

## **1.1.7 THE CLEAN WATER ACT (CWA)**

### **1.1.71 The Act and its Requirements**

#### **Objectives**

The Clean Water Act is the key American legislation governing the quality of surface inland waters. It seeks to re-establish and maintain the physical, chemical and biological integrity of all U.S. waters. Originally approved in 1956, it has undergone numerous amendments expanding its scope (1961, 65, 66, 70, 72, 77 and 87). In its early years, the Act was focussed mainly on the construction of treatment plants, but later its scope expanded to include monitoring of toxic pollutants in surface waters, protection and restoration of lakes and estuaries, drainage of farmland, oil spills, stormwaters and monitoring of nonpoint source pollutants.

The Water Quality Act (WQA) of 1987 encourages those concerned to voluntarily go beyond the national pollution control standards in order to achieve the best possible environmental results.

#### **Programs**

Programs established under the authority of the Act provide for:

- . development of municipal and industrial effluent standards;
- . control of toxic pollutant discharges;
- . control of non-point source pollution (resulting from the erosion of cultivated land and the exploitation of urban, suburban and forest lands);
- . prevention of the destruction of wetland habitats.