Riparian Rights
What are Riparian Rights?

“The term ‘riparian rights’ indicates a bundle of rights that turn on the physical relationship of a body of water to the land abutting it.”

The Riparian Rights

1. Of access to the water;
2. To build a wharf or pier into the water;
3. To use the water without transforming it;
4. To consume the water;
5. To accretions (alluvium); and
6. To own the subsoil of non-navigable streams and other "private" waters.
The Riparian Rights

• To build a wharf or pier into the water...

• To accretions (alluvium)…
Virtually all the navigable waters, as well as the submerged lands beneath them (up to mean high tide), are owned by the State.

What do you, as a County, want your shoreline to look like?

&

How can your vision be accomplished?
ZONING

“[The] County has the authority to reasonably regulate through zoning the exercise of the riparian right to wharf out because, under law dating back for more than 200 years, this right, when exercised, is nothing more than an extension of the shore land.”

British Advance on Washington, 1814

MARYLAND

WASHINGTON
Aug. 24

Bladensburg
Aug. 24

Alexandria
Aug. 27

Ft. Warburton
Aug. 26

(Ft. Washington)

Upper Marlboro

Benedict
Aug. 19

Chesapeake
Bay

Virginia

Potomac River

By land

By water

North

0 10 20 Km
0 10 20 Mi
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- TIDAL WETLANDS ACT
- CRITICAL AREA PROTECTION PROGRAM
- COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT
- SHORE EROSION CONTROL
- BEACH EROSION CONTROL AND REPLENISHMENT
- PATENTS (PRIOR TO 1862)
- QUASI-RIPARIAN RIGHTS (DUCKBLINDS, LIMITED SHELLFISH CULTIVATION)