

The Town of York has a rich history with European settlements beginning in the early 1600s and various Native American populations calling this area home before and during the early colonial era. This long history means that historic and archaeological resources are prevalent around town and are seen as an important part of York's identity. Threats to historic and archaeological resources include climate change and sea level rise, aging materials, funding, unknown or private resources, and disasters.

HISTORIC + ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS

Archaeological sites can be classified in two varieties, Native American or pre-European arrival (sometimes called prehistoric, since these often are from time before the written historical record) and Colonial or European-American sites (for which there are historical records starting around 1600 AD).

- **Native American sites** include campsites or village locations, rock quarries and workshops, and rock carvings (petroglyphs). While a lot of these sites remain unknown, areas are identified for potential based on settlement patterns and distance to canoe-navigable water.
- **Colonial archaeological sites** can include cellar holes from old houses, foundations of houses, farm buildings, mills, wharves, and boat yards, as well as near-shore shipwrecks. These sites are often predicted through study of historical documents, deeds, and maps.

- The land that the Town of York occupies was inhabited for thousands of years by native peoples before colonizers arrived. While some of this history remains visible, such as the buildings at the Old York Historical Society, a lot of it was lost to time, either destroyed, buried under land, or submerged by water. For this reason, the state defines these rich resources as both historic and archaeological, where historic represents those resources that exist today while archaeological may include anything that may be underground, including cellars or foundations of buildings that are no longer standing. Archaeological sites are often discovered through research of historical documents or discovering artifacts in the soil or under water.
- Today, York is home to various historic and archaeological resources. There are 23 “prehistoric” and 207 “historic” known sites. Some of these sites are estimated to be five to seven thousand years old. On the National Register of Historic Places, run by the National Parks Service, there are four (4) districts and 13 buildings that fall within York’s borders. Locally, York has recognized three (3) historic districts with more than 60 properties in total, 18 local historic landmarks, and one (1) historic site.

Historic Organizations/ Institutions

Historic District Commission

- York’s Historic District Commission (HDC) was created in March 1985, when citizens at Town Meeting enacted the Historic District Ordinance. The purpose of the Ordinance, now an article of the Zoning Ordinance, is to provide a legal framework within which York’s residents can protect the historic, architectural, and cultural heritage of historically significant areas, landmarks, and sites in the community. It is the Commission’s responsibility to carry out this purpose, and it functions as both a regulatory and an educational body. The Historic District Commission is also one of 10 Certified Local Governments (CLG). The CLG program is designed to promote preservation planning and cultural resource protection efforts at the local level that are consistent with state and federal standards and guidelines.

This topic includes...

- The history of the settlement and development of the land the Town of York occupies
- Important historical and archaeological resources and sites within York
- Preservation and conservation of the historic resources

- In its capacity as a regulatory body, the HDC has authority over the local historic districts and designated landmark properties. Currently, there are three (3) local historic districts (Village Center, Lindsay Road, and York Harbor) with 60 properties and 18 designated historic landmarks and one (1) historic site. A total of 76 properties are regulated under this system.

York Historic Markers Committee

- This Committee was initially appointed by the Board of Selectmen on May 10, 1994, to increase public awareness and appreciation of historic places in York. While not formally disbanded, this committee has been inactive for many years.

Old York Historical Society

- The Old York Historical Society is a private, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to preserve and promote the history of York, Maine for the education and enjoyment of the public. Old York maintains ten historic museum buildings on six properties in York Village, open to the public for tours from June through mid-October. These buildings are furnished with items from Old York’s deep and nationally recognized collections of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artifacts, most of which have been donated by local families. Old York’s library and archives offer rich resources for historical and genealogical research to the town’s residents and visitors. Old York offers a wide range of educational programs for people of all ages.

Building Age

- There are 1,124 residential homes in York that are 100 years old or older, with 86 of those built prior to 1800.

Age of Homes in York

Year Built	Number of Homes
pre-1700	12
1700-1749	35
1750-1799	39
1800-1849	55
1850 - 1899	388
1900-1922	595
1923-1949	499
1950-1972	1,709
100 years old or older	1,124
50 years old or older	3,332

Source: 2020 Town of York Assessor Data

- In addition, there are 101 commercial structures that are 100 years old or older, with 11 of those built prior to 1800.

