

## Introduction to Maine's Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation Reviews

Maine's cultural resources include a variety of objects and properties that date from the end of the glaciations of the Pleistocene epoch to modern times. The tools, other artifacts, and archaeological sites of prehistoric, or pre-European, inhabitants are found throughout the state. Archaeologists categorize the prehistoric cultures into the Palaeoindian (ca. 13,000 – 10,000 years ago), Archaic (10,000 – 3,000 years ago), and Ceramic periods (3,000 – 500 years ago) based on typical artifacts and ways of life. Prehistoric sites include habitations/workshops, stone quarries, cemeteries, and rock art locations. Most prehistoric archaeological sites are situated by present or former waterways that could have been navigated by canoe. A small number of sites are found on level, well-drained sandy soils adjacent to small streams. The Maine Archaeological Society has a web page which offers publications and a poster illustrating prehistoric artifacts of the state (see this FOTG's Section II/Cultural Resources Information/General Information/Archaeology, History and Architectural History in Maine). Historical archaeological sites date from the early 1600s to modern times and can include aboriginal and European components. Some of the focus of historical archaeologists in Maine has been on sites of the early colonial period and on first European settlements of later times. As historic-period buildings have decayed through time, their foundations and cellars provide reminders of early residences and the locations of archaeological resources. The rivers and coasts of Maine also contain a number of underwater historical sites in the form of shipwrecks. Architectural resources, including buildings, structures, and districts, are additional classes of cultural properties. They range from elegant mansions in cities to long, connected farmhouses and rural agricultural districts in the country. We may also expect to find traditional cultural properties and properties of cultural and religious significance to Native Americans and other cultural groups in Maine.

NRCS employees involved with project planning must consider the effects of their undertakings on cultural resources eligible for, or listed in, the National Register of Historic Places: namely, historic properties. The Prototype Programmatic Agreements between NRCS Maine and the Maine State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Indian tribes describe the cultural resources review process for NRCS Maine employees to comply with federal laws (e.g., National Historic Preservation Act) and agency policies. This FOTG's Section II/Cultural Resources Information/General Information/NRCS and Cultural Resources contains the Prototype Programmatic Agreement with the SHPO.

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