

# The Capital Crescent Trail

A NATURAL ADDITION TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL

JUNE 1989



## CCCT CALLS ON COUNTY TO PROVE COMMITMENT

The board of directors of CCCT, articulating a growing frustration with Montgomery County's planning process, has asked the county to demonstrate its commitment to the Capital Crescent Trail by taking three concrete steps by August 1, 1989.

Specifically, the Coalition has officially requested the County to:

- (1) promise to keep the trail within the existing corridor and not to shift any of it onto streets;
- (2) pursue full funding for the trail, including setting up a meeting with Maryland Gov. William Donald Schaefer to seek the same guarantee of funding for the trail that he has for a light rail system; and
- (3) officially name the new park and trail the "Capital Crescent Trail."

CCCT's dissatisfaction with the process to date centers on the group's apparent exclusion from the County's decision-making process. "Although the Coalition represents the largest and most diverse interest group with a stake in the Georgetown Branch corridor," explained CCCT Chair Chris Brown, "our efforts to have input in planning its future use have been thwarted on several occasions."

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## COUNTY RELEASES TWO PLANS

Planning for a combined trail and trolley proceeded fast and furious in May with the release of an engineering plan by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and a draft land use plan from Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). While both plans result in some improvements in the proposed trail design over previous drafts, both continue to have flaws.

Among the improvements from earlier drafts is the likely elimination of the historic rail concept from Bethesda west to the District line. Another new element is the proposal that the trail follow alongside the light rail in an underpass of Jones Mill Road. And the M-NCPPC's draft report established an improved off-street route for the trail from the main line of the Chessie System into Silver Spring.

However, there are various problems with the trail design in the two reports. One plan calls for the platform area at the Wisconsin Avenue light rail station, which is only nine

feet wide, to be combined with the trail, forcing trail users to navigate past passengers waiting for the trolley. The other plan suggests diverting the trail away from the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue to an on-street route through busy downtown Bethesda. Neither is acceptable.

Another major problem for trail supporters is the suggestion in the DOT report that certain sections of the trail be taken off the original corridor and placed alongside Little Falls Parkway. This would result in a circuitous route that destroys the natural continuity of the rail-trail.

The next step in the planning process is a public hearing at M-NCPPC, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, on June 26 and 27 at 8:00 pm. The planning board will then conduct work sessions to finalize its Master Plan Amendment, which will go to County Executive Sidney Kramer, who will in turn send it to the County Council for approval. At that point there will be another public hearing before a final decision by the Council sometime in the fall.

*CCCT urges all trail supporters to attend the June 26 and 27 hearings to demonstrate community support for a quality trail. The hearings will begin at 8:00 p.m. at M-NCPPC, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring.*