HISTORIC + ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

Historic and Archaeological Resources

Local Historic Resources

- There are three local historic districts, 18 local historic landmarks, and one historic site.

LOCALLY DESIGNATED HISTORIC RESOURCES

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Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset

- ★ Local Historic Landmark
- Village Center Local Historic District
- Lindsay Road Local Historic District
- York Harbor Local Historic District

Local Historic Districts and Landmarks in Town of York

Name	Type	Address
Village Center Local Historic District	District	Intersection of York St and Lindsay Rd.
Lindsay Road Local Historic District	District	Lindsay Rd between York River and Barrells Mill Pond
York Harbor Local Historic District	District	Between York St and the York River
Contributing Property	Building	70 Clark Rd
Contributing Property	Building	83 Clark Rd
Contributing Property	Building	77 Clark Rd
Cape Neddick Lighthouse	Building	13 Sohier Park Rd
Joseph Banks House (Also site of Richard Banks House)	Building	112 York St
Contributing Property	Building	31 Long Sands Rd
Contributing Property	Building	25 Sentry Hill Rd
Contributing Property	Building	17 Sentry Hill Rd
Contributing Property	Building	11 Sentry Hill Rd
Trinity Church	Building	546 York St
Contributing Property	Building	2 Norwood Farms Rd
Contributing Property	Building	16 Simpson Ln
Contributing Property	Building	416 York St
Contributing Property	Building	16 Sentry Hill Rd
Contributing Property	Building	450 York St
Contributing Property	Building	5 Orchard Ln
Contributing Property (A.K.A Grant House)	Building	200 U.S. Route One
District Nine Schoolhouse (A.K.A Agamenticus Schoolhouse, razed in recent years)	Building	301A Mtn Rd
Town Farm	Historic Site	178 Long Sands Rd

Source: Town of York Zoning Ordinance

National Historic Resources

- In the National Register of Historic Places, maintained by the National Park Service, there are four historic districts and 13 historic landmarks listed. Two of the four listed districts take the form of traditional districts.

NATIONAL HISTORIC RESOURCES

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National Register of Historic Places, National Parks Service (September 2020)

Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset

- ★ National Register Historic Listing
- York Cliffs National Historic District
- York National Historic District
- Brave Boat Harbor Farm

National Historic Districts and Resources in Town of York

Name	Type	Address
Boon Island Light Station	District	Boon Island
Brave Boat Harbor Farm	District	110 Raynes Neck Rd.
York Cliffs Historic District	District	Agamenticus Ave
York Historic District	District	Roughly U.S. 1, U.S. 1A, ME 103 and Woodbridge Rd.
Barrell Homestead	Building	W of York Corner on Beech Ridge Rd.
Breckinridge, Isabella, House	Building	Off U.S. 1
Cape Neddick Light Station	Building	Cape Neddick
Conant-Sawyer Cottage	Building	14 Kendall Rd
Hancock, John, Warehouse	Building	Lindsay Rd
Hawkes Pharmacy	Building	7 Main St
McIntire Garrison House	Building	On ME 91 about 5 mi. W of York
Moody Homestead	Building	Ridge Rd
Old Schoolhouse	Building	York St (on the Village Green)
Old York Gaol	Building	4 Lindsay Rd
Pebbledene	Building	99 Freeman St
Rose, Robert, Tavern	Building	Off Long Sands Rd
Sedgley, John, Homestead	Building	N of York Corner on Chases Pond Rd

