

The South River Current



Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship



Aerial view of North Park

Take a Walk Back: Recreation Rises to New Heights

In 1968, the city of Waynesboro established the Department of Parks and Recreation. For decades, the department's main job was to oversee the operation of the city's five main parks: Coyner Springs, Ridgeview, Constitution, North, and Basic. In the 2000s, the department began to explore the idea of expanding recreational opportunities by constructing a greenway along the South River. The idea took root, and the city secured funding through a Transportation Enhancement Grant in 2001. By 2012, the first phase of the Greenway Trail Plan was complete. The community gathered at a dedication ceremony on March 17, 2012, to celebrate the progress and show its support. The popularity of the completed first phase fueled efforts for the next phase, which was completed in 2022. Riverbeds were bolstered, land was cleared, stairs and pedestrian walkways were built, and pathways were paved. The greenway now stretches two miles along the riverfront from the YMCA through downtown to North Park. "If you build it, they will come" has never been truer. About 60,000 people visit the greenway each year. Transformation efforts haven't been occurring only at the riverside, though. Workers have almost completed the first

phase of construction at the city's former landfill, the new Sunset Park. In a few months, residents and visitors will have access to the new park's expansive view of the surrounding valley, new trails, and picnic areas. The park system in Waynesboro has seen quite a transformation in the last two decades and, with more to come, nature is calling one and all.



The Blue Ridge Children's Museum Natural Playground is adjacent to the museum location at 201 Short Street in downtown Waynesboro.

Connections: Helping Local Families Grow Together

Modern methods of socialization can be especially hard to navigate for parents with young children. Finding a healthy balance of playtime and screen time can be a challenge. Parents need alternative ways to connect with one another and help their little ones burn off energy, interact, and grow. Enter the Blue Ridge Children's Museum, whose goal is "to build a place in downtown Waynesboro where children learn through play and exploration in environments designed just for them." As fundraising continues for indoor building renovations, an outdoor natural playground has been created and is open to the public. Museum Without Walls events like Toddler Time, Interactive Storytime, and Family Yoga are held at local businesses, farmers markets, and schools. But that's not all:

- The museum offers field trips for pre-kindergarten to third grade classes and homeschool groups.
- Registration for the 2024 Junior GROWers Summer Day Camp in collaboration with Project Grows opened to the public February 12.

- The museum is planning a mini summer camp specifically for young children with autism.

To find out more about Blue Ridge Children's Museum events and activities or to volunteer or donate to the cause, go to blueridgechildrensmuseum.org or follow them on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).



Did You Know?

- The Sustainable Apparel Coalition, of which The LYCRA Company is a part, was founded in 2009 by Walmart and Patagonia to gather interested apparel-linked organizations so they could develop "a common approach to measuring sustainability." ([link](#))
 - Project GROWS, located in Augusta County, is an educational, nonprofit farm formed in 2010 to help local at-risk populations develop a healthy relationship with food from the ground to the table. ([link](#))
 - Local trails and parks not only benefit the environment, they promote healthy living, help preserve history and culture, and can increase tourism and property values.
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Watershed Preservation: The Conscience of a Clothing Company

These days, almost every type of sportswear contains a little Lycra®. Just 5% to 10% of it in any given garment provides the extra elasticity to maintain the garment's shape and provide stretch. Most Americans wear clothes with a little Lycra® or Lycra®-like fabric every day. But do you ever think about how it's made? In 2023, The LYCRA Company used the Higg Facility and Environmental Module (FEM) tool to examine air emissions, energy use, environmental management systems, wastewater, waste, chemical management, and water usage at its manufacturing plant in Waynesboro, Virginia. This tool is widely used in the apparel industry to help companies assess their environmental impact, find areas for improvement, and see how they stack up compared to similar facilities. A third party verified the results – the Waynesboro site scored in the top quartile among peer facilities. It is important to the health of the South River Watershed that manufacturing companies in the watershed seek to improve their sustainability profiles and operate responsibly. If you'd like to read more about the Higg FEM tool, click [here](#) and follow further links as provided.



What Can I Do? Pick Up On Picking Up Trash

This new segment of the newsletter will explore what it means to be part of a watershed and how community members can help keep the watershed healthy.

Because the flow of water does not respect town and county lines, the boundaries of a watershed are defined not by man-made lines on a map, but by the highest elevations surrounding a given body of water. It follows then that every watershed has its own unique shape. In fact, the South River Watershed is shaped like a boot. If you live in this watershed, most of what seeps through your yard and runs off it flows into local streams that lead to the South River. Protecting water that flows from your house can reduce water and wastewater treatment costs. That's why your individual actions impact the health of the water for your community. What can you do? If you don't already, consider picking up after your pets and picking up litter from the street and storm drains. Read the disposal instructions on your household cleaning products before emptying them down the drain and limit your use of chemical fertilizers. Encourage family and friends to do the same and then keep checking back here for more tips on water conservation and protection!
