

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Barnes Woods archaeological district includes two small base camps and two procurement camps, which represent a segment of the settlement system of Native American groups living in the Nanticoke River drainage between about 3000 B.C. and A.D. 1700. The sites' deposits are relatively intact and retain undisturbed vertical and horizontal spatial relationships between artifacts and features, indicating that reconstruction of activity areas within sites, and comparisons between sites are possible. Differences between sites in size and activities also provide an opportunity to study variability in social complexity along the Chesapeake headwaters for native populations during the Woodland I and Woodland II Periods, and the disruption of social and economic patterns during the Contact Period.

The Barnes Woods Archaeological District is significant under Criterion D as having the potential to yield significant information in the study of Woodland I, Woodland II and contact Period site distributions and community patterns. The data contained in these sites which can contribute to these studies include the placement of the sites on the landscape, the relative density of various kinds of debris, differences in the kinds of tools present at each site, and the vertical and horizontal patterns of distribution of debris within each site.

All four of the sites within the district were occupied during the Woodland I Period of Delaware prehistory, and two of the sites (7S-E-38 and 7S-E-39) were occupied during the Woodland II Period. Sites 7S-E-38 and 7S-E-39 represent small base camps which were frequently reoccupied, which 7S-E-40 and 7S-E-151 represent intermittently reoccupied procurement sites. The time periods during which these sites were occupied have been defined by the presence of temporally diagnostic artifacts such as ceramics or projectile points, and by the stratigraphic position of artifacts (that is to say, the depth from which cultural material has been recovered.

The earliest identifiable occupations at sites in the Barnes Woods Archaeological District occurred during the Clyde Farm complex time period (3000 B.C. to 500 B.C.), represented by stemmed projectile points. During this time period, the number of both micro-band base camps and procurement camps increased in the Nanticoke drainage. This reflects, in part, an expansion into previously unoccupied environmental settings. All four of the Barnes Woods sites were occupied during this time period, based both on

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temporally diagnostic artifacts and on the depth from which cultural material has been recovered. The low density of cultural material in deeper levels indicates that all the sites were occupied as procurement camps during this time period.

By middle Woodland I time (Wolfe Neck complex, 500 B.C. to A.D. 0), the two larger sites (7S-E-38 and 7S-E-39) appear to have been occupied as small base camps, indicated by the density of Wolfe Neck and clay-tempered ceramics. The beginning of site specialization can also be seen.

The lower density of Mockley ceramics at 7S-E-38 and an absence of this ceramic type at 7S-E-39 indicates less intense use of the area during the Carey complex time period (A.D. 0 to A.D.1000). Some Hell Island ceramics, dating to late Carey times, are found at both sites, both the pattern of low intensity of use continues.

The period of greatest intensity of use at 7S-E-38 and 7S-E-39 occurred during the Woodland II Period (A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1600), and appears to have been particularly intense at the beginning of this time. Early Woodland II is characterized by the presence of complicated incised Townsend series ceramics. The interior midden and exterior activity areas associated with the house sequence at 7S-E-39 contained these ceramics. Both of the pit features identified at 7S-E-38 contained Townsend series ceramics, but none were decorated so that it is not possible to place them temporally within the Woodland II Period. The presence of house features at 7S-E-39 and pit features at 7S-E-38 indicates that both sites were used as small base camps during Woodland II, although the activities were different at each site.

The sites in the Barnes Woods Archaeological District have the potential to provide data which can be used to address research questions relating to population growth, population movement, human adaptation to estuarine development, and site specialization.

The data recovered to date indicates that the intensity of use for 7S-E-38 and 7S-E-39 varied noticeably over time. Increases in population density are associated with the Wolfe Neck Complex (ca.500 B.C.) and with the transition to the Woodland II period (ca. A.D. 1000). These shifts appear related to changes in social organization and adaptation that were occurring elsewhere in Delaware at the same time (Custer 1984), but may also be related to environmental changes within the Nanticoke drainage as a result of rising sea level and the concurrent development of the Nanticoke

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estuary. The decrease in the intensity of occupation identified for the Carey complex may reflect population movements during the latter part of the Woodland I Period.

The pattern of variability between related sites is one of the important research questions which may be addressed by further study of the Barnes Woods sites. Functional differentiation is a reflection of the complexity of the social organization of a culture. Studies of change in socio-cultural complexity are most revealing when sets of sites are compared. Furthermore, the Woodland I/Woodland II transition corresponds to the period of developing village life and social complexity within the Mid-Atlantic region (Custer and Mellin 1989).

The sites in the District have a high degree of integrity because it is unlikely that any of the sites have been cultivated in the past. Only selective logging has taken place over the last century, and historical evidence suggests that the property was maintained as a woodlot for nearly two hundred years. The presence of windblown soils also contributes to the integrity of the archaeological sites within the Barnes Woods Archaeological District because these soils have buried archaeological remains, providing a degree of separation between earlier and later deposits.

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Statewide Comprehensive Planning

The Barnes Woods Archaeological District is located in the Nanticoke drainage sub-unit of the Mid-drainage Management Unit as defined in the State Plan for prehistoric archaeological resources, and in Composite Sensitivity Zone II. This zone is defined as having a high significant site potential with no development pressure. Study Units represented in the sites of the district include the Woodland I Study Unit, the Woodland II Study Unit, and the Contact Study Unit. Site types include micro-band base camps and procurement sites. The regional prehistoric management plan for Southwestern Delaware identifies the study of micro-band base camps and procurement sites as a significant research issue for the Woodland I Study Unit. The study of site distributions and community settlement patterns are identified as research issues for both the Woodland II Study Unit and for the Contact Study Unit.