

THE CRESCENT

THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

Summer 2003

Vol. XII No. 2

Montgomery County Officially Opens the Reconstructed Rock Creek Trestle

Montgomery County officials hosted a Rock Creek trestle dedication ceremony on May 31st for the "official" opening of the trestle on the Georgetown Branch/Capital Crescent Trail (the trestle was available to trail users prior to the 31st, even as work crews put some finishing touches on the rehabilitation project). County Executive Doug Duncan and Council member Howard Denis (R-Dist. 1) were among the county and state officials who joined a crowd of enthusiastic trail users (some of whom displayed pro- and anti-Purple Line signs) to cut the ribbon at the Trail's newly rehabilitated trestle bridge in Rock Creek Park.



Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan (right) peers over the trestle railing prior to making his comments at the May 31st trestle dedication ceremony. Joining him at the podium was County Council member Howard A. Denis (at mike), who began his comments by saying, "Welcome to Montgomery County's newest tourist attraction!"

The \$1.3-million trestle spans across Rock Creek to connect Silver Spring to the east with Chevy Chase and Bethesda to the west, via the crushed stone portion of the trail. Previously an abandoned, single-track wooden railroad trestle built in 1892, this latest enhancement to the Capital Crescent Trail

features an overlaying steel bridge, railings, a wooden deck, safety fences and two scenic overlooks. The CCCT contributed \$75,000 earlier this year to add the scenic overlooks to the reconstruction of the trestle.

As with most public gatherings on the trail these days, the dedication ceremony was not without its controversial aspects. Advocates on both sides of the ongoing Inner Purple Line debate (IPL) were out in force carrying signs and chanting. The IPL proposal would link Silver Spring and Bethesda with a light rail transit system that would follow the same right-of-way with the Georgetown Branch/Capital Crescent Trail.

In his comments, CCCT Chair Ernie Brooks noted that the trestle is a great addition to the Trail, and that the Coalition was very happy with the scenic overlooks. He singled out Board members John Dugger, David Putman and John Campanile for their efforts in drafting an excellent fundraising letter for the overlooks, and in getting the word out on the project on our website and in our newsletter. He gave special thanks to former Chair Wayne Phyllaier for his efforts spearheading the trestle rehab project. He closed his comments by welcoming those

continued on page 4

CCCT Reply to *Gazette* article, “Purple line might determine trail’s fate”.

Dear Sirs:

As one of the participants in the walk along the Silver Spring section of the proposed Inner Purple Line corridor, which was discussed in the article noted above (see June 11, 2003 *Gazette*), I feel the position of the organization I represent, the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, was not properly reported.

As I mentioned to Ms. Hooker during the walk, the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail recognizes that there are issues for the trail if the rail line is not built, but there are also issues for the trail if it is built. Other groups involved in this debate start from a pro or anti rail position, and then point out how their approach benefits the trail, without pointing out the negative impacts their approach will create. Our role in this process is to do everything we can to ensure the users of the CCT will have a first class trail whether or not the rail is built.

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail believes strongly in completing the trail into the Silver Spring transit center, and one way of doing that would be to piggyback onto the proposed light rail. However, as currently proposed, the light rail presents some significant problems for the trail. Among them is the narrow width of the right-of-way between the western end of the Columbia Country Club property and the tunnel under the Air Bights building in Bethesda. Fitting both a first class trail and a double track rail line above ground through that section will be very difficult, if not impossible. While a deep bore tunnel would likely prove too costly, a less expensive method of under grounding the rail line (often referred to as “cut and cover”) could effectively deal with the problem of too little space above ground. We have asked the State of Maryland to study the impacts of under grounding options, and anxiously await their reply.

