



The South River Current

Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship



Click on the picture to view the latest video from the South River Science Team.

River Restoration: Next Steps in *The Story of Mercury*

Over the past four decades, the South River Science Team has collected and analyzed samples of water, soil, fish, birds, and other organisms of the South River to understand the effects of mercury and how it made its way into the food web. Over the next several years, sampling results will be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the completed riverbank remediation projects at the Pilot Bank, Constitution Park, City Shops, Allied Ready Mix, Shiloh Baptist Church, and North Park (click [here](#) to learn more). Currently, the scientists collect, process, and analyze tissue samples from fish (see October 2021 issue [here](#)), wolf spiders, and mayflies. This sampling will continue until measured mercury levels achieve project success goals. The team anticipates subtle improvements over the next few years. If you visit the newly remediated and restored riverbanks in Waynesboro, you may still catch a few scientists in waders performing punch biopsies on fish or lifting rocks and logs to catch spiders and mayflies. For a refresher on the story of the DuPont plant and how mercury first entered the South River during rayon production and the carefully executed cleanup efforts in recent years, watch this [short video](#).



Did You Know?

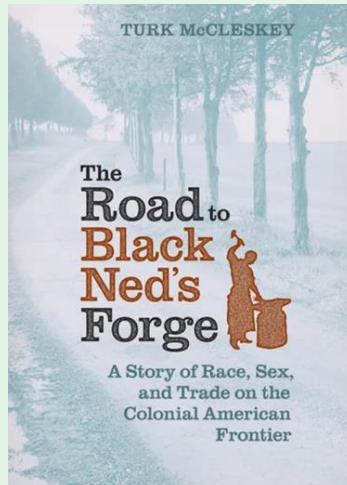
- DuPont acquired some “time-only” clocks for their Waynesboro plant with no calendar dial, and the faceplate, identified as “form 142,” is a piece of paper glued onto a tin backing. They are still ticking over 70 years later!
- Flat boats called “gundalows” up to 90 feet long navigated the rivers from Grottoes to Harpers Ferry carrying items such as iron and flour produced by the river valley furnaces and mills.
- South River Science Team crews have collected over 10,000 samples of water, soil, fish, birds, and other organisms over a 40-year span.



Connections: Get Out!

Do you need help preparing for your next outdoor adventure? Rockfish Gap Outfitters has been outfitting South River Watershed and Shenandoah Valley adventurers since 1986. Instead of searching online for bikes, boats, backpacking gear, and outdoor apparel, consider shopping locally at Rockfish Gap. They will even give your pack a shakedown and help you figure out how to lighten the load for free! Have a bike or boat in need of repair? Take it there. The store will soon be offering bike and backpacking equipment rentals and evening classes so you can brush up on the 10 essentials for hiking and camping. Rockfish Gap Outfitters is located on East Main Street in Waynesboro and sits along U.S. Bicycle Route 76

and close to the Appalachian Trail. You can literally step out of their store into your next adventure! Explore all their brands and services at Rockfishgapoutfitters.com or give them a call. They are ready to help you explore the South River Watershed and beyond!



Take a Walk Back: Remembering Edward “Ned” Tarr

The Road to Black Ned's Forge: A Story of Race, Sex, and Trade on the Colonial American Frontier tells the story of a slave who bought his freedom, traveled to Virginia, and made a name for himself as a blacksmith. The book is based on the real Edward “Ned” Tarr who bought his freedom in 1752, traveled from Pennsylvania, and settled in modern-day Rockbridge County, Virginia. Ned married a Scottish woman and established a well-known forge on the Great Wagon Road. In 1754, he bought a 270-acre farm on Mill Creek and became the first free black landowner west of the Blue Ridge. When his former master's son turned up and tried to claim Ned was still his property, his freedom was in jeopardy, but Ned's neighbors believed his story and stood by him, thus securing his future as a free man. A copy of this fascinating tale is available at three different branches of the Valley Libraries. Grab your library card and check it out [here](#) or you can buy one online. Don't miss out on this opportunity to dive into the rich history that surrounds us here in the South River Watershed.