



The South River Current

Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship



River Restoration

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The South River is unique in the State of Virginia due to its cold-water fishery, including an urban fishery in Waynesboro. This fishery is made possible by cold water springs that enter the river upstream of the city. As discussed in previous issues of *The Current*, agriculture, land development, and industry have impacted the river. Efforts are underway to lessen the human impacts, protect the cold-water inputs from springs, and enhance the habitat for trout. Removing old dams (see below), creating channels and habitat structures in the river, and remediating and restoring riverbanks (to name a few) improve the water quality and enhance the habitat for trout. There are now five separate sections of the South River that are stocked with trout every year—the Lyndhurst area, Ridgeview Park, the 2-mile reach from Wayne Avenue downstream through Constitution Park to 2nd Street in North Park, the reach from Grand Caverns Park to Grottoes Town Park, and Basic Park which is just for kids. Take your [pick!](#)

Did You Know?

- In 1989, the South River in downtown Waynesboro became the first urban trout fishery in Virginia managed as Delayed Harvest.
- Virginia is home to over 176,000 acres of public lakes and 27,300 miles of fishable streams.
- Virginia anglers measure over 6,000 trophy-size freshwater fish annually on average. Their accomplishments are recognized by the Virginia DWR through the Virginia Angler Recognition Program.



Connections

Do you know the difference between classic fishing and fly fishing? Hopefully, you are not surprised to know it doesn't involve fishing for flies but fishing with flies—at least imitation flies! In fly fishing, the bait (often resembling a fly) rests on top of the water, much like its namesake. The weight of the cast is not in the bait as with classic fishing, but in the fly line. The rod is long and flexible with an open reel. Hand positioning and casting require some artistry and practice.

If you'd like to give it a try, check out the licensing guidelines [here](#) and make your way to the catch and release fishery in downtown Waynesboro. For more information on fly fishing in the Shenandoah Valley, click [here](#) or check out the [South River Fly Shop](#).



Take a Walk Back

In the early 1900s, dams were built to improve production at various mills along the South River. Over the years these dams had caused some detrimental effects on the health of the river. Small dams can block or inhibit upstream and downstream fish passage; increase water temperatures; decrease water oxygen levels; obstruct the movement of sediment, debris, and nutrients; and harm wildlife. Removing old dams is one of the strategies used by the Shenandoah Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited (SVTU) and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) to improve the South River cold water fishery. The remains of the McGaheysville Dam were demolished in 2004, and, in 2011, the Ramworks Dam (Rife-Loth Dam) and the DuPont Dam were excavated. Find out more about the dams removed from this river and others all across the country by clicking [here](#).



The former McGaheysville Dam



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