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# The South River Current



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*Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship*

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*Section of the Crompton Mill that still stands unchanged.*

## **Watershed Restoration: When Passion Meets Potential**

Vacant buildings in disrepair make even the nicest streets look a little less appealing, and the bigger the property, the bigger the eyesore. A couple of decades ago, the 40-acre Crompton-Shenandoah plant at Arch Avenue and 12th Street in Waynesboro was one such property. In the 1980s the Crompton Company ceased operation, and the property sat shuttered and empty, seemingly destined for demolition. But, Beverly Shoemaker, the property owner, was passionate about reusing the facility. The first step was to clean up the contaminated land. In 2005, she committed to the Voluntary Remediation Program (VRP). Her \$5.5 million contribution became the largest known voluntary Brownfield investment by an individual in Virginia. The redevelopment team included individuals from nine different businesses. Together they made every effort to inform and involve the community and

collaborated with each other under a common vision. Now, the Mill at South River occupies the majority of the old facility which includes office and retail spaces ranging in size from 200 sq. ft. to 200,000 sq. ft. Current tenants include the Waynesboro Health Department, a bagel manufacturer, an architectural firm, a physical therapy facility, a national trucking company, a blacksmithing school, a machine shop, and an injected-molding business, as well as artisans such as a glass blower, blacksmith, and bronze crafter. Read more about this historic remediation effort [here](#).

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### Did You Know?

- Waynesboro is offering free concerts on the South River Greenway at Constitution Park on Thursday nights all summer long starting at 6 p.m. Check out the list of performers for Groovin' at the Greenway [here](#).
- POWs at Lyndhurst were paid 35 cents in coupons for a day's labor that could be cashed at the camp's canteen. Their leftover change was put into a savings account in their name at the First National Bank of Waynesboro. One thrifty man received a cashier's check for \$65.00 at the end of the war. See "Take a Walk Back" below to find out more.

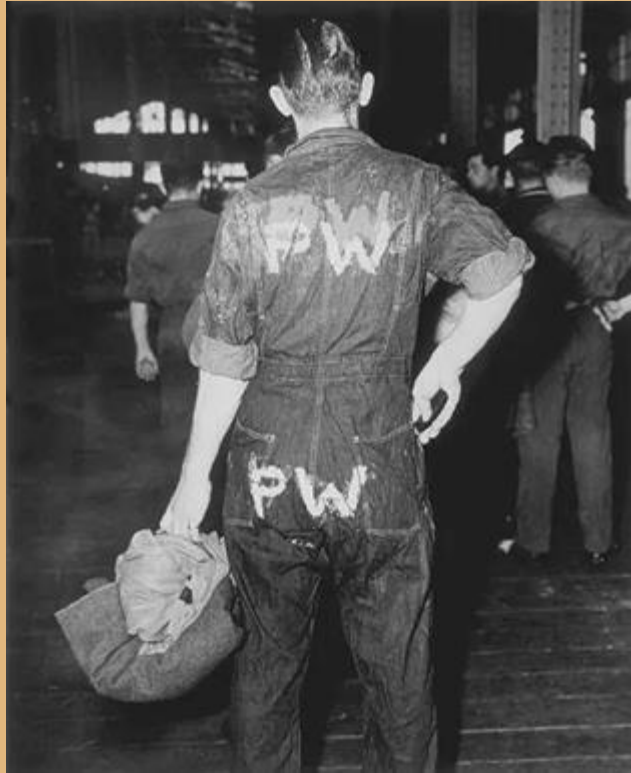




## Connections: Mouthwatering Neighborhood Nutrients

Have you ever tried The Waynesburger or do your tastes lean more toward The Fun Guy? These and other fine eats are up for savoring at a local watering hole, The River Burger Bar. In 2020, when Mandi Smack opened the restaurant, she hung river photos on the walls and scattered river rock under the glass bar top—a nod to the South River and life in a river town. Mandi is the owner of The River Burger Bar and co-owner of Blue Mountain Brewery, Blue Mountain Barrel House, and South Street Brewery. She and her team recycle all materials accepted by local facilities and avoid offering single-use items, when possible, to help mitigate the restaurant's carbon footprint. The health of the South River is important, and the team is always looking for opportunities to help maintain its beauty and appeal. [The River Burger Bar](#) is located at 137 N. Wayne Avenue, across from The French Press coffee shop and The Tubular Toy Box, and down the street from Extreme Expressions tattoos and piercings—all small businesses in the heart of town. If you have an open afternoon or evening, consider venturing downtown to support these and other local establishments. Don't forget, supporting local businesses helps create jobs and provides opportunities for in-person social connections.

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*German POW. (Picture from James Overton)*

## Take a Walk Back: When War Came to Waynesboro

It may not surprise you to know that during World War II, the DuPont factory in Waynesboro adjusted their manufacturing process to produce rayon for silk parachutes, but it may surprise you to know that during the same time the Civilian Conservation Corps camp near Lyndhurst housed prisoners of war (POWs). Opening as Camp Lyndhurst about August 1944, the camp housed 277 enlisted POWs and four non-commissioned officers. The POWs were required to help with logging, forestry, farming, and harvesting. They worked long hours, six days a week. That first year, the 440,000 apple trees in Augusta County yielded a bumper crop. Without the help of the prisoners, the two million bushels of produce would have been spoiled. During the 17 months that Camp Lyndhurst operated, the POWs worked the equivalent of 43,000 days of labor, mainly in the fields and orchards. In 1947, the U.S. government auctioned off the camp buildings, which buyers dismantled and carted off. A cracked, sunken foundation, a few random stone-lined pathways, and a moss-covered stairway to nowhere are all that remains of the campsite today. For more information, watch the film James Overton produced and directed, [In This Land: The Camp Lyndhurst Saga](#).

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For upcoming events go to the [South River Watershed Coalition Events Page](#).

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