



# ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OFFICE NEWSLETTER

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

The purpose of this newsletter is to outline some of the activities carried out by the Aboriginal Heritage Office for the Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Manly, North Sydney, Pittwater, Warringah and Willoughby Councils.

This is the first edition of the Aboriginal Heritage Office News. Every month these newsletters will keep you up to date on news, events, stories and special recipes you can try at home. The quiz answers will be published in the following editions. We hope you enjoy reading these articles and if you have any questions please contact our friendly staff.

David M Watts – Aboriginal Heritage Manager

## 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

On 24 March 2010, the AHO will be celebrating its 10 year anniversary and signing new Memoranda of Understandings with its participating Councils. In view of this happy event, we thought we

would take this opportunity to provide you with a brief background of the AHO and its current projects.

Initially opening in 2000, the AHO has now grown to provide Aboriginal Heritage services to Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Manly, North Sydney, Pittwater, Warringah and Willoughby Councils. In March 2010, Ryde City Council will also become part of this venture. The AHO employs one permanent full-time position (Aboriginal Heritage Manager (AHM), David Watts), and casual staff such as Archaeologists and Education Officers who are contracted for specific projects when funding allows. The AHO carries out a range of tasks in order to conserve Aboriginal Heritage within each Council area. Despite some early teething problems and the many challenges facing such a diverse organisation, a large number of projects and more regular activities have been successfully completed.

The AHO liaises and works closely with the Aboriginal custodians of the



land, the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC), the Dept. of Environment, Climate Change & Water (DECCW) and the relevant Local Council on all Aboriginal heritage issues. Many of the projects would not have been possible without additional support and funding from other agencies such as the NSW Heritage Office.

One of the most important roles of the AHO is to achieve conservation outcomes by successfully managing and protecting Aboriginal sites. The AHO is also called upon to inspect, assess and record Aboriginal sites. Many sites require protective management and this will be the focus for future works proposals.

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## Quote of the Month

**"No battle plan ever survives contact with the enemy"**

(Ancient military proverb)

# Heritage Rangers Around the World

Ed Abbey once called her a "girl ranger," and that's what she was, the very first. Lynell Schalk began her federal career tracking grave robbers and pothunters in southeast Utah, and ended it catching pot growers in western Oregon. She broke through the sagebrush ceiling as the first female special agent in charge in the Western United States, and she did a bang-up job.

Schalk, who winters in Bluff, Utah, and summers in Oregon, is retired these days, but she still volunteers for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as a site steward-at-large, patrolling for pothunters and documenting illegal activities. A University of Washington graduate in philosophy, Schalk had been working as a swimming instructor when she read Ed Abbey's *Desert Solitaire*. It changed her life. She gave two weeks' notice, and at 23 headed towards the Southwest and a lifelong love affair with the landscape.

Schalk went to Natural Bridges National Monument, where she worked as a volunteer in the park for a *per diem* of \$3 a day. Thus began her introduction to women's work in a male-dominated federal agency. As a seasonal ranger at Walnut Canyon National Monument in Arizona, her uniform was a white polyester knit dress, with a special version of the Park Service's arrowhead logo. It was only half the size of a man's – and she hated that.

As a seasonal worker at Navajo National Monument south of Kayenta, Ariz., she spent days alone at Kiet Siel, the second-largest cliff dwelling in the United States. In the oppressive heat of full summer, she'd see an occasional visitor, but more often she had the magnificent ruin all to herself. "It was always hot", Shalk recalls. "And once it got dark there was a constant pitter-patter of rats and mice. You couldn't sleep because of the night noises."

By 1974, she'd become a ranger for Grand Gulch, entitled to her very own 16-foot trailer. Her job was to nab the pothunters who were

looting some of the most remote Ancestral Puebloan sites in the Southwest. Schalk eventually became one of the first Grand Gulch rangers, patrolling in everything from pickups to helicopters to horseback. One morning, as she was rounding up horses in a tight corral, she got kicked in her lower back. She lay screaming in agony, sprawled in horse manure. After almost a two-hour wait for an ambulance, she was taken to the Monticello, Utah, hospital, only to be placed on a stainless-steel table and given nothing for pain.

Finally, a physician arrived. Although it's been over a decade, Schalk will never forget his words: "Well, young lady, I understand you've been kicked by a horse. I hope it knocked some sense in you, and you will quit this job and get married." Instead, she got a gun.



