

McLean Trees Foundation Recycling Program Ends

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The McLean Trees Foundation (MTF) announced that SP Recycling Corporation, the company responsible for managing MTF's two recycling bins at Cooper Middle School, removed the bins from school grounds. SP Recycling, a subsidiary of SP Fiber Technologies, is based in Manassas. A manager for SP Recycling said that it is no longer profitable to collect and recycle newspapers from Cooper Middle School in McLean. The company is now focusing on recycling cardboard.

"SP Recycling has begun to focus on recovering other grades of material in response to the decline in newsprint consumption. As a result, we have begun the process of reducing the size of the collection service we have provided schools and non-profits," stated Christian Garrett, Plant Manager for the Manassas branch.

Recycling efforts in McLean began in the late 1960s and early 1970s when a group of residents from the McLean Citizens Association (MCA) placed several bins throughout McLean to encourage residents to recycle. Proceeds from recycling supported the planting and maintenance of trees and generated \$4,000 to \$5,000 annually. Over the years, fewer and smaller bins were placed in McLean, largely due to Fairfax County's implementation of curbside recycling pick-ups. MTF's proceeds from recycling were greatly reduced but continued to support tree planting and care.

"This marks the end of a long history of MTF using the proceeds from recycling paper for planting and maintaining trees," said Joyce Harris, Chairman of the McLean Trees Foundation. "We thank Cooper Middle School for hosting the bins on their site for many years, and we are grateful to the residents who helped support us by bringing their newspaper to the bins. We apologize for any inconvenience that this change has caused. MTF did not receive advance notice of this change from SP Recycling and was therefore unable to notify the public in advance."

MTF could not find another recycling company that would provide proceeds to non-profits.

"We encourage residents who supported us through recycling of papers to make annual contributions to MTF so that we can continue to maintain and restore our urban forest here in McLean," said Harris. "MTF is a small non-profit, with no paid staff, and we receive no county funds. We are solely dependent on grants and contributions to fuel our planting and maintenance programs. It would be unfortunate if we could not continue our work because of a lack of funds."

MTF was founded in 1970 as a semi-autonomous committee of the MCA before incorporating in 2004 as a 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization. MTF's mission is to preserve, plant, and maintain trees in McLean; to educate the public on the benefits of trees; and to assist the public in taking an active role in caring to their trees.

Tax-deductible donations, suggestions for projects, and offers for volunteer assistance can be addressed to The McLean Trees Foundation, P.O. Box 113, McLean, VA 22101 or by contacting MTF through the website: www.McLeanTreesFoundation.org.

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