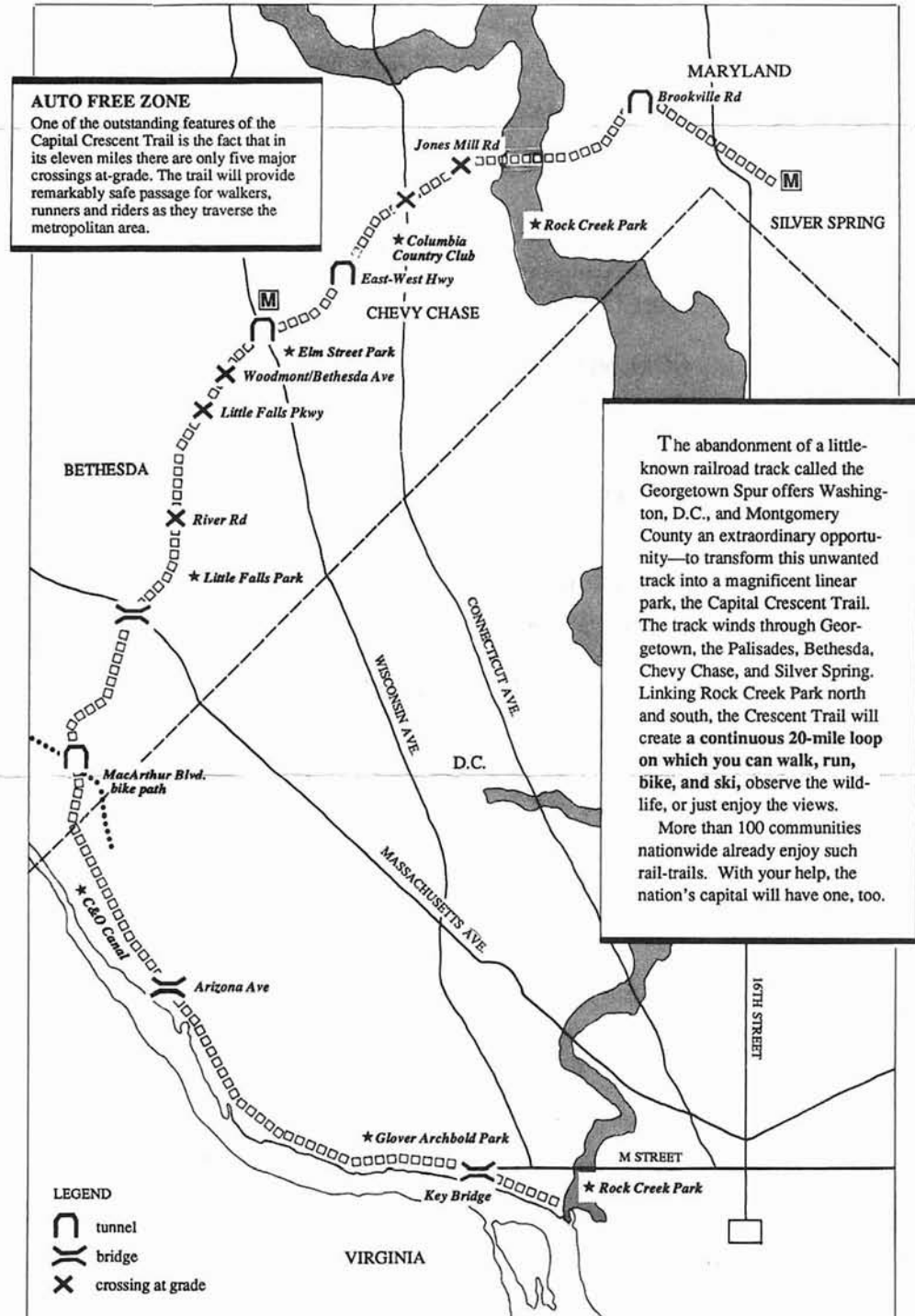
## COALITION MEMBERS

American Forestry Association  
 American Hiking Society  
 AYH —Potomac Area Council  
 Appalachian Mountain Club  
 (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  
 Maryland Association of Bicycling  
 Organizations  
 Mont. Co. Citizens Bicycle Comm.  
 Mont. Co. Outdoor Education Assn.  
 Mont. Co. Road Runners  
 National Handicapped Sports and  
 Recreation Association  
 N.I.H. Bicycle Commuting Club  
 Nat'l Parks and Conservation Assn.  
 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 Volkssport Association  
 Walkways Center  
 Wanderbirds Hiking Club  
 Washington Area Bicyclist Assn.  
 Washington Canoe Club  
 Washington Running Club  
 Washington Women Outdoors

## MUSKIE LEADS HIKE ON RAIN-SOAKED TRAIL

On the anniversary of the historic hike by Justice William O. Douglas to preserve the C&O canal, Sen. Edmund Muskie led a walk on the Capital Crescent Trail. Muskie spoke eloquently about the fight to save the trail to over 60 supporters who joined the Senator on the trail, despite the rain.

Noting that it took 20 years to win the battle to preserve the Canal, Muskie encouraged CCCT volunteers to persevere. He has learned, he said, that the time it takes to achieve one's goals is less important when looking back. Muskie has also written *The Washington Post* on behalf of the trail.



## WET BUT REWARDING WILDFLOWER WALK

Undaunted by rain, 11 hardy hikers showed up for a wildflower walk along the Capital Crescent Trail Saturday, April 15. Although some flowers were waiting for the sun, 18 different beauties were spotted between Bethesda and the tunnel under MacArthur Blvd., including

## BOARD RESPONSE...

*(Continued from Page 1)*

"These are very reasonable requests and will serve to show us whether the county is really committed to a quality trail or not," stated Brown.

