



The Crescent

THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

SUMMER 2008

Vol. XII No. 1

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 3 The Bethesda Trailhead
- 3 River Road Update
- 3 Invasive Species Work
- 4 Safety on the Trail
- 6 July Open Meeting on Speed Limits on the Trail
- 6 GU Boathouse



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DESIGN:

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PRINTING:

Ecoprint

Printed using 100% wind power
on 100% post-consumer recycled
paper, process chlorine free.



Purple Line UPDATE

The Board of the CCCT has been closely following the studies currently being conducted by the Maryland Transportation Authority proposing a "Purple Line" transitway on portions of the Georgetown Branch right-of-way. The Montgomery County Park and Planning Commission appointed a Citizens Advisory Group last year to assist it in reviewing the various alternatives being studied. Peter Gray, Chair of the Coalition, is representing the CCCT. Other current and former Board members are also participating in those meetings.

Sometime this Fall, possibly as early as the end of September, the State will issue a Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) which will detail the impacts of eight possible alternatives. There will be a review period during which the Board of the Coalition will actively represent the interest of trail users. The transitway issues are very complex and are difficult ones 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. Among the many impacts, the focus of the Coalition Board will be to insure that, whatever transitway alignment and vehicle mode are chosen as the preferred alternative, (1) the trail remains adequate, safe and attractive to all users; (2) the trail connects, off road, directly into both Silver Spring and Bethesda; and (3) the trail's construction and maintenance be guaranteed permanently. We have recently seen that the trail associated with the Inter County Connector is in jeopardy—we will insist that the CCT not suffer a similar fate.

If there is to be a transitway on the trail right of way, there is no question but that the replacement trail and associated tunnels and overpasses will be very expensive and will require a commitment by local and State officials to guarantee that design, construction and maintenance will be of the highest quality, and that the funding be adequate to achieve that goal.

We will post updates on the web site frequently along with links to the DEIS as it becomes available. As always, your comments are welcome as this process unfolds.

Merle Steiner is Honored at the CCCT Annual Meeting

The CCCT Annual Meeting was held in Elm Street Park, Bethesda on June 9, 2008.

Coalition members and guests spent much of the evening enjoying the free food and sharing trail ideas and stories. During the short business session CCCT Chair, Peter Gray, outlined accomplishments of the last year and gave the major Coalition goals for the coming year. Major goals include beginning construction of a new trail rest plaza at River Road, and improving trail safety by increasing trail user safety awareness and making physical improvements on the trail.



Board member Pat Baptiste and Chair Peter Gray honor Merle Steiner's many years of support for the Trail with a small gift.

continued on page 2



THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

Board Members 2008-09

Officers At-Large

Peter Gray, Chair

Ron Tripp, Vice-Chair

Wayne Phyllaier, Treasurer

Jennifer Longworth, Secretary

Charlie Wellander, Asst. to the Treasurer

Pat Baptiste

Ernie Brooks

John Dugger

Jenny Sue Dunner

Isaac Hantman

The Crescent is published three times a board year (June-June) by the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT), P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20824, phone (202) 234-4874.

CCCT is a non-profit citizens' group promoting a first class 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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contact@cctrail.org

