

## Pennsylvania Potomac Watershed TMDLs

Written by Administrator -

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The Pennsylvania portion of the Potomac River Basin is predominantly rural in nature. In general, the majority of the Potomac River Basin in Pennsylvania is dominated by forested ridges and narrow valleys common to the Ridge and Valley and Blue Ridge physiographic regions. Land use is predominately forestland (56%) and agriculture (41%). Developed land is only about 1.5% of the total land area.

As a result of the rural character of the Potomac River Basin in Pennsylvania, streams are primarily impacted by nonpoint sources of pollution. At present, approximately 220 linear stream miles of the 2,478 total assessed stream miles are considered to be impaired (about 9%) by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP). The most common causes for impairment are nutrients and sediments, which can originate from many sources including agricultural operations, residential development, and urban runoff to name a few.

PADEP addresses streams impaired by nonpoint source pollution with TMDL development using an Arcview GIS version of the Generalized Watershed Loading Functions (GWLF) model. ICPRB has been contracted to develop TMDLs using GWLF for watersheds impaired by nutrients and sediments in the Pennsylvania portion of the Potomac River Basin. By completing TMDLs for impaired streams, stakeholders and watershed organizations can apply for state and federal grants to implement recommended best management practices (BMPs) targeted at minimizing nutrient and sediment pollution. Ultimately, the goal is to improve water quality conditions, which will allow once impaired watersheds to meet state water quality standards.