Knowing that it is possible that the rail line between Silver Spring and Bethesda may never be built (due to funding and/or political issues) the CCCT has also studied the various options for completing the trail into Silver Spring without having the rail line to piggyback on. Since all those options include sections that must share existing roadways, and will likely have to cross a number of roadways at grade (something that the rail/trail essentially eliminates), the resulting “final mile” into Silver Spring will not be nearly as user friendly as the remainder of the trail to the west. However, a trail superior to the current interim trail in that section is achievable without purchasing any additional right-of-way from CSX. Of course, such a trail would be far more costly per mile than other sections of the trail.

As you can see, there are no easy solutions to “completing the trail”, but given the success of the existing Capital Crescent Trail, we must carefully examine all options so that we have the best possible trail between the Silver Spring and Bethesda transit centers.

Sincerely,

Ernie Brooks

Chair, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail

FOR THE RECORD:

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail Statement on the Silver Spring/Bethesda 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.

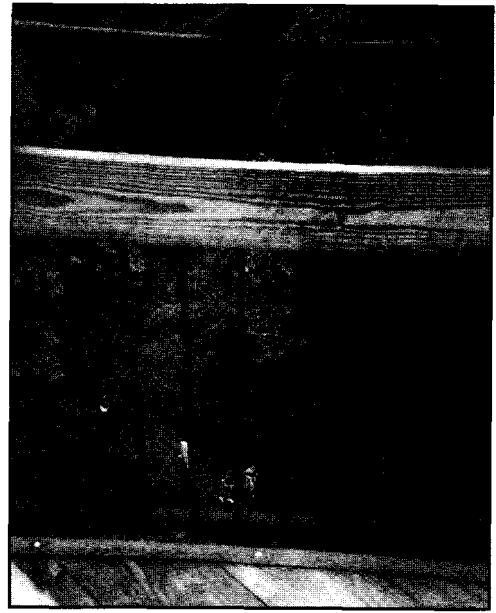


CCCT Chair Ernie Brooks at the dedication.

Continued from page 1

from the eastern side of Rock Creek (Silver Spring) to the rest of the CCT, noting that one of our remaining goals is to get the Trail finished into Silver Spring.

County Executive Doug Duncan acknowledged the CCCT's role in lobbying the county to fund the rehabilitation of the trestle for trail users. In addition, he thanked the CCCT for spearheading efforts to raise the \$132,000 needed to build the scenic overlooks. Also contributing to this fund were the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Coalition with \$55,000, and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association with \$2500.

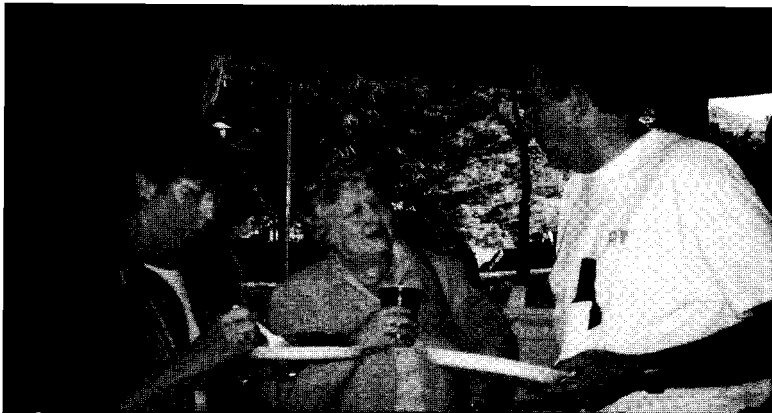
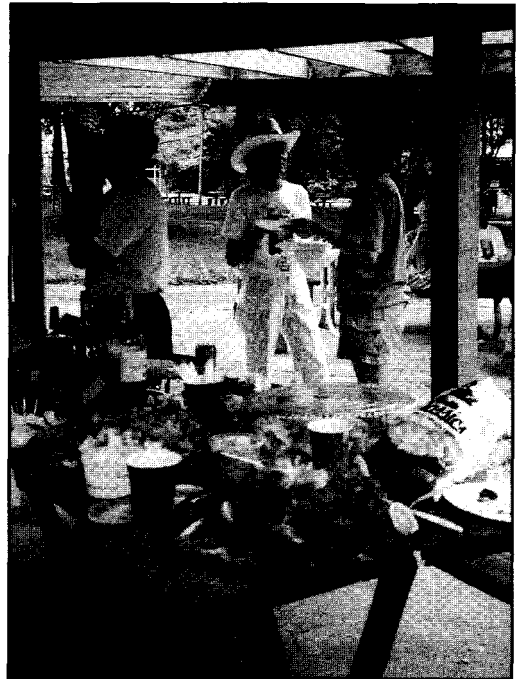