P.O. Box 30703
Bethesda, MD 20824
202-234-4874

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

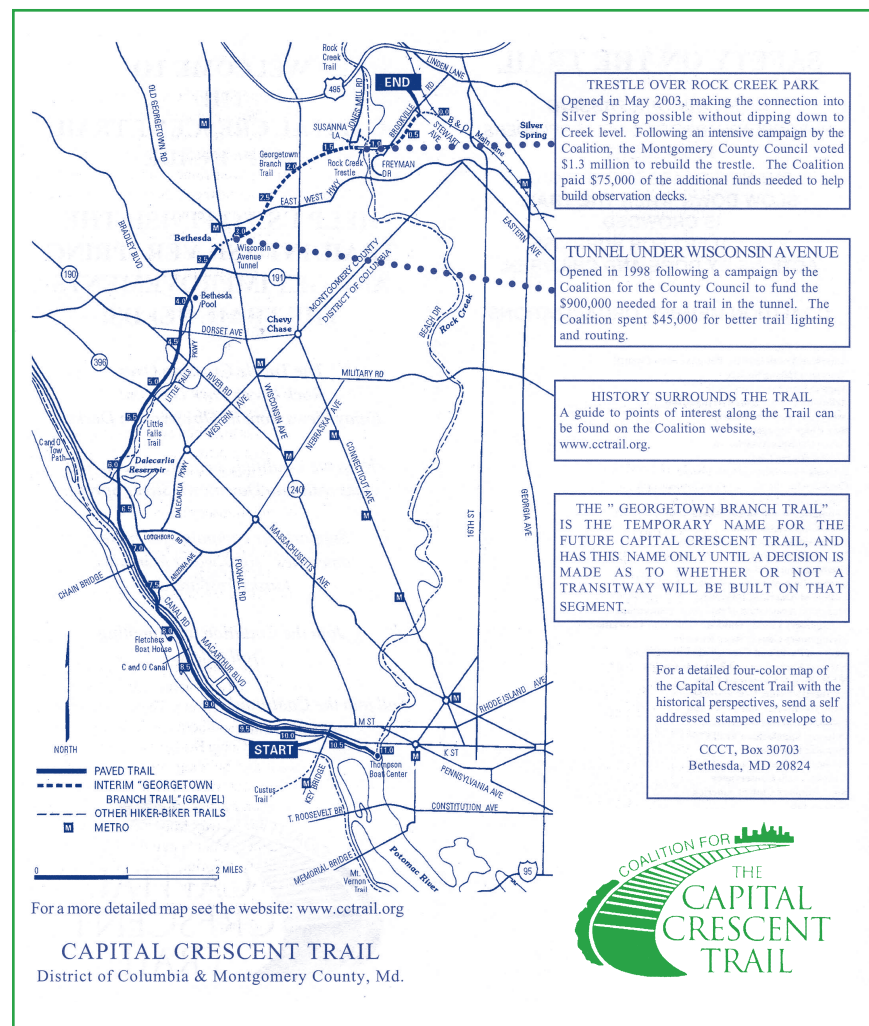
www.cctrail.org
for trail updates and events!

Merle Steiner is Honored at the CCCT Annual Meeting

continued from page 1.

The CCCT Board for the coming 2008-09 board year was presented to the members. The new Board will have 10 members: **Patricia Baptiste, Ernie Brooks, John Dugger, Jenny Sue Dunner, Peter Gray, Isaac Hantman, Jennifer Longworth, Wayne Phyllaier, Ron Tripp, and Charlie Wellander.** (NOTE - The Board elected its officers at its next regular meeting on September 8: Peter Gray, Chair; Ron Tripp, Vice Chair; Wayne Phyllaier, Treasurer; Jennifer Longworth, Secretary.)

Merle Steiner was recognized for the many years she has been an especially valuable friend of the Trail. Merle retired this summer after 24 years as a staff member of the Montgomery County Council. She was an aide to former Councilmember William Hanna, then she was former Councilmember Ike Leggett's legislative assistant for four years, and most recently has been Chief of Staff to Councilmember Nancy Floreen. She has been one of our best allies at the Council – going out of her way to help us be effective at getting our message to the Council during many budget battles about the value of building and enhancing the CCT. We considered her to be our "10th Council Member". She will be missed.



Safety is NO Accident *Courtesy is Contagious*

A "Letter" to Capital Crescent Trail Members

As a result of your hard work and generous contributions our trail is a beautiful and heavily used success. Bikers, bladers, joggers, runners and walkers, commuters and recreational users of ALL SPEEDS and AGES enjoy its 'car-free' park like setting. Unfortunately 'car-free' does not mean 'danger-free' and success has brought congestion and increased danger to the trail. Serious accidents involving hospital convalescence and police investigation have occurred.

Our trail has over 1 million users per year, is quite congested at times, and has users moving as slowly as 1-2 miles an hour up to 20 – 25 miles an hour. We are experiencing an increasing number of serious accidents on the Trail and we urge ALL users to exercise greater caution, courtesy and alertness.

