**Cultural and Historic Resources – Objectives and Actions-**

**Working Draft May 2018** – subject to updates, changes and reorganization

**Goal: Identify and preserve cultural and historic resources of the York River Watershed.**

The objectives and actions in this Stewardship Plan are intended to complement, reinforce and build upon important work already being undertaken by watershed towns of York, Kittery, South Berwick and Eliot, as well as conservation organizations, community groups, and public agencies. Several ongoing actions are included in this plan to emphasize their importance to achieving long-term resource protection goals. A list of studies and plans related to understanding and implementing actions to protect the archaeological resources, historic buildings and structures, and cultural landscapes of the York River Watershed is included at the end of this section.

**Objective 1: Enhance funding and financial incentives for historic resources protection in the watershed.**

*Key Actions:*

* Stimulate wider community participation in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program to help promote and fund historic resources preservation.
* Promote federal and state rehabilitation and tax incentive programs and Historic Preservation and Barn Grants.
* Promote historic districts, highlighting the importance of maintaining clusters of historic resources.
* Explore opportunities to implement local financial incentives, such as reduced or waived permitting fees, for historic resource preservation.
* Implement education and advocacy efforts to inform citizens of the importance of historic resources for economic values, scenic views, community character, and tourism.

**Objective 2: Improve understanding and coordination of activities under the National Historic Preservation Act and Maine's preservation laws.**

*Key Actions:*

* Foster collaboration and exchange of information with municipalities, transportation and housing agencies, National Park Service, and Army Corps of Engineers, as well as other state agencies.
* Expand network of preservation partners by engaging select boards, land trusts, historical societies, regional planning commissions, and community officials.
* Provide toolkits, support, and guidance to community partners and landowners on the importance of surveys and on advantages of designation to the State and National Registers of Historic Places and the associated review processes.

**Objective 3: Identify and document watershed archaeological, architectural, and historic resources.**

*Key Actions:*

* Assess gaps in surveys and in nominations to State or National Registers.
* Update and expand historic context information, including archaeological sensitive areas, for use in identifying and evaluating archaeological and historic resources in watershed.
* Conduct new and update existing surveys to identify and document archaeological and historic architectural resources throughout the watershed, including updated locational information for historic structures in the Maine Historic Preservation Commission’s (MHPC’s) CARMA database.
* Utilize state and federal preservation practices to ensure proper documentation and showcase application of the MHPC and Secretary of the Interior’s standards and guidelines.
* Maintain up-to-date inventories of historic resources, historic contexts, and scenic values in towns’ comprehensive plans.
* Increase nominations of eligible archaeological and historic resources to the State and National Registers of Historic Places, with an emphasis on those associated with underrepresented regions and resource types. For example, work with stakeholders to investigate and pursue Punkintown Historic District/National Register of Historic Places nomination.
* Undertake new research and scholarship at historic sites to improve understanding of the significance of the archaeological and historic resources in the watershed.

**Objective 4: Improve ability to respond to impacts of sea level rise and other natural disasters on historic resources, including documentation, management and protection actions.**

*Key Actions:*

* Create pre- and post-disaster resiliency and recovery plans that include efficient review and compliance efforts.
* Work with the National Park Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and Maine Historic Preservation Commission to develop guidance for historic property owners to address scenarios such as disaster recovery and how to navigate government assistance.
* Establish effective communication to ensure information sharing with stakeholders and reviewers at all levels.

**Objective 5: Improve towns’ abilities to identify and protect historic resources through local regulatory and non-regulatory approaches.**

*Key Actions:*

* Amend site plan and subdivision regulations, as needed, to ensure that historic and archaeological resources are identified and protected through the review process.
* Provide training to planning board members on ways to protect historic resources through the site plan and subdivision review process and training to code enforcement officers to assist in identifying and protecting historic resources with single-family home construction projects.
* Adopt building codes that allow flexibility in building renovation to accommodate historic design features of historic buildings.
* Review options for tax abatement or other financial incentives for home and business owners and developers that undertake efforts to preserve historic resources.

**Objective 6: Improve public access to information on local historic resources, and facilitate research and exchange of historic preservation information.**

*Key Actions:*

* Update and maintain existing state and local databases, and create a single online archive for collecting and sharing information for identification and documentation purposes (e.g., ArcGIS online maps). Seek funding for an integrated online database of historic resources and associated archives.
* Collaborate with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission on the sharing of historic resource data.
* Provide links to photographs, histories, drawings, and other research and documentation.
* Develop training materials and programs on preservation techniques.
* Conduct or coordinate consultant and preservation partner trainings and workshops.
* Work with historic district commissions and historic societies to create a forum for the dissemination of information on key issues and opportunities related to historic preservation.
* Create a network of local homeowners that have completed historic preservation or restoration efforts that are willing to share their experiences with others interested in preserving historic properties and building features.

**Objective 7: Raise the profile of historic preservation through promotion and stewardship of historic resources.**

*Key Actions:*

* Partner with state agencies (Maine Historic Preservation Commission and Maine Department of Transportation), Maine Archaeological Society, town departments and commissions, historic societies, local museums and land trusts to implement local programs that emphasize history, archaeology, and historic preservation, including Maine Archaeology Month activities.
* Celebrate designations to the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and successful rehabilitation projects to encourage other historic preservation efforts.
* Work with organizations that support historic preservation-related tourism, including the Chamber of Commerce, Maine Humanities Council, and state agencies involved in tourism and marketing, to promote the region’s historic resources.
* Compile local summaries of historic properties, including notable features and preservation techniques, to facilitate self-guided walking tours in areas that have clusters of historic resources along the York River or within a historic district.

**Plans, Studies, and Resources Related to Protecting Historic Resource Values of the York River Watershed**

*Planning Documents*

Eliot, Kittery, South Berwick & York comprehensive plans

*Additional Data, Technical Resources and Studies*

Maine Historic Preservation Commission data

National Register sites documentation

York Historic Districts information

Various reports *(to be listed),* including York River historic resources surveys conducted by Northeast Archaeology Research Center and Groundroot Preservation Group in 2017