Ira worked hard to convince his community of the importance of this project, and demonstrated his commitment with a strong personal contribution.

As with the other "Friends of the Trail" recognitions, we must thank many in Ira's community for their support. But Ira deserves special recognition for his leadership role.

All of **Olney Girl Scout Troop 1106**, and its leader, **Kelly Groff**, were recognized for the support they have given to the CCCT "Bells and Whistles" safety effort. They have twice joined with CCCT to hold a safety event on the Trail, at the Bethesda Trailhead, in which free bells for bikes and whistles for rollerbladers are given to those who desire them. The Gil Scouts provided the volunteer "labor" to install bells on bikes and to promote the safety message to give warning when passing. This is becoming an ongoing cooperative effort between CCCT and Girl Scout Troop 1106, with another event being planned for this fall.

DIAL UP TRAIL CONDITIONS AND EVENTS

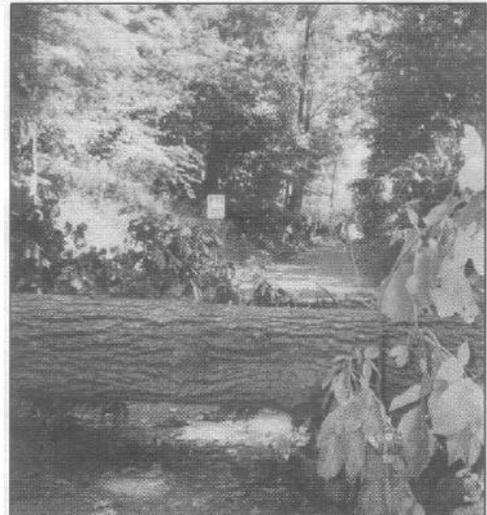
We can't be everywhere! Be the Coalition's eyes and ears the next time **you're out on the Trail - Call the CCCT Information Line at 202-234-4874 and press box "8."** Leave a message on trail conditions you've encountered, or on any issue, which might impact the Trail. The hotline message provides trail 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 |



It happens every spring. A mid-May storm brought this tree down on the Georgetown Branch section of the CCT at the Kentbury access. Within 24 hours of notification by a CCCT member, Montgomery County DPWT crews had the tree removed.

Along the Trail...

15 years ago...

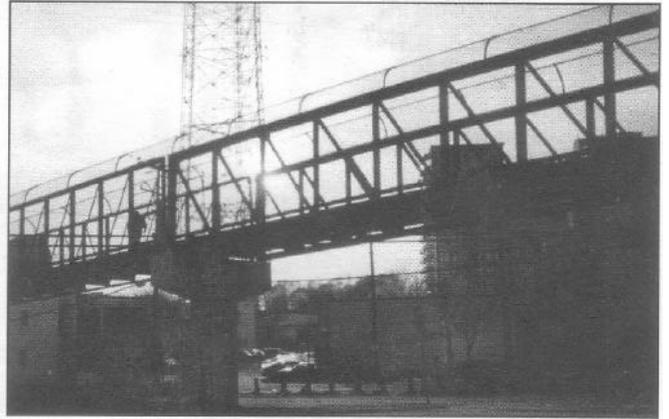
The Montgomery County Council approves the first *Georgetown Branch Master Plan*, stating that the right-of-way has potential use for transit, recreation, conservation, and/or utilities.

10 years ago...

CCCT leads Maryland Dept. of Transportation Secretary James Lighthizer, County Executive Neal Potter and other officials on a tour of the right-of-way.

7 years ago...

The awarding of a contract for construction of the River Road bridge stalls over projected costs; the lowest bid is \$100,000 over the amount budgeted by the County.



“Let no one say - and say it 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.

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.

Second Mondays, July 8, August 12, September 9 (Call 202-234-4874, mailbox 8, to confirm dates) 



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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 _____ S t a t e 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 \$100**, recognition in our annual report, newsletter subscription, action alerts, and commemorative rail spike (IF DESIRED -YES) OR T-shin (IF DESIRED, PLEASE CIRCLE Size M L XL)

Thanks **far your efforts on behalf of the Trail, and in funding the trestle overlooks!**
Here's an additional contribution of \$_____

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 qualifii to receive tax-deductible contributions. VISIT OUR WEB SITE, www.cctrail.org, FOR ACTION ALERTS AND TRAIL UPDATES.