DC PORTION OF TRAIL LEASED BY PARK SERVICE

In late November, the National Park Service gained a lease for park and trail use for the four-mile segment of the Georgetown Branch rail corridor in the District. The entire 11-mile right-of-way is now, for the first time, officially available for interim trail use.

The Park Service is leasing the land for one year from the Georgetown Branch Foundation, a nonprofit organization recently created by developer Kingdon Gould, Jr. to buy the DC segment of the rail line from CSX Corporation. The purchase of the land by the foundation and lease to the Park Service were accomplished simultaneously in November. The sale price is reported to be $11 million.

The foundation apparently plans to hold the land for one year and then, assuming Congress appropriates the necessary funds, to sell the entire corridor to the Park Service at cost. Congress provided $4 million in funds for the trail in October 1989. (Continued on Page 4)

CCCT SEEKS COUNTY ASSURANCES, PROGRESS ON TRAIL

More than a year ago, Montgomery County made a substantial investment on behalf of the Capital Crescent Trail by purchasing the right-of-way where the trail will be located. Since then, the County has said it will include a trail along with a “transitway” in the section between Bethesda and Silver Spring. The County also has said that it intends to build a trail on the right-of-way from Bethesda to the D.C. line.

But instead of embracing the trail and developing it swiftly, the County has been studying the trail corridor piecemeal for more than three years, with no end in sight. None of the trail has been designed or built. Nor have any funds been committed for designing and building it. Instead, at every turn, the trail has encountered new obstacles.

To remedy this situation, CCCT is asking the County for three simple commitments: 1) assurance that the County will build the entire Capital Crescent Trail; 2) adequate funds to design and build the trail within the next several years; and 3) leadership on behalf of the trail. We also would like the trail planning process simplified and expedited.

On Jan. 25, 1990, several Coalition Board members testified before the County Council, seeking funds for the trail in the County’s “Capital Improvements Program.” Specifically, they asked for funds to design and build part of the trail south of Bethesda. They also supported the County Executive’s request for funds for the trail between Bethesda and Silver Spring.

The only way we will get these commitments is through a strong show of support in coming months on behalf of the Capital Crescent Trail. Groups and individuals who support the trail need to write and call the County Council, Executive, and Parks Department. Let them know that you want a continuous trail in the entire right-of-way and are anxious to get the trail on the ground.

Letters should be sent to: Mr. William E. Hanna, Jr., President, Montgomery County Council, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850; Mr. Sidney Kramer, Montgomery County Executive, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD 20850; and Mr. Donald Cochran, Director, Montgomery County Parks Department, 9500 Brummel Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20901. Their phone numbers are 217-7900, 217-2500, and 495-4500. For more information, contact CCCT at 234-4874. Also, send us copies of your letters. We need your support now.

Please see related story on Excursion Rail, Page 2.

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY WITH CCCT

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail is observing the 20th Anniversary of Earth Day with a trail clean-up on Saturday, April 21. Coalition members and individuals are encouraged to be stewards of the proposed hiker/biker trail by volunteering to clean litter, fallen trees and other items detracting from sections of the right-of-way.

Rally family members, friends, coalition members and other groups to work on a particular section of the trail, or have yourself assigned to a particular section. For more information, contact Sally Stevens, 990-6858.

NATURAL ADDITION TO THE NATION’S CAPITAL

JANUARY-MARCH 1990
COALITION SETS GOALS FOR 1990

The Coalition’s Board of Directors held its annual retreat December 16, 1989 and identified the Coalition’s top six priorities for 1990. The objectives are:

- Get $7 million from Congress to finish buying the D.C. portion of the Georgetown Branch for trail use.
- Develop the trail from Bethesda to the Bethesda Pool.
- Have the Montgomery County Council and the National Park Service eliminate the proposal of excursion rail where incompatible with trail use.
- Receive interim use of the Arizona Avenue trestle as a trail.
- Secure a commitment from the Montgomery County Council for trail funding and a trail construction schedule.
- Raise money for a CCCT trail development fund.

CALENDAR OF CCCT EVENTS

March 28: CCCT Meeting, Bethesda Library, 7 p.m.
April 21: Earth Day Celebration, including a trail clean-up, call Sally Stevens at 990-6858 for details.
April 25: CCCT Meeting, Bethesda Library, 7 p.m.
May 5: Capital Crescent Hike, in conjunction with “Montgomery County Outdoors,” call CCCT at 234-4874 or Sally Stevens at 990-6858 for details.
May 6: Potomac Pedalers Bike Trip along the Capital Crescent Trail, 25 miles—contact Charles Montange, 530-4905, for details.

THANKS!

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail would like to thank the more than 150 individuals and groups who supported our efforts during the 1989 year-end appeal. Special thanks to those listed below who contributed $100 or more.

Richard A. Allen
Dr. Samuel Fox, III and Dr. Mary Alice Fox
Dan and Nancy Gamber
Edmund Healy
Christopher Herman
Dr. Donald and Urte McNellis
Dr. Diane A. Mitchell and Dr. Douglas Mitchell
John and JoAnn Nolen
David Passage
Rafe Pomerance
Judson D. Reed
Thomas L. Robertson, Jr.
Ken Skrivseth
Joanna Stum
Northern Virginia Volksmarchers, Inc.
Sturgis and Hilda Warner

Additional thanks to the following foundations who helped make the Coalition’s work possible during 1989.

Merrill G. and Emita E. Hastings Foundation
Jemeda Fund

MONTGOMERY COUNTY TO STUDY EXCURSION RAIL BETHESDA–D.C.

