



At A Glance:

A Quick Look at South River History and Activities

Since the discovery of mercury contamination in the Shenandoah River system in the mid-1970s, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) and other state agencies have monitored to gather the data necessary to protect the health of the public and the river

Waynesboro. The data collected through the monitoring program have provided for a comprehensive understanding of the mercury distribution in the rivers, resulting in fish consumption advisories replacing the overall fish harvest ban. Advances in our understanding of mercury behavior in the environment, coupled with continued river monitoring, will provide the tools necessary to make informed decisions about managing river resources in the future.

remove the mercury than to leave it in place. These reports went through public review prior to approval by the State Water Control Board.

In Fall 2000, the South River Science Team was formed to serve as a focal point for technical and scientific issues concerning mercury in the South River and downstream waterways. The team is a cooperative effort between the VDEQ, Department of Health, and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and representatives from academia, citizen groups, and DuPont. In addition to providing technical direction for the mercury monitoring conducted in the South River, the team's focus includes filling data gaps to better understand mercury behavior, reviewing new technologies, addressing outstanding risk-based questions, and ensuring that there is effective communication provided to the users of the river.

Mercury is very stable in the environment and is expected to remain in the river system for many years. The VDEQ administers a monitoring program that routinely measures the status of mercury levels in water, sediments, and fish. Data collected in the past three decades indicate that the mercury levels in water are generally below our ability to detect it. However, the mercury concentrations in fish and sediments have remained fairly constant over time. The evaluation of the monitoring data by mercury experts led to the conclusion that it would do more harm to the river system to try to

This newsletter will be published twice a year to serve as a communication tool for the South River Science Team activities and accomplishments.

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- >600 copies of Summer 2002 issue mailed in late May
- ~400 physicians, ~200 individuals/organizations
- Positive feedback, several requests to be added to distribution

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Tech Corner:
 Mercury Cycle in the Environment

Did You Know?
 Expert Panel Formed

From the Team...
 VDH Fish Consumption

Winter 2002 Issue Schedule

- Aug 15 - first draft of articles
- Sept 16 - edited drafts distributed for review
- Sept 27 - comments on drafts
- Oct 18 - layout first draft
- Nov 1 - comments on layout
- Nov 15 - reproduction and mailing

Article Ideas?

- At a Glance
 - Review of Historical Data (how it has directed Team efforts)
 - FOS River Monitoring Programs (DEQ, FOS)
- Tech Corner
 - Remediation Techniques for Mercury Contamination
 - River System Conceptual Model
- Did You Know?
 - Other U.S. Mercury Sites
- From the Team
 - Va Tech Fish Diet Study
- Need photos or graphics