

Where Have All the Trashcans Gone?

By Greg Sykes (greg@grsykes.com)

Many residents visiting local parks noticed a gradual disappearance of those large, dark green metal trashcans, which are maintained by the Fairfax County Park Authority. These convenient drums are being removed due to budget cuts. It began several years ago when each of the county's districts needed to identify a single garbage can for elimination. In Braddock District, they selected the only one in Crooked Creek Park. Since then, other waste bins have been pulled, one at a time, at the discretion of the park manager.

At this point, how many trashcans stay remains a question. Most of the ones taken away so far were along trails whereas the garbage cans near parking lots, ball fields, and other heavy-use areas are still present. Before people get too upset, remember that some localities invoke an "if you bring it in, you carry it out" policy—there are no trashcans anywhere within the grounds! Whether or not the trashcans dissuade littering is hard to say, since trash is frequently seen within eyesight of a receptacle. We continue asking dog walkers to kindly pick up after your pet and deposit the bags in a trashcan, yet park volunteers keep finding dog waste bags thrown into storm drains or chucked into woods, which add plastic litter on top of the pet waste contamination! Caring residents voluntarily cleaning the parks after litterbugs voiced discouragement when a garbage deposit point vanishes. A big "thank you" goes to everyone who uses the existing FCPA garbage cans, disposes of their waste at home, and helps keep the parks clean.

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