View of the Rock Creek hiker/biker trail from the trestle

CCCT Annual Membership Meeting, June 9, 2003



CCCT board member Wayne Phyllaier happily acknowledges a framed photo of the Rock Creek Trestle that he received from CCCT Chair Ernie Brooks. Wayne oversaw much of the "heavy lifting" that went into the CCCT'S efforts to re-open the Rock Creek trestle during his tenure as chairperson (1999-2002).

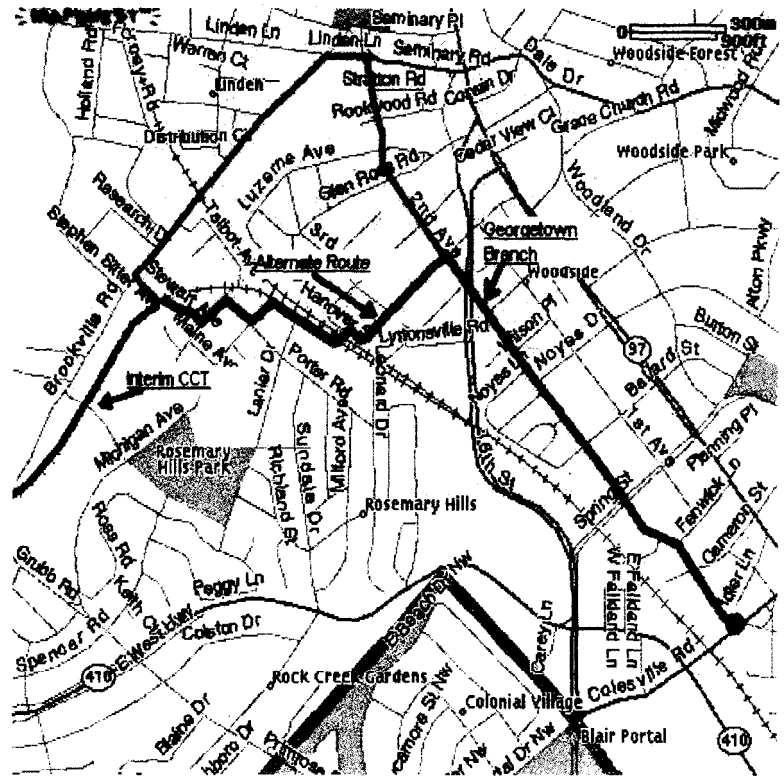


CCCT board members Pat Baptiste, Jennie Sue Dunner and CCCT webmaster David Putman at the annual meeting.

ALTERNATE GEORGETOWN BRANCH TRAIL ROUTE

Between Silver Spring Metro Station and *Interim Capital Crescent Trail* in Lyttonsville
(This route avoids busy Brookville Road)

Although this route avoids dangerous Brookville Road, the route does require walking/riding on-road and crossing several busy streets. Road and traffic conditions may change and some hazards may not be identified. The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail can make no guarantee of safety. Follow this route at your own risk.

