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# The South River Current



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*Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship*

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*Left: Front Royal harvest pavilion with new concrete raceways designed for fish containment and harvesting.*

*Right: Pond 26 with the new harvest pavilion and incubation building in the background.*

## Watershed Restoration: Extreme Makeover Fish Hatchery Edition

Corteva (formerly DuPont) has completed a much-needed facelift at the Front Royal Fish Cultivation Center near Strasburg, Virginia funded by the DuPont Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration settlement. The updated facility will now operate as a modern aquacultural center where fish are spawned, hatched, and cared for until they are large enough to release into the wild or be transferred to a fish farm. Since 2019, the team from Corteva reconfigured and lined about five acres of earthen ponds, constructed three new buildings and a harvest pavilion, updated power sources, and added water screening and filtering drums. The VA Department of Wildlife Resources will reopen the facility in October, marking the start of a modern era of cultivating fish for stocking rivers throughout the state. To find out when the Front Royal Fish Cultivation Center is officially up and running or check out other hatcheries in VA to tour, click on the [DWR website](#).

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## Did You Know?



- Aquaculture includes breeding, rearing, and harvesting fish for commercial, recreational, or public purposes and ichthyology is a fish-focused branch of zoology. Can you fish out these terms in this issue?
- Students can run their own mini-fish hatchery, raising trout from egg to the fry stage, through Trout Unlimited's [Trout in the Classroom program](#). (See picture of student from the program.)
- In 1960, a carton of 12 individually wrapped Little Debbie® cakes or cookies had a suggested retail price of 49 cents.

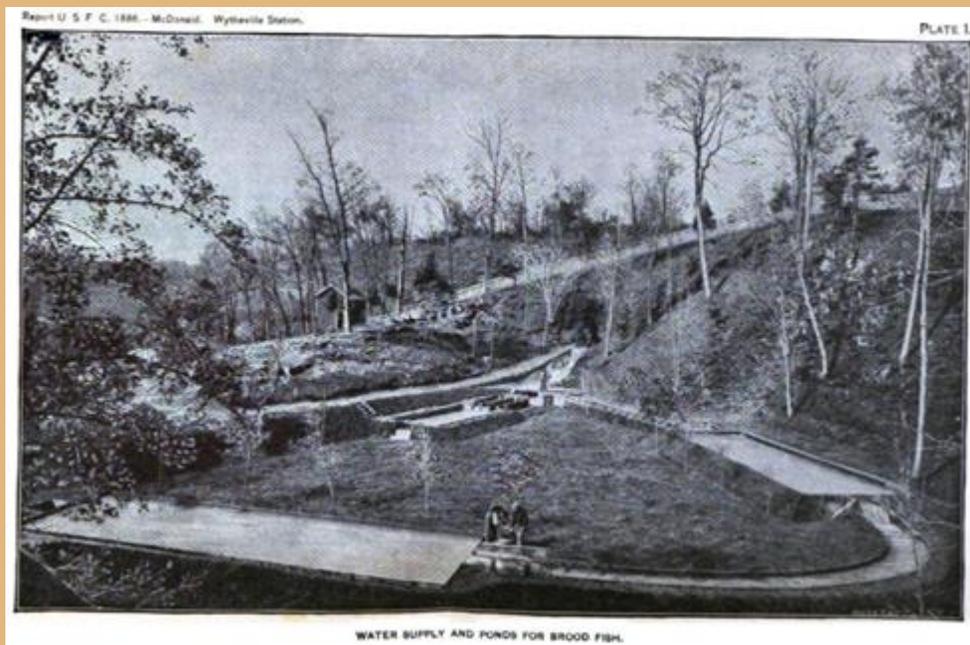


*[McKee Manufacturing Plant](#) in Stuarts Draft, VA*

## Connections:

### Does Little Debbie Have a Snack for You?

Are you in the mood for a Swiss roll with its scrumptious chocolate cake rolled around sweet creme and encased in fudge coating? Or do you prefer an oatmeal creme pie with the combination of whole grain oats, molasses, and irresistible crème? These and dozens of other Little Debbie snacks are produced by McKee Foods, and they operate a plant in Stuarts Draft, Virginia. Built in 1990, the facility houses some of the company's most innovative technology. More than 1,000 employees call this plant their workplace, which includes an active employee recreation association with a pool, children's area, and walking trail. In 2022, McKee Foods contributed \$68,000,000 to Stuarts Draft through employee payroll and purchases from area suppliers. Next time you're in the mood for sweet and delicious goodness wrapped up in a single-serving package, head over to the bakery store at 2929 Stuarts Draft Highway. You are sure to find some delectable deals.



*Water supply and brood fish ponds at Wytheville hatchery, circa 1886. (Picture credit)*

## Take a Walk Back:

### Over a Hundred Years of Hatching

Are you new to the idea of fish hatcheries? You may be surprised to know fish hatcheries have been thriving in Virginia for almost 150 years. Back in the 1870s, Virginians noticed that the fish population had taken a serious hit. The Virginia Assembly created the office of the Virginia Fish Commissioner in March 1871 to evaluate the state's commercial fisheries and make recommendations for restoring them. In 1879, Marshall McDonald (the first Fish Commissioner) traveled to Wytheville, Virginia to select the location for the first trout hatchery from which they provided Rainbow trout to the headwaters of the Shenandoah River in Augusta County. Today the State of Virginia operates nine public fish hatcheries—five cold-water facilities focused entirely on trout production, and four warm-water facilities like Front Royal that hatch and rear species like muskellunge, northern pike, striped bass, walleyes, catfish, largemouth bass, bluegill and redear sunfish. Click [here](#) to view old photos and read details from a Virginia Tech ichthyology class blog about the history of trout hatcheries in Virginia.