On Jan. 23, 1990, the Montgomery County Council voted four to three to study the feasibility of running “excursion” trains (carrying passengers and freight) in the Capital Crescent Trail corridor between Bethesda and D.C. Voting against the proposal, Councilmembers Adams, Leggett, and Subin urged their colleagues to approve a trail instead.

One week later, on a motion by Councilmember Potter, the Council clarified that it intends to develop a hiker-biker trail in this section of the corridor. Excursion rail will be allowed only if “compatible with a usable, safe trail on the right-of-way and without excessive cost to the County.”

During the month before these developments, CCCT Board members Charles Montange, Henri Bartholomot, and Tom Willging urged the Council to vote against the rail proposal. They pointed out that the corridor is too narrow to accommodate both excursion rail and a trail, especially on bridges over Bradley Boulevard and Massachusetts Avenue and in the tunnel under MacArthur Boulevard. Also, the County Executive, County Parks Department, Georgetown Branch Task Force, National Park Service, and D.C. Council have all recommended deleting excursion rail from the corridor in favor of a trail.

On Jan. 30, Councilmembers Adams and Potter said the rail issue probably can be resolved fairly quickly, perhaps within a few weeks. The County Parks Department will conduct the study. The Council will make the ultimate decision.

CCCT WINS NATIONAL AWARD

In November, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a national organization promoting rail-trails, presented CCCT with an award for being “An Outstanding Volunteer Organization.” RTC president David Burwell presented the award during a reception held to acknowledge the Coalition’s achievements.
MAJOR HIKE AND RALLY PLANNED FOR MAY 5, 1990

CCCT is sponsoring what promises to be one of its biggest hikes and rallies in support of the Capital Crescent Trail on Saturday, May 5, 1990 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Coalition is inviting a number of dignitaries to attend, including National Park Service Director James M. Ridenour and Assistant Secretary of the Interior Constance Harriman. We also are inviting our Advisory Board members, including businessman Kingdon Gould, Jr., who has been instrumental in helping to acquire the D.C. part of the trail. We hope that a number of other VIP’s also will attend.

CCCT is holding the event in connection with “National Celebration of the Outdoors” and “Celebrate Montgomery County Outdoors,” two week-long activities in honor of Earth Day.

Come show your support for the Capital Crescent Trail. Join us for a brief rally at Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues at 9 a.m. Then if you have time, hike with us to Thompson’s Boat House. For more information, call CCCT at 234-4874 or Sally Stevens at 990-6858.

D.C. RESOLUTION SUPPORTS FEDERAL PURCHASE

On January 16, 1990, the D.C. Council passed a resolution supporting federal purchase of the D.C. part of the Capital Crescent Trail corridor. The resolution encourages Congress to provide funds for the National Park Service to buy the land.

The resolution also calls on officials in the D.C. government, National Park Service, and Montgomery County to work together “to support prompt development of a hiker-biker trail along the Georgetown Branch” and recommends that the trail be named the Capital Crescent Trail.

A controversial feature of the resolution that would have allowed transit use of the corridor was deleted before passage. The Council thereby intended to eliminate rail and other transit uses of the corridor.

CCCT thanks the Council — especially sponsors James Nathanson and Hilda Mason — for their support. Thanks also to those who testified on behalf of our trail.
MEMBERS OF THE COALITION FOR A CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

American Forestry Association
American Hiking Society
AYH — Potomac Area Council
Appalachian Mountain Club
(A.D.C. Chapter)
Arlington County Bike Club
Audubon Naturalist Society
Blue Ridge Voyageurs
Capital Hiking Club
Citizens Association of Georgetown
Committee of 100 on the Federal City
C&O Canal Association
Conservation Federation of Maryland
D.C. Roadrunners Club
Greater Bethesda Chevy Chase Coalition
Md. Assn. of Bicycling Organizations
Mont. Co. Citizens Bicycle Committee
Mont. Co. Outdoor Education Assn.
Mont. Co. Road Runners

DC Portion...
(Continued from Page 1)

The Park Service will be seeking the balance from Congress in 1990.
One of the conditions of the lease is that the Georgetown Branch Foundation will keep an empty trailer parked in the right-of-way, 500 feet southeast of Fletcher’s Boat House.
Sources say that the trailer satisfies legal requirements of the foundation and that no use is planned. The Coalition may request its use for disseminating information about the Capital Crescent Trail.

National Handicapped Sports and Recreation Association
N.I.H. Bicycle Commuting Club
Nat’l Recreation and Parks Assn.
Northern Virginia Volksmarchers
Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club
Pentagon Pacesetters
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
Potomac Boat Club
Potomac Pedalers Touring Club
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Sierra Club (Rock Creek Group)
Virginia Volksport Association
Walkways Center
Wanderbirds Hiking Club
Washington Area Bicyclist Assn.
Washington Canoe Club
Washington Running Club
Washington Women Outdoors

SLIDE SHOW AVAILABLE

Do you know of a club or citizen’s group that could support the Capital Crescent Trail and would like to learn more about it? The Coalition offers a 20-minute slide show that portrays the Trail’s potential as an urban greenway, and describes Coalition activities to secure it.
Please contact Beth Dillon at 343-3766 (work) to request a presentation or for further information.

YES! I WANT TO HELP CREATE THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

Add me to your membership list. Enclosed is a donation for $____ to help make the Capital Crescent Trail a reality. (Make check payable to CCCT.)

I know of a group that might join the coalition. The group is:

I want to help with:

____ research  ____ writing
____ telephoning  ____ artwork
____ leafleting  ____ event organizing

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY  STATE  ZIP

TELEPHONE (DAY) (EVE)

Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20824

EDITORS
Karen-Lee Ryan
Henri Bartholomot
Christopher N. Brown

PRODUCTION
Editors Express

Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
1400 16th St., N.W., #300
Washington, D.C. 20036

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