



# The South River Current

Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship



## River Restoration

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As part of the South River restoration process, the South River Science Team (SRST) completed studies to determine the safety of eating vegetables grown on the South River floodplain and chickens and eggs from hens raised on the floodplain. The location of the studies required forming a partnership with a landowner on a site next to the South River that is routinely flooded. It was the Augusta Forestry Center in Crimora, a division of the Virginia Department of Forestry, that provided the land and support for the studies. The garden study involved growing 17 different types of vegetables in the floodplain and, for comparison purposes, at a location away from the river that does not flood. Vegetables were grown for two seasons, harvested, and analyzed for mercury. Based on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance, the vegetables were considered safe for consumption. A similar study that included raising chickens and analyzing the meat and eggs also resulted in the same conclusions regarding safe consumption. The partnership with the Augusta Forestry Center was pivotal to the success of these studies. Forestry is not just about trees after all!



The Forestry Center provided the land for this agricultural study. Read more about this and other studies on the [Fact Sheets](#) page of the SRST website.

### Did You Know?

- A self-paced virtual [home food preservation class](#) is offered through the Virginia Cooperative Extension for \$15.
- Every fall, homeowners collect acorns and nuts of select species for donation to the Augusta Forestry Center where the VDOF grows various hardwood seedlings.
  - In 2013, almost 30,000 volunteers of the Virginia Cooperative Extension provided more than 966,000 hours of volunteer service. Click [here](#) to find out more.

### Connections



The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) provides services to help private landowners develop Forest Stewardship

Plans. These plans are intended to encourage nonindustrial landowners to include the protection of forest resources as part of their property management plans. VDOF provides the following services free of charge:

- Determining needs and developing a cost-share plan for planting projects, including plant species spacing and a map of the planned planting area
- Confirming the planted seedlings and approving the cost share or alternate management plan
- Inspecting the area to determine seedling survival and/or the need for further treatment in the winter after planting

For more information on these services, click [here](#).



### Take a Walk Back

The history of teaching forestry and agriculture beyond the classroom in the U. S. dates back to the late 19th century. The Hatch Act of 1887 created the agricultural experiment station program so that lessons learned in classrooms and laboratories could be shared with the community at large. In 1906, businessmen of Terrell, Texas, seeing the value of the program, offered to help pay to have a demonstrator dedicated to their county. The concept quickly traveled to other states. T.O. Sandy of Burkeville, VA was assigned as a Virginia State Agent in 1906 when his farm demonstration proved inspiring and educational. Over the past several decades, the number of state agents has multiplied, with agents spreading helpful techniques and innovative ideas throughout the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, still work with the division to build local relationships and collaborative partnerships today. To learn more, click [here](#).



Men working in a food processing lab at Virginia Cooperative Extension. (1949) Picture credit [here](#).



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