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.

ncorporate an assessment of the cultural significance of lakes into LURC's lake database. This assessment is based upon an evaluation of features listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Maine's Archaeological Survey, Statewide Historic Archaeological Inventory and in the publication, Above the Gravel Bar: Indian Canoe Routes in Maine.

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has data of known archaeological and culturally significant sites for the jurisdiction as well as areas identified as archaeologically sensitive where significant sites may be found in the future. Access to this data, provides Commission staff (for various reasons, this data is not available to the public) with a valuable tool for assessing the potential archaeological and cultural impacts associated with development proposals. When Commission staff reviews an application for a permit which the lakes database or MHPC data indicates is near a potentially significant archaeological or historical area or feature, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission receives a copy of the permit application and site plan for review and comment. In some cases, the MHPC recommends that an archaeologically survey be conducted by the applicant as part of the staff review of the application.

5.4.E Cultural, Archaeological and Historical Resource Issues

### *Erosion, Development, and Vandalism*

Significant archaeological sites and historical resources are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Legally, significant archaeological sites are those worthy of protection or excavation with public funds. Criteria for eligibility consider content and condition of the site with specifics varying dependent on the age of the site. The oldest sites (Paleoindian) are eligible even if they have been heavily disturbed. The youngest sites (Ceramic period age sites, historic sites) must be minimally disturbed and must yield archaeological data such as fire hearths or separable layers of occupation, in addition to stone tools and other objects.

Erosion, development, and vandalism can all destroy the significance of archaeological sites. The primary protection afforded these sites comes from identification so that they can be protected from threats or excavated by professionals.

At this time, erosion poses the greatest threat to archaeological sites. Unfortunately, artificially raised water levels on many interior lakes, as well as natural land subsidence along the coast, have resulted in water covering or eroding many sites from the Archaic period to the present. The greatest source of material that survives erosion fairly intact tends to be those sites sealed in the stratified sediments of floodplains along the rivers.

Development runs a close second to erosion as a threat to archaeological resources. Since most of the sites are shallowly buried and over 95% of the habitation and workshop sites occur along shorelines, any activity in shoreland areas that disturbs the top two feet of earth has the potential to severely damage a site.

Finally, vandalism, caused by nonsystematic digging for artifacts, can destroy both site and artifacts. Vandalism usually takes the form of unauthorized excavations by artifact collectors who loot sites once locations are publicized. This has resulted in the legal restriction of public access to information concerning the location of known or potential archaeological resources.

### *Information Needs*

As with archaeological resources, a complete inventory of historical resources in the jurisdiction has not been made. Limited state and federal funds hinder efforts to identify the resources. That lack of information combined with the variety and low density of known sites, structures and trails scattered across the jurisdiction's millions of acres, often in remote locations, make it difficult to develop effective preservation strategies. Other problems involving known historical resources include inappropriate alterations that compromise architectural design and values, abandonment and deterioration of structures, and adjacent development which is incompatible with the historic context of a particular resource.

As discussed earlier, an assessment of the overall cultural significance of lakes is incorporated in LURC's lake database. However, of over 1,500 lakes contained in the database, only 10 to 15 percent were surveyed to determine their archaeological potential. Consequently, the primary source of cultural resource information for the agency’s review of development proposals is not complete. Since the majority of sites are located within 300 to 400 yards of the shorelines of canoe-navigable waterbodies, protection efforts may be enhanced by considering whether criteria can be developed for determining when to request MHPC review of permit application on lakes that have not yet been assessed.

Both LURC and MHPC could strengthen their efforts to protect these cultural resources by further cooperation. The following needs warrant consideration (1) a strengthened process for assuring that all applications with potential impacts on significant archaeological or historical resources are being adequately reviewed; (2) criteria for identifying potential archaeological sites not located near shorelines; (3) an estimate of the costs of professional reconnaissance and survey activities, prior to requiring such an evaluation through LURC procedures; (4) an approach to dealing with architectural design issues for both clustered and isolated 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.