“1.25 million gallons of stormwater captured annually” only tells one part of this grant’s story. The project’s real success was relationships built and strengthened within the public sector, private sector, communities of faith, and private citizens. With the Frist Foundation’s generous support, the Cumberland River Compact expanded its role as an emissary between reasonable, concerned citizens and the regulatory agencies for a common goal – clean and abundant fresh water.

The impact of the Frist Foundation’s investment will continue beyond 2018 with the program that the grant launched – Depave. By working with volunteers who remove unnecessary asphalt, Depave creates gardens and playgrounds where there was once asphalt. Ideal partners for this project have been churches, schools, and even Metro Nashville. The Compact secured 2019 funding for Depave and program support from Metro Water Services, Metro Planning, and Metro Public Works.

During this grant period, we faced significant challenges and gained some valuable experience. We worked with the Tennessee Department of the Environment and Conservation to better understand the cloudy and convoluted metrics they use to classify water quality and stream health. Even when localities want to restore their stream classification from unhealthy to healthy, TDEC wasn’t able to offer a process. We worked with TDEC to clarify the process and, as a result of the Frist Foundation grant, have partnered with the City of Forest Hills to work to move their waterways from unhealthy status to healthy status.

Frist support strengthened the Compact’s ability to serve as a link between the general public and government organizations and through education and project implementation, our outreach will remain steady and important in the Richland Creek watershed for many years to come.