

The Capital Crescent Trail

A NATURAL ADDITION TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL

MARCH 1989



CCCT TESTIFIES AT APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING ON \$6.6 MILLION TO BUY D.C. SEGMENT

On February 1, CCCT board member Charles Montange testified before the Interior Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee in support of a \$6.6 million appropriation for the "Georgetown Branch." Congresswoman Connie Morrella (R-MD) introduced him, emphasizing her support for the C&O Canal and for this acquisition as a means of protecting the integrity of that historic park.

Under an option negotiated between CSX Corporation and Kingdon Gould, Jr. (of Laurel Sand & Gravel co.), the property may be acquired for \$12.3 million through June 30, and approximately \$12.8 million through December 31.

approach work on the Arizona Avenue Bridge, thus rendering it safe for trail users.

The Interior Subcommittee is chaired by Congressman Sidney Yates (D-IL). Congressman Steny Hoyer of Prince George's County is on the full House Appropriations Committee. Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) is on the Senate Appropriations Committee. To secure the appropriation, the strong support of congresswomen Morrella and Beverly B. Byron (D-MD) and D.C. Delegate Walter Fauntroy will also be required.

Although \$900 million is supposedly available through the Land and Water Conservation Fund for land

If \$6.6 million is appropriated, it can be combined with about \$6 million available from the Park Service

The National Park Service has approximately \$6 million which could be available to purchase park land in a fund established as mitigation for park land lost during the construction of Metro. If \$6.6 million is appropriated and combined with this \$6 million pot, the property can be acquired, and we hope that at least \$300,000 will be left over to permit immediate re-decking, railing, and

acquisition each year, only about \$200 million is actually appropriated.

The D.C. portion of the Capital Crescent Trail is one of the items being recommended for acquisition by a coalition of national conservation and recreation organizations. It is listed in their report entitled "The Conservation Alternative for Fiscal year 1990," which is annually submitted to the committee.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PURCHASES 6.4 MILES OF TRAIL

In the most significant development yet in the effort to create the Capital Crescent Trail, the Montgomery County Council voted December 8 to purchase 6.4 miles of the Georgetown Branch for \$10 million. Although the emergency appropriation required a favorable vote from only five of the seven council members, the proposal was approved *unanimously*.

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail was instrumental in securing that vote. We organized a campaign to demonstrate the widespread support for acquisition of the corridor as a potential trail and park. Over 200 people packed two public hearings where members of the Coalition, representing running organizations, bicycling clubs and civic groups, testified. Five hundred letters from Montgomery County citizens reached the council chambers. Thanks to all who participated.

Due to the insight and persistence of CCCT board member Charles Montange and pressure from the Coalition, the trail was purchased under a provision of the National Trails Act. Providing for interim trail use while holding the corridor intact for possible future use as a rail line, this law guarantees access across all lands where the railroad once ran.

Purchase under the provision also allayed our concerns that the purchase agreement might somehow favor transit use.

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
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 Women Outdoors

CALENDAR

April 1 Hike with Edmund Muskie
Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Fletcher's Boat
House

Info: Chris Brown, 345-1594

April 8 Tree Planting
Meet at 10:00 a.m. at River Road &
the tracks (Roy Rogers)

Info: Joe Keyser, 522-2764

April 15 Wildflower Hike
Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Woodmont &
Bethesda Aves.

Info: Joe Howard, 585-8818

April 22 Bird Outing
Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Audobon
Naturalist Society

Info: David Cottingham, 966-8678



Montgomery County Government

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Sidney Kramer
County Executive
(301) 217-2500
TTY 279-1083

January 31, 1989

The Honorable Sidney Yates, Chairman
Interior Subcommittee, Appropriation Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
8308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Yates:

I urge that the Congress appropriate sufficient funds for the National Park Service to acquire the District of Columbia portion of the Georgetown Branch. Together with its extension into Maryland, the Georgetown Branch can be developed into an important transportation and recreation corridor serving the entire Washington region.

Over the last three years, we and the Park Service have been negotiating with the CSX Corporation to acquire the 11-mile Georgetown Branch in Maryland and the District of Columbia, respectively. We bought the Maryland portion on December 16, 1988 for \$10 million, entirely from County funds. We have spent another half-million dollars developing detailed plans for the development of this right-of-way, including a potential light rail line from Silver Spring to Bethesda; all alternatives include a hiker-biker trail from east of Rock Creek to the District boundary. Without the trail's continuation to Georgetown and Downtown Washington, our plans for this regional trail—which would be heavily utilized for bicycle commutation as well as for recreation—would be seriously compromised.

I strongly recommend that the requisite funds be appropriated, continuing the Federal/local partnership on the Georgetown Branch that will ultimately bring about a facility that will have wide-ranging public benefits.