Please follow the safety tips below:

ALL USERS:

- STAY ALERT, TURN OFF YOUR IPOD
- Stay to the right
- Do NOT block the trail when stopping
- Do NOT block the trail by going 3 or 4 abreast
- Look behind you from time to time
- Pass ONLY after looking behind you
- Pass ONLY after a loud warning
- Pass ONLY on the left
- Pass ONLY if you have a 2 foot clearance
- When dark, wear reflective clothes
- When dark, carry a light
- Yield to others when entering the trail
- Yield to others at crosswalks
- STOP at stop signs, they indicate dangerous cross car traffic

PARENTS:

- PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN, keep them to the right!
- Do not let your children ramble freely across the trail
- Stay immediately behind or to the left of your children

BIKERS AND BLADERS:

In addition to the above:

- Keep safe, reasonable speed
- Adjust speed to trail congestion and surface conditions
- Be predictable
- Wear a Helmet
- Warn with a loud bell, whistle or voice at least 2 seconds BEFORE overtaking someone

HIKERS AND WALKERS:

- TURN OFF YOUR IPOD
- Do NOT READ while on the trail
- If warned before being passed, call out, "Thanks for the warning"
- If NOT warned before being passed, politely call out, "Please warn before passing"

PET OWNERS:

- Keep your pet on a very short leash (required by law!)
- Treat your pet as you would a child

Be safe after dark and use a strong light -

Cyclists: Please, do not use a flashing strobe light as a headlight.

All trail users need a light for safety when using the trail after dark.

Trail users are reporting that the flashing white strobe lights some cyclists are using as headlights can be disorienting and are very irritating. Cyclists, please use a headlight with a steady beam aimed low. We are all safer if no one is confused or blinded by your light.

The Bethesda Trailhead

Several completed and planned projects near the Capital Crescent Trail's northern trailhead on Bethesda Avenue may affect Trail users and are described here.

WISCONSIN AVENUE TUNNEL

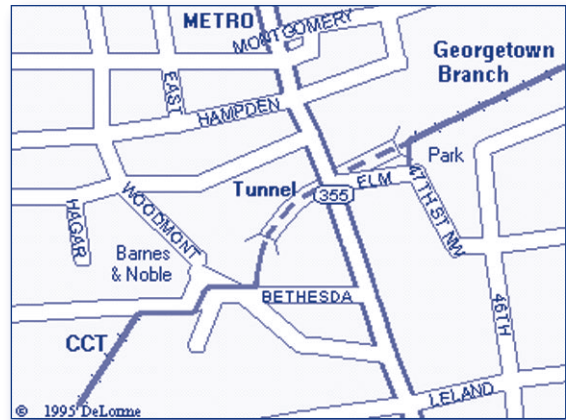
Many trail users arriving at the Bethesda Avenue trailhead from DC and other points south do not know that the trail continues on through Rock Creek Park and eastward toward Silver Spring. The accompanying map shows how to cross Bethesda and Woodmont Avenues, enter the tunnel under Wisconsin Ave and continue eastward. This section of the trail currently has crushed gravel surface and it may not be desirable for skinny tires.

WOODMONT AVENUE ON STREET PATH

For some time Montgomery County has placed markings for a 5 foot wide, on street, bike path on each side of Woodmont Avenue from Bethesda Avenue northward.

SHARED USE BETHESDA AVENUE BIKE PATH PLANNED

Montgomery County plans to create a shared-use, on-street, path on the north side of Bethesda Avenue between Woodmont and Wisconsin avenues; the northside of Willow Avenue between Wisconsin Avenue and 47th Street and on 47th Street from Willow Avenue. This route will allow trail users to continue onto the Capital Crescent Trail at the Elm Street Park entrance. The County plans additional signage for these streets.



Map of Bethesda Tunnel. To view this map and others online visit www.bikewashington.org/trails/cct/cct.htm

WOODMONT DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Plans for Phase I of this development at the Northeast corner of the Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues and the entrance area near the Wisconsin Avenue have been changed to build an office building not a hotel. The current plan calls for the tunnel to remain open and for the Trail to be fully covered during construction. Phase II of this development at Elm Street has been delayed for some time as a result of the current leasee choosing to not terminate their lease.

