



The South River Current

Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship



River Restoration

Remediating soil naturally necessitates clearing ground cover and, unfortunately, some trees. Native trees and shrubs have been replanted strategically along the remediated banks of the South River. Along the floodplain at North Park, the Corteva team worked with the City of Waynesboro and area arborists to protect two very old silver maple trees during excavation. An arborist provided guidance to the team during soil excavation, directing the team to stop just outside the critical root zone for each tree and reducing the excavation to a depth of just 6 inches around the tree. The crew also implemented an air-knife technique in areas with higher soil mercury concentrations within the critical root zone at the base of each tree. This technique uses high-pressure airflow to penetrate, expand, and break up soil. After the soil is loosened, the remaining material is safely vacuumed away. Thanks to these efforts and the collaboration among many stakeholders, the trees were preserved and will continue to grow and provide enjoyment for the community.

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Air Knife Excavation

[Link to picture credit](#)

Did You Know?

- Forests are the most effective land cover for maintenance of water quality.
- 54% of the South River Watershed is forested.
- Forests serve as natural sponges, collecting and filtering rainfall and releasing it slowly into streams. They provide significant benefits by filtering sediments and other pollutants from water before it reaches the stream.

Connections

Have you heard of the Virginia Big Tree Program? The Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation at Virginia Tech coordinate the program to improve the care and enjoyment of trees and educate state residents about the value of tree conservation.

What trees qualify as “big trees”? The five largest specimens of more than 300 native, non-native, and naturalized tree species are included in the registry. The [Virginia Big Tree Registry](#) (VBTR) lists each tree, its size, location, unique characteristics, and a photo.

In 2016, a [Champion Shingle Oak](#) in Ridgeview Park in Waynesboro was measured and nominated as a Virginia Champion Big Tree. Its circumference came in at 178 inches and it stood 88 feet high to a crown of 100 feet. It still stands healthy and strong today!

Virginia BIG Trees



Take a Walk Back

Forests in the Shenandoah Valley have come a long way over the centuries. In the late 1800s, farming, mining, logging, and general development of the land wore away the healthy expanse of trees and shrubs. Repeated fires degraded the soil, causing large gullies. The Weeks Act in 1911 allowed the federal government the authority to purchase the ruined land and work to revive it. In 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was established as part of the New Deal, putting 9,200 unemployed young men to work for nine years building roads, telephone lines, trails, and campgrounds. One of the first CCC camps was in the South River Watershed at Camp Roosevelt in the George Washington National Forest. Rockwork constructed by the CCC throughout the trails remains today.

High Knob Fire Tower Built by World War I Veterans and CCC



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