Note: This draft evolved from planning staff research and Commission meetings held between 2005 and 2007. It is intended to serve as a vehicle for discussion at Public Workshops – to stimulate conversation and dialogue about issues of importance in the jurisdiction. This draft will be revised following public comment and discussion associated with Public Workshops to produce a final draft for the formal Public Hearing process.

5.4 Cultural, Archaeological and Historical Resources

Human activity throughout LURC's jurisdiction has resulted, over time, in a variety of cultural resources. These resources possess educational, scientific and social values that help us understand our heritage and contribute to our sense of the state, and its North Woods, as a unique place. Cultural resources include Indian canoe routes, prehistoric archaeological sites, historic archaeological sites, and historical structures, districts, trails and landmarks.

Archaeological resources, both prehistoric and historic, provide us with evidence of human life and culture in past ages. Prehistoric archaeology attempts to reconstruct the lifestyle of the original human inhabitants of Maine from the end of the Ice Age to the arrival of the Europeans and written history. Historic archaeology analyzes the settlements and forts of the period from 1600 on, helping to expand the historical record. Historical resources in the form of structures, sites or landmarks are associated with past events or people of significance in the history of the state, represent an architectural style of a distinct period, or both. Criteria exist at both the federal and state level for evaluating the significance of such resources for placement on the National Register of Historic Places, Maine's Historic Places, Maine's Archaeological Survey and the Statewide Historic Archaeological Inventory.

5.4.A Early History and Archaeological Resources

The first people known to inhabit Maine, the Paleoindians, moved in from the south or west about 11,000 years ago as the land area of Maine was recovering from its last glaciation. They tended to camp on very well-drained soils away from river valleys and were probably the only prehistoric people to have lived in such areas in Maine. Trees spread across Maine toward the end of the Paleoindian period, forcing subsequent inhabitants to live and travel along lakes, waterways and coastal areas.

Travel on the ocean, main rivers and major lakes in dugout canoes characterized the Archaic period between 10,000 and 3,000 years ago. Native American settlements concentrated at the inlets and outlets of major and medium-sized lakes, along the main river valleys, and in coastal sites. The development of the birchbark canoe sometime between 4,000 and 3,500 years ago opened up the Maine interior away from major lakes and rivers. Canoes enabled an increasingly dispersed settlement pattern around lakes and smaller streams during the late Archaic and Ceramic periods.

Native Americans in Maine began to construct and use pottery about 3,000 years ago. During the Ceramic period, from around 1000 B.C. to 1500 A.D., Native Americans developed a generalized hunting, fishing and gathering economy based upon the mobility of birchbark canoes. They combined subsistence and settlement strategies to move people to seasonally available resources, or to move food and other resources to population concentrations. Life over most of Maine remained based almost entirely upon harvesting wild resources until well after contact with Europeans.

When the first European explorers arrived in the 1500s, the Early Contact period began, marking the end of the prehistoric archaeological period in Maine. Contact with the explorers initially added European materials to Native material culture, followed later by other impacts upon Native life, including intensified fur trapping and trade, changes in intertribal networks, intermittent warfare, widespread disease, and eventually, significant loss of lands.

For most of prehistory, Maine Native Americans were hunter-gatherers. They were generally mobile in lifestyle and lived in relatively small groups. The largest communities consisted of several hundred individuals in villages which most of the population left at certain seasons.

Five types of archaeological sites are known to exist in Maine: (1) habitation and workshop sites; (2) lithic quarries; (3) cemeteries; (4) rock art and (5) waterlogged sites preserving wood or other perishables. There are hundreds of known prehistoric archaeological sites in the jurisdiction, as well as hundreds more that are undiscovered since archaeological surveys have been done on less than 10% of the land area. Habitation and workshop sites comprise the vast majority (over 95%) of the known archaeological locations in Maine. They exhibit evidence of a range of activities from food procurement and processing to tool manufacture and maintenance. More than 95% of these sites are located adjacent to canoe-navigable waters, whether coast, lake, river, stream or wetland, or former shorelines of the same. The majority of sites are shallowly buried on till, sand, gravel or silt soils within 1.5 feet of the surface. Some deeply buried sites, up to three meters in depth, occur in alluvial settings along rivers and streams.

The other types of known archaeological locations are far fewer in number than habitation sites. Lithic quarry sites are mines for rock used in making stone tools. They are highly localized sites, occurring at bedrock outcrops or along exposed, stony stream and river bottoms with extensive cobble materials. Cemetery sites always exist in locations with well-drained sandy or gravelly-sand soils near a large or small river or lake shore, or within 100 yards of a major habitation site. Rock art sites occur immediately adjacent to canoe-navigable water on particular kinds of bedrock outcrops. They include both petroglyphs and pictographs and probably date within the last 2,000 years. The Sebasticook fish weir is the best example of a waterlogged site, where wooden stakes from a fish trap structure, and some associated birchbark container fragments, have been preserved in anaerobic mud for between 2,000 and 6,000 years.

Examples of significant archaeological sites in the jurisdiction include both prehistoric and historic habitation and workshop sites and prehistoric quarry sites. The Chase Lake-Munsungun Lake Archaeological District incorporates at least 18 prehistoric habitation and quarry sites within 0.1 square kilometers centered on the Chase Lake-Munsungun Lake thoroughfare. The sites range in elevation from lake level to the summits of adjacent hills, and in age from 11,000 year old Paleoindian occupations to 500-year-old Late Ceramic period campsites. The sites away from the lake are associated either with glacial outwash landforms, or with quarry outcrops of a high-quality chert. This area was investigated in the late 1970s by the University of Maine and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

The Vail site in the Magalloway Valley near Lake Aziscohos in western Maine

solated historical structures and/or sites which occur within the jurisdiction; and (5) joint efforts to obtain funding to further investigate the extensive areas of the jurisdiction not yet surveyed.