

Improvements at Canal Park's Water Street Entrance Announced

June 18, 2013

The National Park Service news release below concerns planned improvements to the safety and appearance of the area of the C&O Canal National Historical Park that includes the Alexandria Aqueduct and the gateway to the Capital Crescent Trail in Georgetown, D.C. The release indicates that the work is expected to begin on June 20, 2013, and that comments and suggestions are welcome.

C&O Canal National Historical Park News Release

Release Date: June 18, 2013

For Immediate Release

John Noel, Public Information Officer, (301) 491-6422

Visitor Safety Improvements along Capital Crescent Trail

DC - Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) hikers and bicyclists should anticipate construction on June 20th, 2013, as the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park makes improvements to the Water Street entrance following increasing concerns for public and visitor safety.

An increasing number of cars are parking along the trail and landscaped area upstream of the Alexandria Aqueduct, leading to an increasing number of vehicles reported driving on the CCT in search of I-495 Beltway or Dulles Airport.

"In recent months we have become concerned for the safety of Capital Crescent Trail visitors at the end of the trail on Water Street in Georgetown as one serious injury and an increasing number of near-miss accidents between bicyclists and cars have been reported," confirmed Park Superintendent Kevin Brandt, "Before another serious injury occurs we will take actions to minimize the risk posed to park visitors using the trail for recreation."

Plans to enhance visitor safety and improve the aesthetics of this historic area include filling in all ruts and depressions in the drive-through arch of the Alexandria Aqueduct to create a smooth and level surface. Installation of a bicycle-friendly gate at the Georgetown side of the aqueduct will prevent vehicles from driving upstream and replace the single bollard located 200 feet upstream that had previously served this purpose but that was knocked over frequently by errant cars. Signage and striping to warn visitors as they approach the gate and direct them towards the 5 ½ feet-wide opening will be installed. Additional signs will be posted that alert visitors to the fact that they are leaving a non-motorized trail and entering a public road.

The grassy landscape that used to exist in this area will be restored upon project completion. Two weeks ago DC Water turned on the odor control scrubbers which will remove the smell emanating from the eight-foot-diameter Dulles Interceptor sewer line that is buried a few feet below the area where cars park upstream of the Alexandria Aqueduct, making this area much more conducive to visitor enjoyment of the Potomac River waterfront.

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park is interested in your ideas and suggestions for improvements to the Capital Crescent Trail and in particular the Water Street entrance. To submit suggestions or report problems or other maintenance requirements please email John Adams, Safety Officer & Acting Chief of Maintenance, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park at john_adams@nps.gov <mailto:john_adams@nps.gov>.

-NPS-