River Road Plaza UPDATE

Planning efforts continue with regards to the plan to place a rest area/plaza next to the Trail's intersection with River Road on the north side of the trail. A preliminary plan has been drawn up as part of the effort to redesign River Road as it goes through the Westbard area. Professor Iris Miller, from the architecture school at Catholic University of America is working with CCCT board members to execute technical drawings that can then be submitted to the Montgomery County Department of Parks. It has been more difficult than originally anticipated to get a landscape architect to draft the technical drawings and the review by the Parks Department may be more time-consuming than originally thought as well. The Coalition cannot therefore make a prediction as to when the initial submission will take place nor how long the Parks Department review will take. Rest assured, efforts continue and the Plaza will live one day, hopefully in the not too distant future.

Invasives Species Work

CCCT members have been putting on their long pants and shirts to continue the epic battle with invasive species to avoid the slow strangulation of trees along the Trail, particularly between Bethesda Avenue and the DC line. This effort has been coordinated by the Weed Warrior program staff of the Montgomery County Parks Department, led by staffer Lynette Scaffidi. Last winter 35 CCCT members got their hands collectively dirty one afternoon cleaning out a big swath of the Trail, uprooting the invasives and leaving the natives in place. The Coalition also donated \$20,000 to fund the physical uprooting by paid contractors workers for the Parks Department and the spraying of the exposed roots of those invasives. Another volunteer effort led by the Weed Warrior program, took place Saturday September 27 from 1:30-4:00 pm in conjunction with National Public Lands Day. There will be other Weed Warrior efforts along the trail in the future. See our newsletter or website for future announcements. Those interested in helping out need only come with their determination and long sleeve shirts and pants. The Weed Warrior program will supply the know how and gloves.

Are you thinking of becoming a CCT commuter?

Hundreds of cyclists use the CCT every day to get to work. It is a great way to lose some weight and lighten your gasoline bill. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association has a commuter assistance program to help new cycling commuters get started.

See "Getting There By Bike" at their website, www.waba.org.



**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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July Open Meeting on Speed Limits on the Trail

After CCCT consultations with the Montgomery County Parks Department for almost two years, Parks decided to implement a series of measures hoping to enhance safer use of the Trail. In addition to re-stripping the middle of the Trail between Bethesda Avenue and the DC line, Parks laid down raised rumble strips at the intersections of the Trail and Little Falls Parkway and Dorset Avenue and implemented a 15 miles per hour speed limit on the paved Trail in Montgomery County. The latter measure proved to be highly unpopular with much of the bicycling community, particularly with bike commuters who felt unfairly targeted by the speed limit. Given the volume of complaints, the Coalition board decided to devote its public meeting in July to an open meeting between Trail users and the head of the Parks Department,

Mary Bradford. A crowd of over 75 Trail users, mainly bike commuters, showed up to register complaints and offer suggestions for modification of the speed limit in a very civil dialogue with Ms. Bradford. Suggestions included limiting enforcement of the speed limit to the weekends and/or to exclude times when the Trail is not crowded such as the morning rush hour (7:00-9:00am). Ms. Bradford noted that Parks had hired a consultant and would share his findings with the Coalition and the bicycling community. Attendees of the meeting were concerned that conflicts on the Trail are not merely the fault of only one type of user and it was hoped that education aimed at all types of users would occur in the future.

Georgetown University Boathouse DEIS

The eagerly awaited National Park Service's, Draft Environmental Impact Statement has been delayed and was not available prior to our press date. The CCCT Board remains concerned about the effects of the proposed land swap between the National Park Service & Georgetown University. The Board will continue to monitor such issues as land access to the proposed upstream site by boat hauler-hitches, the 100 yard footprint and shadow the proposed boathouse will have on the Trail near the DC trailhead.

Now that autumn and the lovely fall foliage will soon be upon us, you might want to bring your camera to the rehabilitated trestle which carries the Trail over Rock Creek (& Park) to snap some great views. The CCCT contributed \$75,000 toward the inclusion of "safety bumpouts" on the trestle which provide ample room for stopping and viewing without blocking trail users.

