



The South River Current

Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship



Restoration Beyond the River

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The Commonwealth of Virginia and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have recently approved funding to create and protect the Lyndhurst Ponds Natural Area Preserve—a 350-acre site in Augusta County. The funds from the DuPont Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration settlement have preserved over 1,000 acres of land in the South Fork Shenandoah Watershed, furthering a mission to protect Virginia’s biodiversity. The Lyndhurst Ponds Natural Area Preserve will help protect and restore some unique, once-endangered natural habitats called sinkhole ponds. Unlike the dangerous sinkholes that sometimes form under streets and buildings, these small natural pools are treasure troves of diverse and endangered plants and animals and a popular resting spot for migratory birds as well. For more information on the preserve, click [here](#). If you are wondering how these sinkholes form, check out the “Take a Walk Back” article below!



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Did You Know?

- The South River drains into the Shenandoah Watershed, which drains into the Chesapeake Bay, the world's most productive estuary.
- Shenandoah National Park is home to over 190 resident and transient bird species.
- Nearly 4,000 feet of riverbank along the South River have been stabilized as part of the mercury remediation project.
 - Approximately 51,700 people live in the South River Watershed.
 - Rivers and streams in Augusta County flow both north towards the Shenandoah River and south towards the James River, and both watersheds include a river called the South River.



Take a Walk Back

It may surprise you to know that even though the Shenandoah Valley is a mountainous region with lakes and forests and First Landing State Park (formerly known as Seaside Park) near Virginia Beach is a beachy area filled with sand, ocean water, and dune grass, there is one unique habitat that these two regions both have nurtured for years—seasonal sinkhole ponds! Shenandoah Valley sinkhole ponds are depressions in the ground that formed long ago when limestone under the surface broke down and the sediment shifted and formed a shallow depression. Water gathers in the depressions in the springtime and the sinkhole ponds become home to a diverse plant and animal population like the barking tree frog and that famous Virginia sneezeweed! Draining, ditching, and dredging can damage these fragile habitats and so can runoff from fertilized agricultural fields. In order for these longtime natural phenomena to last, measures need to be taken to protect these mini-ecosystems, and that’s why natural preserves are so important. ([Natural Heritage Resources Fact Sheet](#))

Connections

Opportunities to explore and enjoy the natural world around us don’t always require lots of planning and vacation time. In fact, one of the most enjoyable pastimes can be experienced minutes from home—fishing. [The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources website](#) provides instructions on how to fish, where to fish, how to identify the kind of fish you catch, how to get a fishing license, and more. During the spring and fall months, this agency stocks the rivers and lakes with many species of fish, including trout. Some areas are designated just for kids under 15 years old to fish—[youth fishing](#). Check out the website, and schedule some socially distant bonding time with nature’s best swimmers!



The Current is a publication of the South River Science Team (www.southernriverstewards.org). To be added or deleted from our distribution list, contact KB at kbaldino@writingunlimitedllc.com