



The South River Current

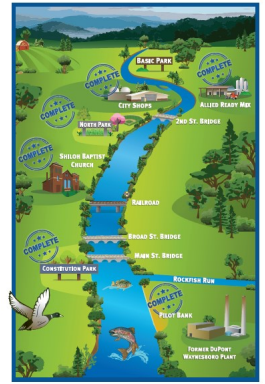
Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship



River Restoration

Over 20 years ago, the South River Science Team was formed to serve as a focal point for technical issues about mercury in the South River. Through its work with the Science Team, Corteva (formerly DuPont) learned that some of the mercury released long ago from the former DuPont Waynesboro plant bound to soil particles in the river and then ended up being deposited on riverbanks along the South River. When the riverbank soil eroded, mercury was going back into the river with it. Equipped with this information, the team developed a remediation approach focused on reducing the amount of mercury going into the river from riverbanks with the goal of reducing mercury in fish tissue. The approach was tested on a riverbank, called the Pilot Bank, just over 10 years ago and was deemed a success. This success cleared the way for remediation and restoration at other key downstream riverbanks —Constitution Park, City Shops, Allied Ready Mix, Shiloh Baptist Church, and North Park. Erosion at these six riverbanks was estimated to contribute the most mercury to the river each year. Recent fish tissue sampling has already shown an improving trend in mercury levels in juvenile fish. The [South River Science Team's website](#) provides details on the work completed at each riverbank.

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Did You Know?

- Waynesboro manufacturing dates to the 1800s when companies flocked to the area to take advantage of the water and transportation access, making stoves, doors, furniture, bricks, barrels, and paper, among other products.
- As the railroad industry expanded after the Civil War, Waynesboro saw the junction of two railroad lines—the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway with the Shenandoah Valley Railroad. The lines met near Waynesboro, inspiring the town nickname, the “Iron Cross.”
 - During World War II, the majority of production at DuPont's Waynesboro plant was dedicated to the war efforts. The rayon they produced was used as substitute for silk in parachutes.



Take a Walk Back

DuPont was not the only company involved in the textile industry in Waynesboro in the early twentieth century. The Mill at South River (also known as the Crompton-Shenandoah Plant) sat just across the river and employed about 700 local workers to dye and finish gray corduroy and velveteen goods (woven fabric off the loom before any finish processing). By mid-century, Crompton was among the top cotton corduroy and velveteen suppliers in the world. Three decades later, as textile production throughout the states slowly moved overseas, the plant closed its doors for good. In recent years, the mill has been repurposed and houses over 50 tenants from all sorts of industries.



Connections

If you follow the South River about 10 miles upstream, you will come upon a facility producing consumables of the edible sort. No textile dyeing or fiber fashioning here! The second largest Hershey's chocolate plant in the U.S. is right in Stuarts Draft. In June, Hershey announced a plan to add 90,000 square feet to the facility and just over 100 new jobs, doing its part to accelerate Virginia's economic recovery.

Jason Reiman, Senior Vice President and Chief Supply Chain Officer at The Hershey Co. spoke highly of working in and with the Shenandoah Valley community ([candyindustry.com](#)). Now isn't that sweet—almost as sweet as the chocolate and nut confections they produce every day!



The Current is a publication of the South River Science Team (www.southernriverstewards.org). To be added or deleted from our distribution list, contact KB at kbaldino@writingunlimitedllc.com