

## Riparian and Littoral rights in the Southeastern United States

### Abstract

The history of riparian and littoral rights is immersed in the ancient concepts of land and boundaries. From the earliest records of humans, we find references to bodies of waters as a method of delineating land. The early settlers to the Southeastern region of the United States, using metes and bounds descriptions, identified their land by natural monuments which included rivers, streams, coast line and other bodies of water. Over time each state's legislation and courts would be required to define the concepts of riparian rights within their borders and attempt to explain how the rules were to be applied within the individual states. These definitions and applications varied widely throughout the region, requiring surveyors in the Southeast to become familiar with both statute law and case law for the states where they worked. While the courts and legislators define the concepts, it is up to the surveyor to apply the theories of law to the land. Therefore, it is imperative that each surveyor understand the rules governing riparian rights and interpretations by the courts in matters pertaining to water boundaries for their individual states.