Source: National Register of Historic Places, 2021

Historic + Archaeological - 1



YORK
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

HISTORIC + ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

Archaeological Resources

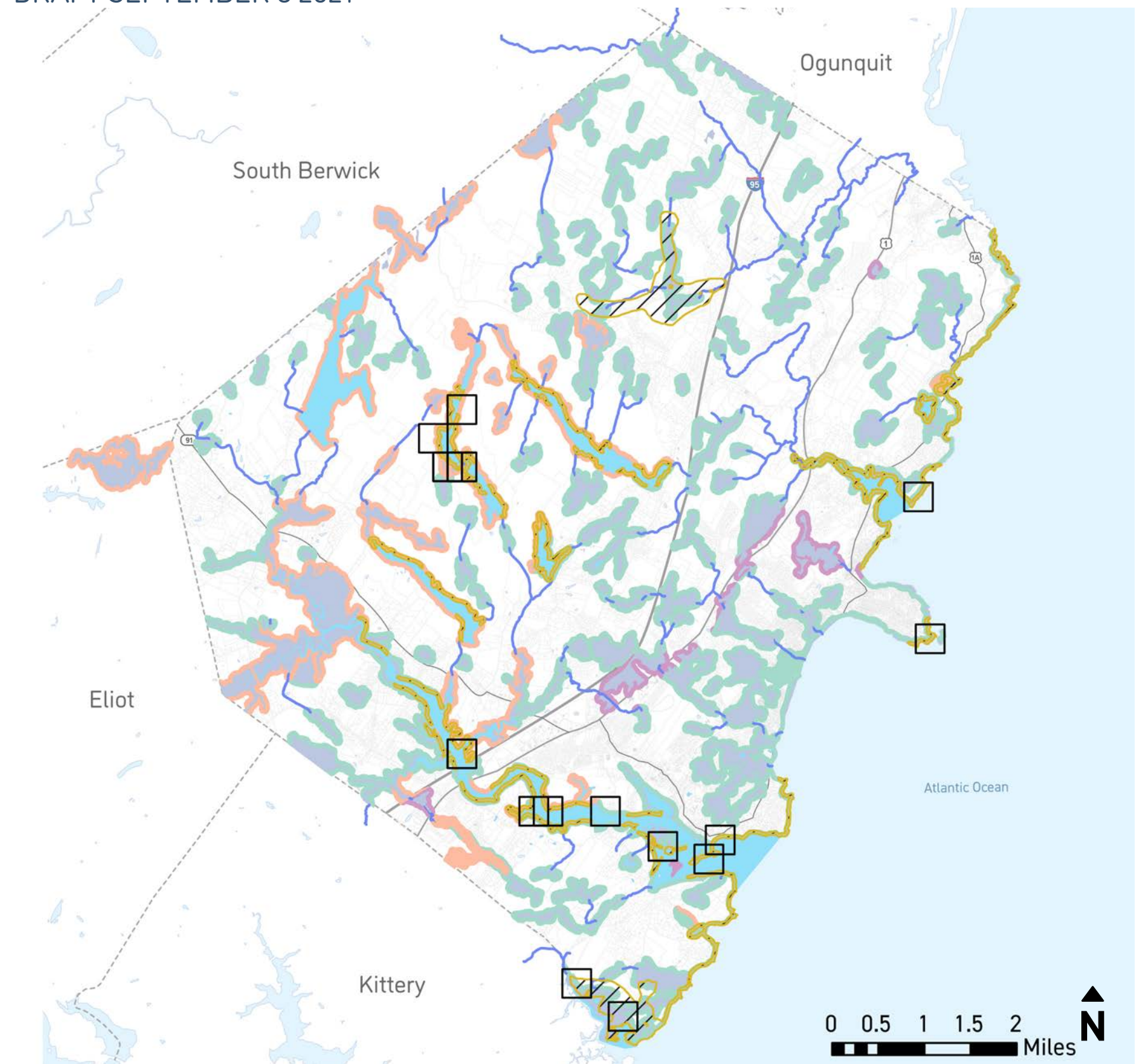
Archaeological site locations are protected information from the State of Maine. These maps provide an area of one kilometer by one kilometer which contains the known site. These sites are not necessarily located in the center of these squares. The known archaeological site areas, in coordination with the Shoreland Zoning Overlay District, help protect known and unknown archaeological sites since a majority of sites are thought to be along the waterways of York.