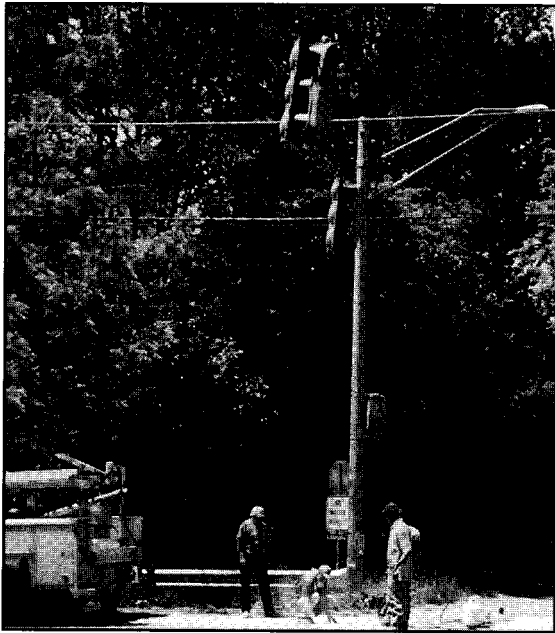


FROM SILVER SPRING METRO STATION:

Mile:	Leg:	Direction:	Street:
0.0	0.0	Start	Go up Second Ave. alongside McDonalds, across Colesville Road from the S.S. Metro Station.
0.3	0.3	Straight	Cross Spring Street, enter Woodside on Second Ave.
0.8	0.5	Straight	Cross 16th Street on Second Ave. (Caution - turning traffic)
0.9	0.1	Left	Grace Church Road.
1.1	0.2	Left	Cross one-lane bridge and follow Talbot Ave.
1.3	0.2	Left	Michigan Ave.
1.3	0.1	Right	Pennsylvania Ave.
1.4	0.1	Left	Kansas Ave.
1.5	0.0	Right	Take sidewalk through low brick wall to parking lot.
1.5	0.0	Straight	Exit parking lot on Stewart Ave.
1.6	0.1	End	<i>Interim Capital Crescent Trail</i> begins on LEFT, before the hill to Brookville Road.

FROM STEWART AVENUE IN LYTTONSVILLE:

Mile:	Leg:	Direction:	Street:
0.0	0.0	Start	At end of <i>Interim CCT</i> , go RIGHT on Stewart Ave. and continue straight into the small parking lot.
0.1	0.1	Left	At left back corner of parking lot, take the sidewalk through the low brick wall to Kansas Ave.
0.1	0.0	Left	Kansas Ave.
0.2	0.1	Right	Pennsylvania Ave.
0.3	0.1	Left	Michigan Ave.
0.3	0.1	Right	Talbot Ave.
0.5	0.2	Left	Cross the one-lane bridge behind the elementary school.
0.5	0.0	Right	Grace Church Road
0.7	0.2	Right	Second Ave.
0.8	0.1	Straight	Cross 16th Street on Second Ave. (Caution -turning traffic)
1.3	0.5	Straight	Cross Spring Street on Second Ave., enter Business District
1.6	0.3	End	S. S. Metro Station is across Colesville Road.



In mid-May, DPWT workers applied crosswalk markers on Jones Mills Rd. as part of the County's efforts to make the cross to and from the Rock Creek Trestles safer. Recently installed traffic signals hang above.

Pedestrian Perils at Jones Mill Road

Since the opening of the Rock Creek trestle, residents in nearby Chevy Chase have expressed their concerns regarding the Trail's crossing with Jones Mill Road, a popular vehicular cut-through between East-West Highway and Connecticut Avenue near the Trail's 1.5-mile mark. Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation had planned to install "traffic calming" measures along the road, but due to budget reasons and last winter's harsh weather those plans have been put on hold.

