



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

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For Immediate Release

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New Rainwater Harvesting System Installed at City Public Works

HARRISONBURG, VA – The City of Harrisonburg contracted with Rainwater Management Systems of Charlottesville, VA to have a 6,000 gallon rainwater harvesting system installed. This system collects rainwater from the 10,000 square feet rooftop of a fleet storage building at the City’s Public Works facility. The collected rainwater will supplement the water needed by the City’s street sweepers and vector-flusher truck. A one-inch rainfall event will fill the rainwater harvesting system’s tanks.

Reducing stormwater runoff is an important part of improving the water quality of Blacks Run, the 11-mile stream that runs through the City and eventually into the North River, Shenandoah River, and Chesapeake Bay. Blacks Run is considered impaired, or unhealthy, by the Commonwealth of Virginia for too much *E. coli* bacteria and sediment.

As land is developed for homes and businesses, more land is covered by impervious surfaces such as parking lots, driveways, and buildings, so rainwater cannot infiltrate into the ground. Instead it flows across impervious surfaces and rushes into our waterways which can increase flooding and erode streambeds. Rainwater harvesting diverts stormwater which could also carry pollution and debris such as pet waste, motor oil, fertilizer, litter, and sediment into our streams and waterways that make our water unsuitable for work and play.

The new rainwater harvesting system at Harrisonburg Public Works is one of many projects that are collectively known as “Community Solutions to Stormwater Pollution in Blacks Run” and was funded by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and US Environmental Protection Agency. In 2009, the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation in partnership with the City of Harrisonburg, Eastern Mennonite University, James Madison University, Shenandoah Valley Soil & Water Conservation District, Boxerwood Gardens, Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority, and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality received \$325,000 in grant funding to implement projects that reduce stormwater pollution and enhance stormwater management throughout the Blacks Run watershed. The program has resulted in over 200 best management practices (BMPs) including a series of residential rain gardens, rain barrels and pet waste digesters, bioretention facilities (aka rain gardens), streambank stabilization and riparian buffer planting projects, a small green roof, and several rainwater harvesting cisterns.

Residents interested in taking part in rainwater harvesting at home may be interested in purchasing a rain barrel at the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County’s next Rain Barrel & Compost Bin Sale tentatively scheduled for April 6, 2013. More information at www.cleanstream.org.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 50,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.harrisonburgva.gov

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