Sincerely,

Sidney Kramer
County Executive

SK:adp

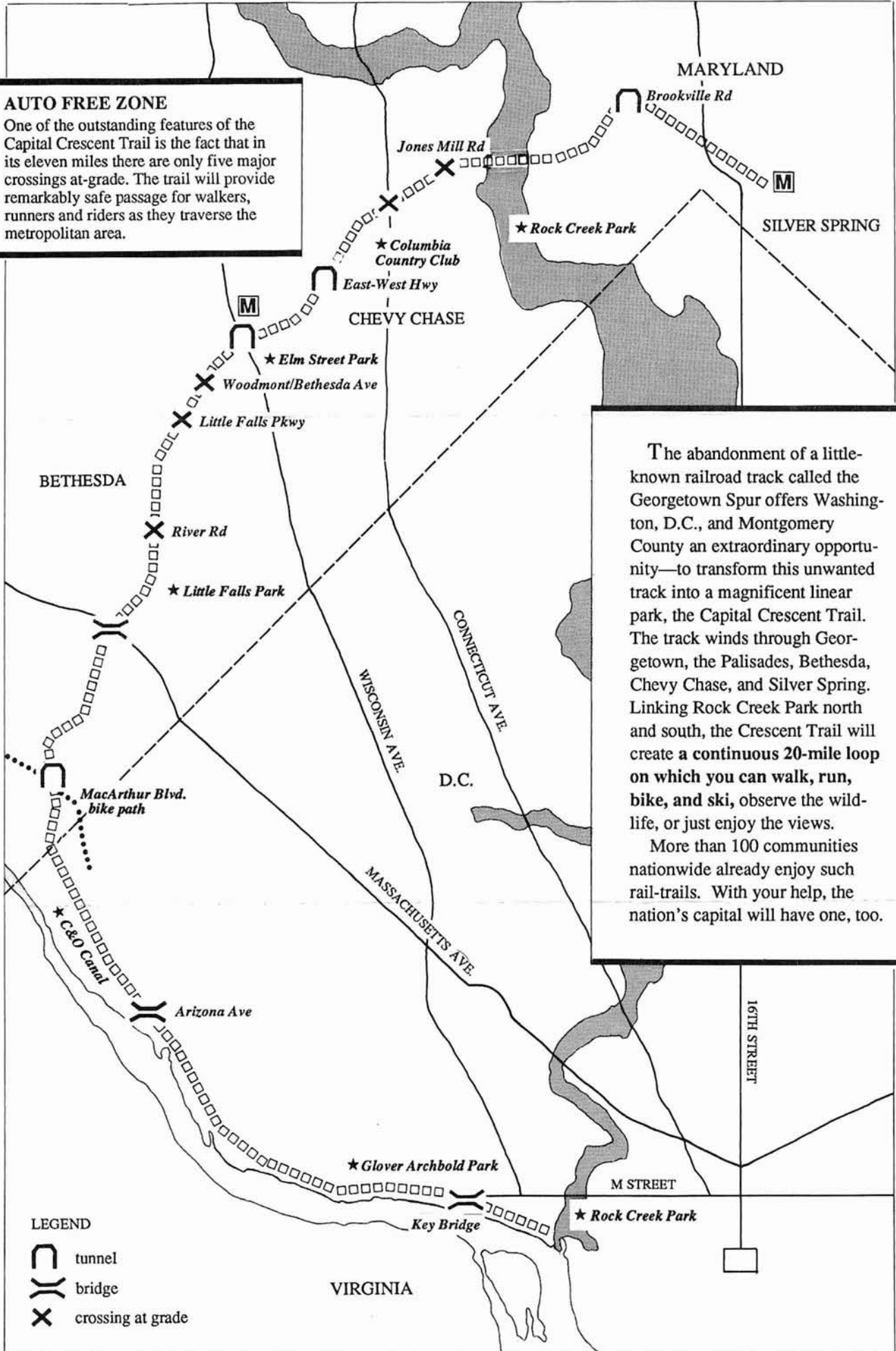
cc: Michael Gudis, President
Montgomery County Council

AUTO FREE ZONE

One of the outstanding features of the Capital Crescent Trail is the fact that in its eleven miles there are only five major crossings at-grade. The trail will provide remarkably safe passage for walkers, runners and riders as they traverse the metropolitan area.

The abandonment of a little-known railroad track called the Georgetown Spur offers Washington, D.C., and Montgomery County an extraordinary opportunity—to transform this unwanted track into a magnificent linear park, the Capital Crescent Trail. The track winds through Georgetown, the Palisades, Bethesda, Chevy Chase, and Silver Spring. Linking Rock Creek Park north and south, the Crescent Trail will create a continuous 20-mile loop on which you can walk, run, bike, and ski, observe the wildlife, or just enjoy the views.

More than 100 communities nationwide already enjoy such rail-trails. With your help, the nation's capital will have one, too.



- LEGEND
- C tunnel
 - X bridge
 - X crossing at grade

COALITION FOR
The Capital Crescent Trail

A RAILS-TO-TRAILS PROJECT

CONCEPT PLAN PUBLISHED

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail released its Concept Plan for the Trail in December.

A result of many volunteer hours and a year of hard work, the plan sets forth for the first time a specific vision for the finished trail. It outlines the important features we want in a trail, such as separate paths for pedestrians and bicyclists. Chapters include discussions of funding, ownership and management issues, and the costs of building and developing the trail.

We have distributed the plan to legislators at the county, state and national levels in an effort to bring their attention to the recreational opportunities afforded by this unique corridor.

If you would like a copy, send \$5.00 (to cover printing and mailing costs) to: P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20814.

HARNIK TO CHAIR HONORARY ADVISORY BOARD

Peter Harnik, one of the founders of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, has left the Board of Directors to chair a new Honorary Advisory Board for the Coalition.

The advisory board is still being formed and already two prominent people in the Washington area have agreed to join: former Senator Edmund Muskie and Kingdon Gould, Jr., a local businessman. More details will follow in our next newsletter.

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 Cent 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)

Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20814

EDITORS

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PRODUCTION

Editors Express



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