Brown noted that we were turned down when we sought to have new representation on the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) of the Georgetown Branch Task Force. (The only representative from the recreational community resigned from the CAC in September 1988 and was never replaced, nor was CCCT informed of the resignation.) The Coalition was then promised it would receive all relevant information and mailings on the Georgetown Branch in lieu of a permanent seat on the CAC; yet as of May 22, 1989, it had received none. Most recently CCCT was unable to obtain requested copies of the draft and final corridor studies from the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Brown complained that DOT has consistently failed to include experienced park and trail planners in the design of the trail option for the corridor, leading to plans ignorant of current standards for trail safety and use. Moreover, the county's estimates of trail development and maintenance costs are as much as 10-20 times higher than the costs of other rail-trails.

trout lilies, toothwort, periwinkle, and lush carpets of marsh marigolds.

Litter bags were distributed at the Dalecarlia Tunnel, and the return trip became a clean-up hike. Much trash was removed, including 188 aluminum cans (which were recycled). Many thanks to Joe Howard, who led the hike.

A tree-planting and bird walk were also held in April. Thanks to Joe Keyser and David Cottingham for their leadership.

## RAFFLE

To spread the word about the Capital Crescent Trail and raise much needed funds, CCCT is sponsoring a raffle. Prizes include a trail bike, outdoor equipment, and a weekend trip. The top ticket seller will win a trail bike also. To get tickets to sell or buy for yourself call Kate Kent at (202) 234-4874. The drawing will be held August 26 at the Montgomery County Fair.

## ANNUAL MEETING

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail will have its annual meeting June 19, 1989. It will be held at the Bethesda Library at 7:00 pm. We will be voting on our new Board for the next year. CCCT supporters are encouraged to attend. For directions or information call Kate Kent, Coordinator, at (202) 234-4874.

## WASHINGTON D.C. APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE

On April 28, Representative Constance Morella, who represents Montgomery County, wrote Representative Sidney Yates, Chairman of the Interior Subcommittee on Appropriations to urge him to support the purchase of the Georgetown Branch for the Capital Crescent Trail.

In her letter Morella emphasized the "imperative nature of this purchase," citing pressure for development and danger of losing the right-of-way that provides views of the Potomac River and the protection of the C&O Canal National Historic Park.

Each year Congress appropriates money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for acquisition of open space for parks. The District of Columbia section of the Georgetown Branch could be purchased by the National Park Service by combining these funds with some money already available.

Morella's letter indicates both her interest in the purchase and the public support that has been demonstrated to her in letters from her constituents. Thanks to those of you who were able to write letters in response to our Action Alert. Letters of support were also sent by our coalition group members.

Board member Chuck Montange continues to be active on Capital Hill on our behalf. On May 19 he participated in a hike for legislative staffers on the Capital Crescent Trail.

# ADVISORY BOARD ADDS LUSTER TO CAPITAL CRESCENT CAMPAIGN

A group of prominent national and Washington area figures have joined the new Advisory Board for the Capital Crescent Trail.

"We're really gratified at the strong support for the trail effort; virtually every prominent person we invited to join immediately signed up," said Peter Harnik, Advisory Board Chair.

The new members are:

Chair, Peter Harnik, Director of Programs, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy;

Senator Edmund Muskie, former Senator and Secretary of State;

Robert Blake, Chairman on Agricultural Sustainability for Developing Countries, World Resources Institute;

Brock Evans, Vice President for National Issues, National Audubon Society;

Doug Wheeler, Executive Vice President, Conservation Foundation;

Robert McNamara, former Secretary of Defense, former President of World Bank;

Gilbert Gude, Author, Former Representative from Maryland;

Henry Diamond, Partner, Beveridge and Diamond, formerly Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State;

Michael McCloskey, Chairman, Sierra Club;

Patrick Noonan, President, Conservation Fund;

Kathleen Douglas Stone, Attorney.

## 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 Sierra Club Foundation/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)

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