



The South River Current

Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship



River Restoration

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The South River restoration was designed to achieve many objectives, including preventing erosion and enhancing the quality and quantity of vegetation between the river and nearby land. The vegetated areas near streams and rivers are called riparian buffers. These areas are important because they help reduce nutrient and sediment runoff from rainstorms and snowstorms. A robust riparian buffer also provides shade for the river, which helps keep the river cooler in hotter months. In the South River, this cooler water is essential for cold water fisheries species like trout. The shade also provides animals on the land relief from the extreme heat, and the bushes and trees provide a habitat for birds and small mammals. As highlighted in *The South River Current* December 2020 issue, mature trees were left in place on the riverbanks during remediation to provide shade and help stabilize the bank to prevent erosion and sediment runoff. Plant species like Japanese knotweed (see July 2020 issue [here](#)) that are invading the restored riverbanks are being managed so that more desirable native species can become established and provide better habitat and bank stabilization.

Did You Know?

- The industries of agriculture and forestry together have a total economic impact of \$91 billion and provide more than 442,000 jobs in the Commonwealth.
- 35% of the South River Watershed is farmland.
- A 100-foot-wide strip of forest and grass can reduce rainstorm and snowstorm runoff of sediment by 97%, nitrogen by 80%, and phosphorus by 77%.



1700s American Settlement

Picture from the [Frontier Museum Website](#)

Connections

Sometimes we gain insight for moving forward by taking a look back. The Frontier Culture Museum, located on Richmond Road in Staunton, shows visitors how the first settlers in Virginia farmed in communities like the South River Watershed. In fact, you can even explore examples of traditional rural buildings from England, Germany, Ireland, and West Africa. The museum experience includes informational signs and living history demonstrations. The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day, and they recommend allowing three to four hours to see everything by foot. Click [here](#) more information.



Take a Walk Back

Less than five minutes off Main Street in Waynesboro rests a century-and-a-half-old farmhouse called Rose Cliff. Historians guess that the original structure dates back to the 1850s when the Brooks family built the house near their growing apple orchard. Just before the turn of the century, Craig and Lillian Loth bought the property and developed it into a commercial fruit farm. They grew all sorts of apples, including the heirloom Albemarle Pip-pin—one of Thomas Jefferson’s two favorite apples! Trees along the South River mark the edge of the sprawling property and provide shelter for wildlife on the land and in the water. The house is now registered in the National Register of Historic Places and is part of the Tree Street Historic District in Waynesboro.



Picture from the [DHR Website](#)



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