Prehistoric

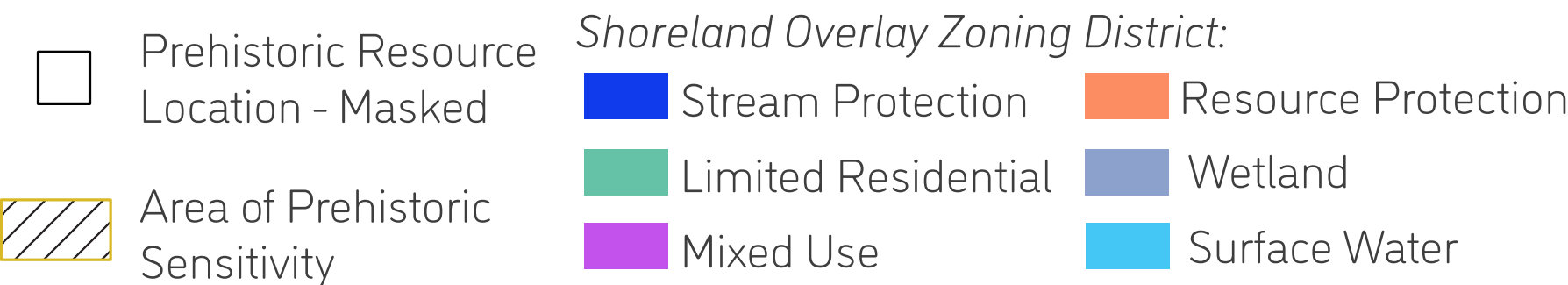
- There are 23 prehistoric archaeological sites known in York. Seven are located around Foley Pond (inundated at full pool levels). Ten are located on the shores of the tidal York River. Four are located elsewhere on the tidal coast.

PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY WITH SHORELAND ZONING

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Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset

