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## The South River Current



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*Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship*

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*The float group stops to chat about riverbank restoration.*

## River Restoration: Facts, Fun, and Floating

One of the long-term aspirations of the South River Watershed Coalition (formerly South River Science Team) is that the riverbank restoration would stimulate interest and activity on the river. Now that all six riverbanks have been remediated, the South River Remediation Advisory Panel (RAP) and Waynesboro Parks and Recreation organized a float trip. A handful of adventurers gathered at Constitution Park to launch their canoes and kayaks and venture forth to gain a river view of the transformation at each restored riverbank. Mike Liberati from Corteva explained the nuances of the work at each bank as the group listened, drifting in the water and enjoying the tranquility. Participants finished the voyage and were reminded that kayak and canoe trips on the South River provide a natural respite right through the City and also downstream in Augusta County. River access points provide parking areas and flat banks to easily move boats into the water. Find a launch closest to your doorstep on the [Water Trail Map](#) or [downstream](#).

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## Did You Know?



- President Herbert Hoover strongly supported the construction of Skyline Drive. His summer house, Rapidan Camp, (Rapidan's Brown House pictured here) still sits in Shenandoah National Park. Hoover donated the camp to Virginia after losing the 1932 election. Click [here](#) for more information and picture credit.
- Waynesboro spends approximately \$100,000 annually on tree pruning and removal, leaf clean up, storm clean up, and planting.
- A 6.5-mile stretch of the South River from N. Oak Lane to Hopeman Parkway has been designated a Virginia Scenic River. This designation was several years in the making but became official on July 1, 2021.



*Parking lots before and after city ordinances required interior landscaped islands for parking lots. Newer lots are designed with trees to enhance the look of a property, provide shade protection, and reduce impervious surfaces.*

## Connections: Discover Our Urban Forest

No need to travel to the mountains to stand in the middle of a forest. Take a walk around downtown Waynesboro to enjoy a forest—an urban forest, that is! An urban forest is a network or system of woodlands, groups of trees, and individual trees that can include trees on the street or trees in parks and gardens. The City of Waynesboro is working hard to maintain our urban forest. Crews regularly remove and prune trees around town, and each year 20 to 30 new trees are planted throughout the city. Shade from trees helps to cool parking lots, sidewalks, and buildings that would otherwise absorb heat on a hot sunny day. Trees also allow people to feel close to nature, even in the city - they provide a sort of roof to the “outdoor room.” The city plans to replace 10 acres of impervious surface (like parking lots) and managed areas with native trees, shrubs, and grasses. Want to learn more about plans for our urban forest and how you can make a difference? Check out this five-minute video, [\*\*“Our Urban Forest: Waynesboro, Virginia”\*\*](#) and plant a native tree near you!



*Photo from National Park Service archives.*

### Take a Walk Back: 105 Miles of History

Almost 100 years ago in 1924, the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee was commissioned to identify a future national park site for the growing population of Americans living on the East Coast. The committee proposed the park include a continuous drive along the mountain tops so that visitors could enjoy the picturesque sky-line view from their cars. The Committee settled on the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Shenandoah Valley. Beginning on July 18, 1931, and over the next eight years, Skyline Drive slowly took shape. Architects and engineers imagined and constructed 105.5 miles of roadway, including a 610-foot-long underpass known as Mary's Rock Tunnel. Every few years, a section of roadway was funded and completed – from Swift Run Gap all the way to Rockfish Gap. The Federal Drought Relief Administration funded the first section as a way to employ Virginia farmers and apple pickers suffering from the drought impacts on apple and produce harvests in 1930. Subsequent funds were allocated by Congress. In May 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corp was called in to help build rock walls, grade slopes, construct overlooks, assemble guard rails, and plant thousands of trees and shrubs along the roadways. Seven different contractors worked on 10 consecutive sections of roadway, and three other contractors applied the asphalt surface. In August 1939, the project was complete. Since then, crews have removed rotting wooden guardrails and bolstered various rock walls with cement, but most of the landscape remains unchanged except from natural growth.

Accessing Skyline Drive these days costs \$30 per car for a seven-consecutive-day pass. Five days a year the entrance fee is waived. August 4th is the next free day this year in honor of the anniversary of the Great American Outdoors Act. To find out more about Skyline Drive and nearby amenities, click [here](#).