



Total Maximum Daily Load

From: <http://www.montanariveraction.org/clean.water.act.html>

The goal of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. There are four specific objectives within this general goal:

1. Restore water quality to provide for the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and provide for recreation in and on the water by July 1983
2. Eliminate the discharge of pollutants into the nation's waters by 1985
3. Eliminate the discharge of toxic pollutants in toxic amounts
4. Develop and implement programs for the control of non-point source pollution

Water pollution is traced to two general areas of origin: point sources and non-point sources. Point sources are specific physical sources such as a pollution outflow pipe. Non-point sources are broad area sources such as a plowed field, a logged and roaded forest, or a mining waste heap. The CWA applies different regulatory controls for point and non-point sources. "Technology-based" effluent (liquid waste) standards stipulate certain levels of pollution control and treatment technologies for specific point source pollution-generating activities. A second set of controls establishes water quality-based standards for non-point sources as explained below.

Legal authority for the CWA follows a specific path. Congress passed the CWA, authorizing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set federal water quality regulations, then maintain primary oversight through their regional offices of the individual state's implementation of the regulations on a local level. If state programs are not consistent with federal minimum requirements, the EPA has the right to intervene. Citizen participation is equally important throughout this chain of command.

TMDL is a convenient acronym for "total maximum daily load" and is a process for setting procedures or programs to clean up waterways where water quality falls below minimum levels set by use classifications. TMDL sets limits on point and non-point source pollution-loading in lakes and stream segments that do not meet, or are not expected to meet, state water quality standards.

The National Clean Water Act requires each state to:

- ❖ Identify water bodies that are water quality limited (as assembled in the 303(d) list)
- ❖ Prioritize and target water bodies for TMDL's



- ❖ Develop TMDL plans to attain and maintain water quality standards for all water quality limited waters