

# Our Watershed is Unique

**T**he Nature Conservancy has identified the Rivanna Watershed as one of the finest remaining freshwater river and stream systems in the Piedmont of Virginia.

The Rivanna Watershed has many unique features and important designations, including:

- A higher percentage of healthy streams than most other areas in Virginia, according to Virginia Commonwealth University.
- Designation of the Rivanna Corridor as an American Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the White House Millennium Council's Save America's Treasures program.
- Many headwater streams originating in National Park Service lands along the Blue Ridge Parkway and in Shenandoah National Park.
- Designation of the Upper Doyles River as an Exceptional State Water, home to brook trout and other cold-water fish.
- An elevation change of 3,400 feet, from 3,580 feet above sea level in the Blue Ridge Mountains to 180 feet at Columbia, Virginia.
- Over 2,000 miles of permanent and seasonal streams.
- Approximately 4,250 acres of wetlands including agricultural wetlands and ponds.
- Forest cover in over 70% of the watershed.
- Home to 11 species of freshwater mussels, including globally rare James spiny mussel, Atlantic pigtoe, and green floater.
- Approximately **165,700 people living in the watershed**, with population densities at the subwatershed level ranging from 10 to 1,685 persons per square mile.
- Many groups and individuals passionate about the Rivanna River working to protect the water and natural resources here.



*Many Rivanna headwaters begin on the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the interface between the Appalachians and the Piedmont. Photo/Mary Porter*



*The Rivanna becomes a classic Piedmont river as it winds past Carysbrook and through Fluvanna County. Photo/Mary Porter*



*There is habitat in several Rivanna headwater streams for the James spiny mussel (*Pleurobema collina*), a globally rare and federally and state endangered species. Photo/USFWS*



*The wetlands in Greenbrier Park along Meadow Creek help absorb flood (high flow) waters and pollutants such as lawn fertilizer and oily wastes carried off nearby lawns and streets. Photo/City of Charlottesville*

## The Rivanna Conservation Society

The Rivanna Conservation Society (RCS) was created in 1990 with the mission to safeguard the ecological, recreational, historical, cultural, and scenic resources of the Rivanna River and its tributaries. RCS hosts river paddles, river clean-ups, public education, teacher and student education, and stream and watershed restoration projects. RCS works to keep the health and protection of the Rivanna River at the forefront of our community's environmental agenda.

*Water is the most critical resource issue of our lifetime and our children's lifetime. The health of our waters is the principal measure of how we live on the land.* —LUNA LEOPOLD, HYDROLOGIST