

Archeological Resources



Unit 4: Archeological Resources of Cape Cod National Seashore

It's your job! Be an Archeologist and uncover clues to how the Nauset Indians lived.

You are the archeologist who will assess a cultural resource site that includes an important artifact and some historical information. This unit has two activities:

1. *Examining artifacts and historical records,*
2. *Preserving and exhibiting artifacts.*

Start this unit at the bench at Skiff Hill overlook. Bring a ruler for measuring.

Time: 50 minutes.



Career Profile:

What does an archeologist do?

- Studies sites and artifacts used by past people.
- Determines if sites and artifacts provide important insight into past cultures.
- Plans for the care of sites and artifacts.
- Tells the story of the people connected with these sites and artifacts.
- Note: modern archeologists usually do not excavate sites. There are new less-destructive methods for studying sites and artifacts.



Frederica Dimmick
Archeologist at
Cape Cod National Seashore

What is an archeological resource?

Archeological resources are the remains of past human activity and the records that document those remains. An example might be the fragments of glass bottles where a house once stood and some drawings illustrating the layers of soil there. What matters most about an archeological resource is its potential to describe and explain human behavior.

Know the law! There are many laws written to protect archeological sites. In many places, including National Parks, it is against the law to dig up and take artifacts. This includes using metal detectors on Cape Cod National Seashore beaches. Why do you think it is against the law to dig for and remove objects from a national park? Write your answer here.



Archeological Resources

Protecting artifacts: Here's what you should do if you find an object that might be an archeological artifact?

- Leave it in place!
- Take photos or write notes to identify the site.
- Contact a park ranger or other local authority.



ACTIVITY 1—EXAMINING ARTIFACTS & HISTORICAL RECORDS

The Skiff Hill area is part of the Nauset Archeological District. It has been designated a National Historic Landmark for yielding nationally significant information on early contact between native peoples and European explorers.

Looking out over this landscape, can you visualize how the local Nauset Indians were living when French explorer Samuel de Champlain's party sailed into the harbor over 400 years ago? Perhaps not yet. But as you piece together clues from archeological evidence and from Champlain's written accounts, you should be able to formulate a clearer impression of that historic scene.

There are many Nauset Indian archeological sites in this district including campsites, larger communities, burial sites, and shell middens (their garbage dumps!). There is also a spectacular artifact right here on Skiff Hill—Sharpening Rock.



sharpening rock at skiff hill



Archeological Resources



As an archeologist, you have been asked to examine the sharpening stone to gather clues about its origin and purpose.

Write your thoughts in the spaces after each question.



What makes this rock different from other rocks you've seen?

- Feel the grooves and the smoothed areas. How might they have been made?
- With geologists help, you decide that the grooves and smoothed areas are human-made and not left behind by natural forces like glaciers. What things do you think you need to know to determine if this rock is an archeological artifact?
- Measure the lengths, widths and depths of the grooves and record your results here. What can you learn about Indian Rock from measuring?

Sketch details of grooves, angles, depth of groove compared to length



Archeological Resources

Now step under the shelter and read the “sharpening stone” wayside exhibit. It describes what archeologists at Cape Cod National Seashore have determined about this rock. Write answers to the questions below.



Did the Rock belong to a person, a family, or was it shared by the community?

What are some types of tools that were sharpened or shaped on the rock?

How many sharpening stones are in this area?

What do you think the number of sharpening stones tells us about the community?



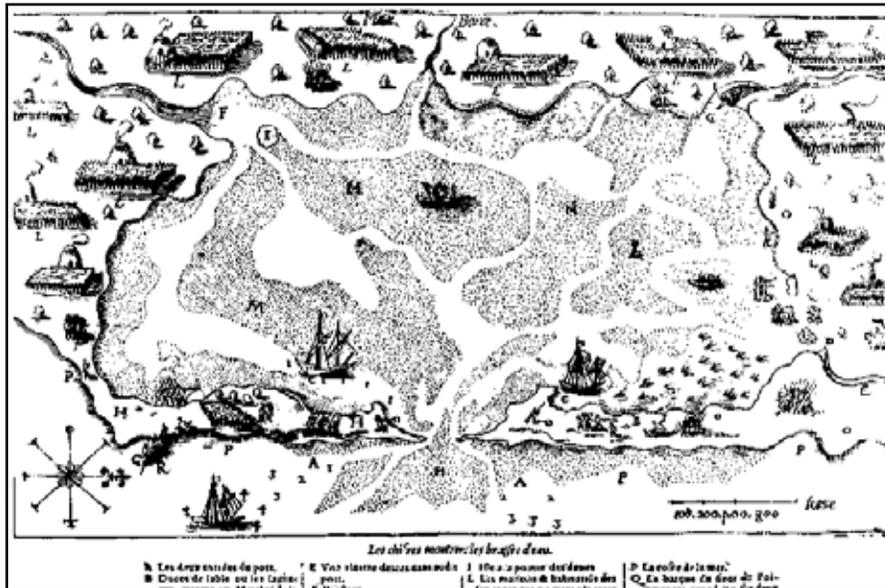
Archeological Resources



Now you are asked to find more clues about how the Nauset people lived by searching the historical records left behind by the French explorers. Step over to the wayside exhibit entitled Port de Mallebarre and examine the map drawn up by Champlain's party.

