

**Susquehanna River Forum**  
**Smallmouth Bass and Water Quality Issues**  
**Sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation**  
***Comments of John Arway, Executive Director PFBC***

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The smallmouth bass, our anglers and I would like to thank the Chesapeake Bay Foundation for sponsoring tonight's forum since it brings necessary attention to a problem of local, regional and national significance while we wait for EPA's decision about river impairment.

Tonight we will hear from some of our leading scientists who will speak about what we know and don't know about our river's problems.

We have learned much in the last 8 years about the conditions in the river that contribute to the disease that continues to plague our YOY and adult smallmouth bass. However, although we still have much to study and learn about the river's problems, our bass continue to get sick and die.

Some recent work which I would like to emphasize includes:

1. The U.S. EPA's National Rivers and Streams Assessment Survey found over 55% of our nation's streams and rivers do not support healthy populations of aquatic life. 40% of our waters have been identified to have high levels of phosphorus and 27% have high levels of nitrogen. Furthermore, 4 sampling sites of the national survey were located on the Susquehanna River and the 2 Pennsylvania sites rated poor for fish, periphyton and water quality.
2. In a recent paper published in the Journal of Environmental Science and Technology, USGS researchers found that movement of nitrogen through groundwater to streams can take decades to occur. This means that we may only now be seeing the effects from the fertilizers applied to our farm fields and lawns over 10 years ago and even if we begin to stop or reduce nutrient infiltration into our soils today, we may not see the results for another decade.
3. Geoff Smith and I published an article about the Susquehanna River and its fishery in decline which appears in the May edition of *Fisheries* magazine, the official publication of the American Fisheries Society. We posed a relevant question about how many diseased smallmouth need to found to list a river as an impaired water on the 303(d) list?

We not only need to continue to study and discuss the things that we don't know, but we also need to use the information that we do know to begin fixing a sick river.

I closing I would like to leave you with 3 observations:

- What is good for the river is good for the Bay.
- We have already learned enough about the river's problems to begin implementing solutions.
- The time for action is now before it is too late.

Thanks again to CBF for hosting tonight's forum and I am looking forward to joining with you in learning more about problems and solutions from tonight's speakers.