

## 1.5 The environment

The Department of the Environment was created as a federal government department in June 1971 to spearhead the attack on pollution and ensure the proper management and development of Canada's renewable natural resources. It has the responsibility to initiate government-wide programs and to co-ordinate efforts related to environmental protection. It also provides specialist advisory services to other departments both in the formulation of programs and in the development of regulations under Federal Acts assigned to other ministers.

The Environmental Protection Service of the Department is responsible for developing and enforcing environmental protection regulations and other instruments used in implementing federal laws relating to the environment. It also serves as an information source for other federal departments administering legislation under which environmental regulations are developed.

The principal objective of the Water Pollution Control program is the control and abatement of water pollution in Canada. The main objectives are: the reduction of existing pollution and the prevention of new problems; achievement of regional water quality objectives by means of appropriate programs; and the development of new technologies to solve water pollution control problems more economically. Water pollution control regulations and guidelines are being developed for all major industrial sectors. At the moment regulations governing the pulp and paper industry, the chlor-alkali mercury industry and the petroleum refinery industry already exist. These regulations are promulgated under the Fisheries Act and restrict the amount of effluents an industry can discharge into waters inhabited by aquatic life. Other programs include water pollution surveys in shellfish growing areas; phosphorus concentration control regulations; analytical and advisory services to other federal departments and agencies; inventories of water pollution problems in Canada and annual assessments of pollution control costs and studies on the treatment of municipal and industrial wastewaters.

The broad objectives of the Air Pollution Control program are to preserve, restore, or enhance the quality of the ambient air in Canada for optimum social and economic benefits. Programs carried out to achieve these objectives include: collection and evaluation of information regarding air pollution sources in Canada; development of abatement and compliance programs for stationary and mobile air pollution sources; preparation of regulations controlling the amount of lead in leaded gases and defining the limits of lead and phosphorus in "unleaded" grades of gasoline; maintenance of a mobile motor vehicle emission testing facility and promulgation of national air quality objectives.

Studies carried out under the Ecological Protection program include development of a federal approach to environmental noise control; development of environmental contaminants legislation; development and implementation of a solid waste management program. Environmental accidents, such as oil spills, occur frequently. The Environmental Emergency program examines the national state of preparedness to cope with such accidents and co-ordinates the development of over-all improvement on the state of preparedness.

The objective of the Federal Activities Protection program is to demonstrate environmental leadership on the part of the federal government. The program serves as a focal point in dealing with environmental protection matters associated with federal government departments, agencies and Crown corporations. All proposed new projects that will be managed by or receive financial assistance or permits from the federal government must be evaluated for the possible effects they might have on the environment. Protective measures must be incorporated into the planning, design and operation of the projects.

The federal government is also committed to cleaning up pollution problems at existing federal facilities within a reasonable time frame. Cleanup projects have dealt with water, air, noise, dust and solid waste pollution problems at airports, government offices, laboratories, grain elevators, defence bases, parks and ships and harbours.

### 1.5.1 Federal legislation

There are already a large number of statutes that are important in renewable resources and environmental quality management. Major pieces of legislation for which the Department of the Environment is responsible include the following: The Fisheries Act (and Petroleum Refinery Liquid Effluent Regulations) (RSC 1970, c.F-12, amended 1970); The Canada Water Act (and phosphate regulations) (RSC 1970, c.5 1st Supp.); The Migratory Birds Convention Act (RSC 1970, c.M-12); The International River Improvements Act (RSC 1970, c.I-22); The