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The Cabell brand Center has completed first phase of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF) Grant. Through the use of WQIF grant funds, The Cougar Upper Elementary School in Manassas, VA has installed a rainwater harvesting system designed to collect and reuse the rainwater from the roof of the school.

Cougar Upper Elementary School is an extension of the current elementary school and will house third, fourth, and fifth graders. The school design focuses on green building designs like geothermal heating, daylight harvesting, recycling and regional materials, and rainwater harvesting. Since the school was concerned with the growing cost for constructing the green building, the WQIF grant was instrumental in ensuring that rainwater harvesting was incorporated in the design.

The rainwater harvesting system will reduce the stormwater runoff for the entire Cougar Upper Elementary School Campus. Stormwater runoff can carry with it phosphorous, nitrogen and sediment which impair waterways. The incorporation of a low maintenance high quality rainwater harvesting system contributes significantly to reducing this Nonpoint Source Pollution (NSP) of local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay.

The stored rainwater will be used to irrigate the landscaping and flush toilets and urinals in the school. It is anticipated that the rainwater harvesting system will conserve approximately 1.3 million gallons of water each year. This is not only a significant cost savings to the school and the municipality but has a major impact on the environment that is so important in construction today.

The second project funded by the Virginia Department of Conservations and Recreation WQIF Grant Funding is the Charlottesville Transit Facility that is owned and operated by the City of Charlottesville. The project is designed for vehicle washing and flushing toilets in the facility.

The Cabell Brand Center will continue to seek grant funds to assist in financing projects that focus on reducing NSP, water conservation and Rainwater Harvesting Projects across the United States. It is everyone's responsibility to be cognizant of the water situation in world and do their part to conserve and protect our most valuable resource.