List three aspects of Nauset Indian life that the illustrations on the map suggest. Then, indicate where on the map you found the clue to each answer. (For example, draw an arrow from answer #1 to the place on the map that gave you the idea to answer #1.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Using Champlain's map to guide you, circle below which ecosystems the Nauset Indians had as resources.

- Salt Marsh Mountains Forest Farm land
- Fresh water Dunes Ocean



Archeological Resources

The remains of natural resources used for food, shelter, tools, and other activities may or may not survive to become evidence or part of an archeological record. Some materials decompose over time while other material may remain for hundreds of years.

Below are images of some food resources in the Nauset Area. Below each image write the part of the plant or animal that might remain identifiable for hundreds of years. Hint: soft tissues like flesh and flowers decompose but hard materials like bone and pollen may survive for centuries.



Looking around, would you say the resources have changed since then?

Yes or No

Is there anything in the historical record left by Champlain that conflicts with what we found at the artifact (Sharpening Stone)? Yes or No

Now that you've examined the artifact and the historical records, can you better visualize how the local Nauset Indians were living when French explorer Samuel de Champlain's party sailed into the harbor over 400 years ago? Yes or No



Archeological Resources



ACTIVITY 2—PRESERVING AND EXHIBITING ARTIFACTS

The sharpening stone is not in its original location—it used to be down at the marsh's edge. In the 1960s, archeologists determined it should be moved up to its current location to keep it from being buried by the encroaching salt marsh plants and soil.

How do you move an artifact that's large but fragile? Here are the basic steps that were followed to move the sharpening stone.

Below are four photographs that were taken during the project to move the sharpening stone.

See if you can identify which of the above steps is being shown in each photo.



↑ Step # _____

↓ Step # _____



↑ Step # _____

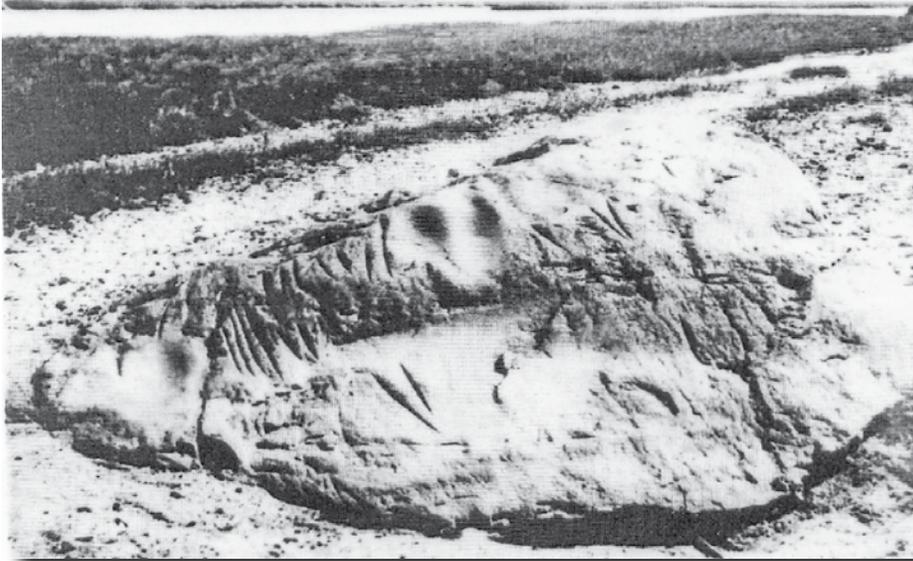
↓ Step # _____



Archeological Resources

The old photo below shows the sharpening stone in its original location down in the marsh.

Compare the view in the photo to the rock as it is now. Circle on the photo which features are still visible on the rock.



Have its features changed at all from when it was at its original location? Yes or No

What might have caused it to be different? _____

Regarding how the sharpening stone is exhibited:

Can it be touched? Yes or No Is it protected from the elements? Yes or No

What walking surface surrounds it? _____

Is the information provided on the wayside exhibits helpful? Yes or No

What do you think some of the concerns might be in preserving the sharpening stone in its current location? _____

How would you rate Cape Cod National Seashore's care of the stone and its setting?
Good Fair Poor

What other ways could the rock be displayed? Would it be better in a museum, stay where it is, or some other method? Why? _____

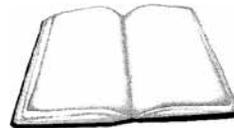


Archeological Resources



EXPLORE FURTHER

Is there an archeological site in your area? Find out and then explore it to learn why it is important and how it is protected.



RESOURCES:

www.nps.gov/history This site has easy-to-follow links to archeology for teachers and kids including a link to WebRangers, a site for kids. Enter as a guest, then click on History, and you will find interactive archeology activities.

www.nps.gov/caco This is the Cape Cod National Seashore website. Click on History & Culture in the Park Home box, click on Stories, click on Archeology of Outer Cape Cod, scroll down to the list of sites, and open Nauset Archeological District.





Archeological Resources

Notes Page

Take your own notes, draw sketches to remind yourself of ideas you think are important.