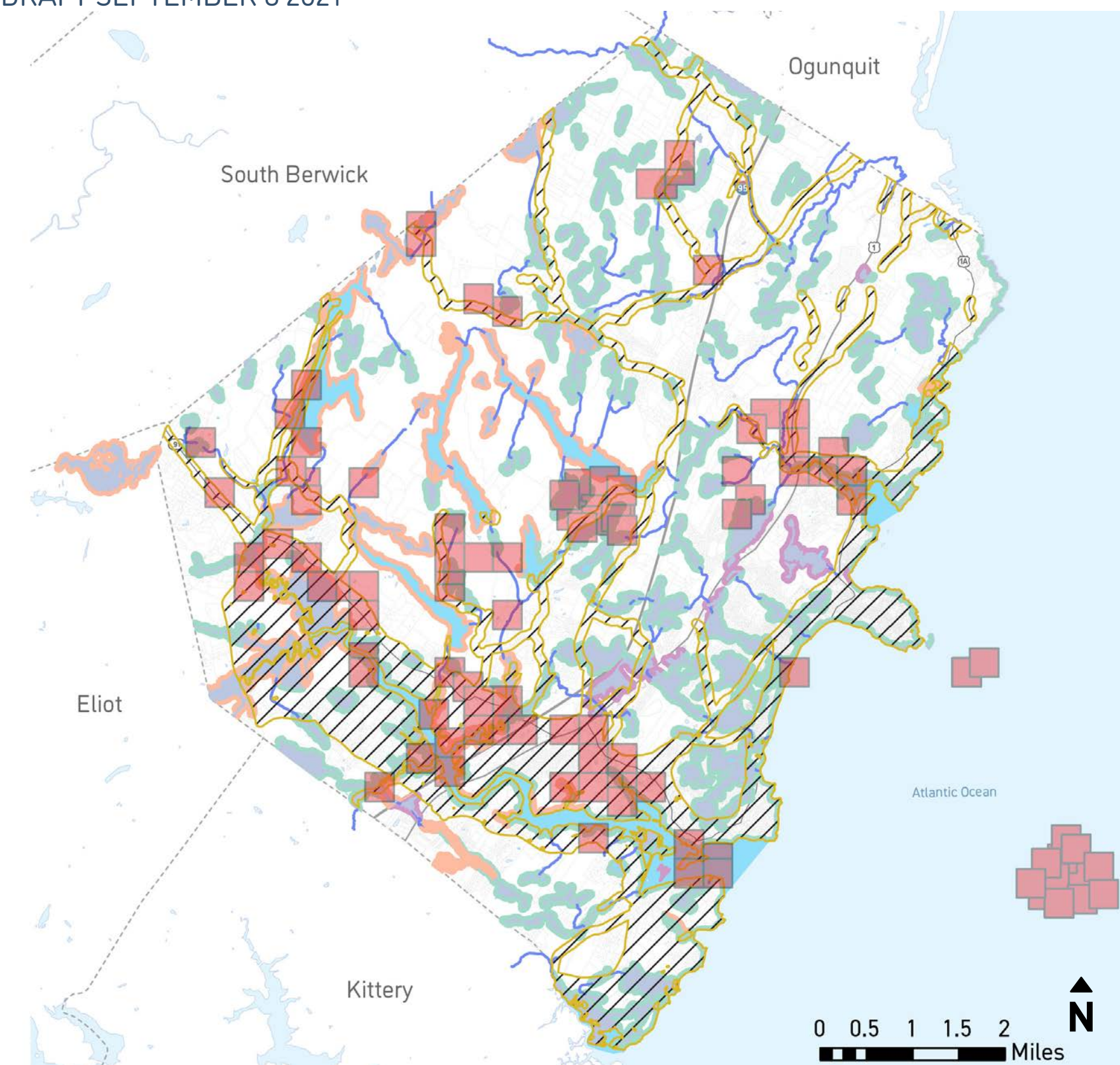


Historic

- To-date, a total of 207 archaeological sites have been documented for the town.

HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY WITH SHORELAND ZONING

DRAFT SEPTEMBER 8 2021



Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset



Threats to Historic and Archaeological Sites

Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

A significant number of archaeological sites and historic settlements occur along the York River and other waterways. As sea level rises and the risk of storm surge and other flooding increases, these resources are threatened to be lost. This also affects the various shipwrecks found in the waters around York. One example is the shipwreck on Short Sands beach, which becomes uncovered on occasion and could incur a lot more damage if not adequately protected from rising seas and violent waves from storms like nor'easters.

Aging Materials

As anything ages it tends to decay and the same goes for historic and archaeological resources. Natural erosion and decay of materials are challenges when it comes to preservation.

Funding

Lack of funding for preservation techniques and historic resource management could threaten the loss of many historic and

archaeological resources. There is often not enough funding for research, management, and preservation to adequately conserve historic resources. Some properties, like the Old Goal and the Emerson-Wilcox house, no longer have heating systems, which causes problems with the expanding and contracting of building materials between winter and summer. Preservation of these buildings would require new systems to be put in, at much expense.

Unknown or Private Historic/Archaeological Resources

A lot of the legal or systematic protections for historic and archaeological resources only apply to those that are known. Anything on private property or that is unknown to the local and state governments is at risk of being destroyed and lost from the cultural heritage of the region.

Disasters

Historic and archaeological sites are always at threat from any disaster. This can be a wide variety of disasters both natural and human caused. A recent example is the car that crashed right into the Emerson-Wilcox house this year.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR...

- York residents love York's character and historical resources.
- Sometimes preservation of historic structures is not possible because of the difficulties and expense to bring these structures up to current building code, making them ripe for tear down.
- Programming and education can help make residents aware of these historic resources and perhaps support their preservation. These require money and staff time that are not possible with current budgets.
- Residents value the Old York Historical Society and the historic buildings it maintains, as well as the local churches. People are concerned about losing the historic cemeteries and the Native American archaeological sites.

KEY ISSUES/ITEMS OF NOTE

- All historic structures are under threat. The Historic District Commission can only delay applications for 60 days, and the most common application is for demolition. The Commission is required to find something that is mutually agreeable with the owner, which in most cases is the approved demolition.
- Historic tax credits are available but rarely used. These tax credits offer a 20% tax credit for developers or property owners who undertake improvements and maintenance on historic properties.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

THESE ARE DRAFT AND ARE JUST MEANT
TO START THE CONVERSATION

1. Prioritization of the preservation, rehabilitation, and active reuse of historic structures in York, recognizing that the history of the town is a key characteristic of York.
2. Protection of archaeological sites.
3. Articulation of the story of pre-colonial history in York to recognize the deeper history of human settlement in town.
4. Enhancement of the offering of historic programing, destinations, and narratives for residents and visitors.

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS OR COMMENTS ON THIS TOPIC?

PLACE YOUR
POST-IT NOTES
HERE!