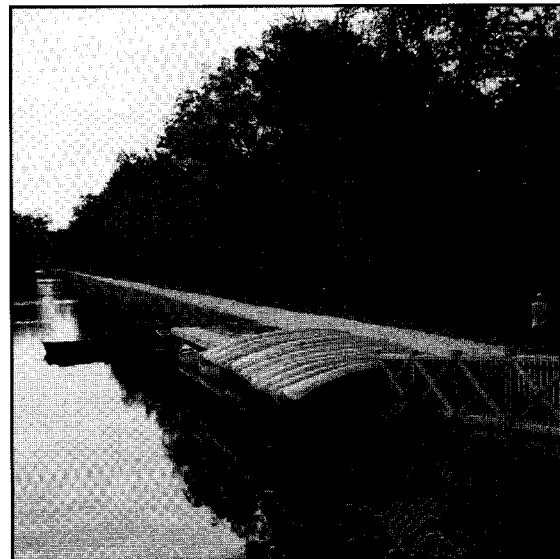
In anticipation of heightened Trail traffic due to the opening of the trestle, county officials did add a new traffic light, complete with a pedestrian-activated crossing button, and a "No Turn on Red" sign to the intersection in mid-May. However, county officials acknowledge residents' claims that many drivers heading east on Jones Mill Road have yet to realize the new rules governing the intersection, leaving trail users vulnerable to oncoming traffic. County officials plan to monitor the situation in the hopes that drivers' compliance will increase. If not, selective enforcement from county police will be used.

.....

Safety on the Trail

For the past seventeen years, one of the prime concerns of the CCCT has been trail safety. Parents with small children, walkers and joggers, elderly people, some of whom are hearing-impaired, are among the trail users we hear from who tell us stories of bicyclists and rollerbladers who pass without giving any audible warning. Besides being required by law in Montgomery County and DC., warnings are important for safety and is the courteous thing to do, appreciated by those being overtaken.

The Capital Crescent Trail has been an enormous success, and with summer upon us with its longer days, it can be very crowded with users of all sizes and number of wheels. Toddlers and children present a whole new set of concerns, as their actions can be unpredictable. Keep this in mind when you're on this on any other trail.



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.

5 YEARS AGO.. .

Archaeologists discover eight underground silos at Fletcher’s Boathouse (mile 8 on the CCT) thought to have been built about 2,000 years ago by Native Americans to store their harvests. The digs began after the National Park Service decided to build a new bridge linking the parking lot from Canal Road to Fletcher’s.

10 YEARS AGO.. .

Rails and ties are removed from rail bed, and paving of the Capital Crescent Trail starts from Key Bridge to Potomac Palisades. At about the same time, CCCT sponsors its annual walk through of the entire 11 -miles of the Trail (July 1993).

15 YEARS AGO...

Efforts by the National Park Service and Montgomery County to acquire the Georgetown Branch right-of-way are delayed after developer Kingdon Gould, Jr., owner of Laurel Sand and Gravel Co., announces a bid to buy the entire 11-mile strip and operate a freight service on it. However, price becomes a major issue as Gould values the line at about \$6 million while CSX Corporation, the railroad’s owner, puts its value at “anywhere from \$19 to \$83 million” (June 1988).

160 YEARS AGO...

An aqueduct for the Alexandria Canal (connecting seaport Alexandria to the C&O Canal) is built over the future Georgetown Branch rail line (later to be known as the Capital Crescent Trail), crossing the Potomac River on 1100-foot bridge.



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
- 2: Coalition meeting dates
- 3: Membership information
- 4: Obtain a CCT map
- 5: Volunteer activities
- 6: Other messages
- 7: [Inactive]
- 8: Trail hotline & events

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All events are rain or shine, unless noted. To confirm, call the Events Hotline, 202-234-4874, box 8, or visit our web: www.cctrail.org.

CCCT MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Second Mondays, August 11, Sept. 8 (Call 202-234-4874, mailbox 8, to confirm dates). LOCATION: Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Lane, 2nd floor, Bethesda; one block west of Bethesda Metro, at the corner of Old Georgetown Rd. and Edgemoor. Meeting begins at 7 p.m.

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 _____

individual Contributions:

Basic individual \$10, includes newsletter subscription, action alerts. **New member** **Renewing member**
 Sustaining \$30
 Sponsoring \$80, 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 and in funding the trestle overlooks!
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.

CCCT
P.O. Box **30703**
Bethesda, MD 20824

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #4468
Wash., DC