

## VIEWPOINTS

▶ Viewpoints are the Conservation Authority's point of view on some of the everyday environmental issues and situations people find themselves in along the Rideau.

▶ Visit our website @ [www.rideauvalley.on.ca](http://www.rideauvalley.on.ca) or contact our Landowner Resource Centre at 692-2390 for more information.

## Docks

The absolute best type of dock to install anywhere in the Rideau watershed is a floating dock. Floating docks don't even touch the bed of the lake or river and do not obstruct currents, fish or plant communities. There is no such thing as ice damage to floating docks since they are removed from the water for the winter. With proper design, they can be solid and stable. Post-supported docks and cantilever docks are also very environmentally friendly and can be used. All other kinds of docks run a distant fourth in terms of impact on the environment. The old-fashioned rock and cement crib docks are dinosaurs and being phased out.



All of the top three dock types (floating, post and cantilever) have low maintenance and long life. Because of their gentle footprint, they tend to get quick approval from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) and Parks Canada.

Why do we pay so much attention to little docks on a remote Rideau lake anyway? That shoreline and the shallow water where you want to plunk down your dock is the ribbon of life — the most productive and the most

essential of all ecosystems in the entire water environment. It may also be fish habitat critical to the long term survival of certain kinds of fish or minnows in the lake. If that nearshore area is permanently disturbed, some species and some unique habitat could be in danger of disappearing from your lake. And that's not good for the health of your lake, your family or your watershed. Besides, the bed of the lake or river is not "your property." It is public land under the management of the OMNR (or Parks Canada if your lake/river is part of the Rideau Canal).

Good dock planning is good stewardship: it saves time, money and the environment. Here are the four pieces of dock dogma that should be built into every new dock on the Rideau:

1. docks should intrude as little as possible into the delicate "ribbon of life" along the shoreline
2. docks should not cover the bed of the lake/river
3. docks should occupy less than about 10 per cent of the lot frontage
4. dock plans should be checked early with agency staff for easy approval.

Call the LandOwner Resource Centre at 692-2390 or 1-800-387-5304 for all the information you need to make your new dock fit right into the lake environment.