

Smallmouth bass eradication

The process continues to acquire a permit to eradicate smallmouth bass in Miramichi Lake and a section of the SW Miramichi. Smallmouth bass were discovered in Miramichi Lake in 2008 and efforts have been ongoing to get permission to eradicate the species from the Miramichi Watershed. Containment of the bass in Miramichi Lake was tried, but in the late summer of 2019, smallmouth bass were discovered in the Southwest Miramichi River below the outlet of Miramichi Lake. A consortium of non-government groups formed a Smallmouth Bass Eradication Committee in 2018 to request a permit from DFO to apply rotenone to kill the smallmouth bass in Miramichi Lake, the first application to DFO under the new invasive species legislation in Atlantic Canada. It took a year to provide DFO all the information they required as they developed the application process during this time and finally, in the early summer of 2019, the application was finished and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was waived by the Province of NB allowing DFO to come to a decision. As we waited for the permission to come from DFO to eradicate the bass in the lake, smallmouth bass were discovered in the river and we amended the application to include a section of the SW Miramichi river. More details were required and this triggered an EIA determination by the Province of NB and we are waiting on that determination before DFO will render its decision.

This has been a long frustrating process and a permit is still not in hand for next year, but at least we know we have made progress removing barriers for others wanting to eradicate invasive species. The Province of NS applied to eradicate smallmouth bass in Piper Lake that feeds the St. Mary's River this past summer, and DFO issued the permit for the work to be done in October 2020. We have been waiting since 2008!