**MA Department of Conservation and Recreation**
**Office of Cultural Resources**
**Best Management Practices**

## Archaeological Features

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**Goal** Stabilize resource to prevent loss; monitor for vandalism and illegal activity; preserve public access.

**Guidelines**: People have been living in Massachusetts and utilizing the entire landscape for at least 12,000 years. Most of these sites have not been identified and lie below ground surface. The DCR archaeologist keeps an inventory of known pre-Contact sites and uses key criteria for determining potential archaeological sensitivity of a given area. These sites are kept confidential in order to prevent looters from destroying sites. When planning for a project, the DCR archaeologist is available to assess your property for site sensitivity.

Besides below ground cultural resources, "archaeological sites" can be above ground, and these refer to places left behind by people. These sites can be structures or landscapes. What is often left today of a 17th,18th, 19th or 20th century farm, homestead, industrial, military, or institutional site is a stone foundation or cellar hole. Other important archaeological deposits are found outside of these stone features including barns, wells, trash dumps, outbuildings, paths/transportation networks, stonewalls (covered under a separate BMP), kitchen gardens, orchards, and burial grounds. By following these guidelines, you are employing a strategy that can have a lasting effect on the survival of archaeological sites, features and landscapes throughout the DCR land system.

Additional information can be found in *DCR's Terra Firma #5 - Stones that Speak: Forgotten Features of the Landscape* available at http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/histland/publications.htm or upon request to the Office of Cultural Resources.

## General:

- Use of metal detectors is never allowed.
- Digging on state property is illegal.
- Clean debris in area around feature.

- Inspect feature periodically to make sure it is not a threat to your/public safety and has not been subject to vandalism (i.e is it a well that needs to be covered?). Document any damage to the site. Report to DCR Archaeologist.
- Prohibit any activities that disturb the integrity of historical sites and features.

## Vegetation Management

- Vegetation management will require periodic and cyclical treatment depending on the nature of the growth, the condition and significance of a specific site.
- Remove small to medium brush, saplings, and trees from on, and within stone archaeological features (channelized stream beds, culverts, mill dams, stone posts/boundary markers, mills, limekilns and blast furnaces or other stone features described above).
- Remove by cutting as close to the ground as feasible. Vegetation should not be pulled, or otherwise dislodged in a manner that would affect the root system.
- Where terrain is level and stable, a feller buncher may be appropriate for removing trees. This machine has a long reach which limits the need to bring equipment too close to the structure/feature. Ideally, when the ground is frozen would present the best time to bring in machinery. If ground is soft, utilize wood or other material to plate the equipments' path.
- Cut stumps to grade and promote natural decay; do not pull or stump grind.

## Repair and Rehabilitation

- Reset fallen stones placing weathered or lichen-covered surfaces facing outward.

## Monitoring:

- All parties involved in vegetation management and monitoring will be directed to take extra care and precautions around stone features.
- Monitor for illegal harvest of stones which are often collected from state lands for private use.
- Identify, record areas of erosion or collapse and report to DCR Archaeologist.
- Identify, record and report areas of digging or vandalism to DCR Archaeologist.
- Signage/temporary fencing may be necessary to protect a site. Contact DCR Archaeologist.