In 1978, Schalk became one of the first Bureau of Land Management staffers authorized to carry a service revolver. She was also the first female officer. But the BLM had never had armed rangers before, and administrators thought that sidearms should be locked in truck gloveboxes, while rangers wore an empty holster on their duty belts. Schalk and her colleagues protested in a story that eventually made the New York Times. She stated, "You're putting our lives at risk because we are dressed as officers and that's how the public perceives us. We wear a badge and we need to be able to enforce it." Because they were not allowed to wear their weapons, the officers initially refused their commissions.

Rabble-rouser Edward Abbey then got into the controversy, telling Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus to "give these people the enforcement authority they need to protect the public lands of the American West." The secretary rescinded his gun-in-the-glovebox memo, and Schalk got her revolver.

She worked in Utah, California, Nevada, Idaho, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Oregon, sometimes under cover, often alone. Schalk helped with the second prosecution of pothunters under the *Archaeological Resources Protection Act*, taught hundreds of federal and Indian officers and archaeologists about protecting artifacts, and retired after 28 years with a Superior Service Award. In one case, she personally helped recover 150 Anasazi artifacts now at the Edge of the Cedars Museum in Blanding, Utah.

Retired U.S. Attorney Kris Olson called Schalk "the best case agent I ever had in trial. ... Lynell was fearless, but not reckless, in pursuit of her duties."

Schalk is finishing a book she plans to call *Plunder on the Plateau*. I can't wait to read it. The Old West abounds with stories of sheriffs with their big hats and handlebar mustaches. Now it's the New West, and it's high time we learned about the "girl rangers" who saved 1,000-year old artifacts for us all.

Written April 14, 2009 by Andrew Gullifor for the *High Country News*



Lynell Schalk

# Inside the Aboriginal Heritage Office Museum

👉 This is a working model of a coastal fish trap (figure 1). In the past several years, the Aboriginal Heritage Office has re-recorded a fish trap, which was discovered earlier by James Smallhorn (Willoughby Council outdoor staff).

A full day of diving, exploring, measuring and recording the placement of the rocks that encompassed the skirt of the fish trap was undertaken by AHO Officers, alongside several staff from the NSW Heritage Office.

It was a problematic exploration in murky water with visibility reduced down to a couple of feet. Even more worrying, the edge of the platform, around 1.8 metres of water dropped off to around 35 metres. An area favoured by nice big Bull Sharks that prowled the area looking for juicy fish which we, unfortunately, somewhat resembled in the murky depths.

Nevertheless, the dive progressed well and, with underwater video recorders and underwater cameras, the job was eventually completed. Totally Wild did a story on the work of re-recording the fish trap and we have a copy of the DVD at the AHO so, next time you are passing, drop in.



Figure 1 (above) – Working model of a coastal fishing trap from the AHO Museum. Figure 2 (below) – Exploration and survey of underwater fishing trap.



## Aboriginal Heritage Office Volunteers

👉 Since starting in 2007, in response to community interest, the AHO's Volunteer Monitoring project has been a resounding success.

Volunteers from the local community, with an interest in the conservation of Aboriginal Heritage, have been monitoring various sites such as rock art shelters, engravings and shell middens throughout their Local Council area. Reports on the sites, including such matters as

damage due to erosion or vandalism, continue to greatly assist the AHO to assess conservation needs and requirements.

The AHO has now also arranged for the electronic lodgment of the Volunteers' site reports through the AHO website ([www.aboriginalheritage.org](http://www.aboriginalheritage.org)).

Identification of the AHO Volunteer Monitors has now also been made easier due to the issue of

shirts, hats and various other necessary field equipment, indicating their affiliation to the AHO.

Enthusiasm appears to be high amongst the Volunteers as they are now requesting multiple sites to monitor.

AHO would like to say a big thank you to the Volunteers for giving up their valuable time to assist in our pursuit of the conservation of Sydney's Aboriginal Heritage.

## BUSH 'TUKKA' RECIPE – WARRIGAL GREENS PESTO

The Warrigal Green (*Tetragonia tetragoides*) is a leafy, sprawling, herb with arrow shaped leaves and small glistening, liquid filled blisters as well as small yellow flowers and winged seed pods. It can be harvested all year round and likes to grow in moist shade to sunny conditions including coastal situations.

### INGREDIENTS:-

- 6 handfuls of Warrigal Green leaves
- 1/2 small red onion
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- Handful of unsalted macadamia nuts
- Juice of half a lemon
- 1/2 cup oil (macadamia or virgin olive)
- 125g parmesan cheese, grated



### ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS:-

1. Blanch leaves of Warrigal Greens, refresh in cold water and drain well;
2. In a food processor, blend onion, garlic, nuts, Warrigal Greens and lemon;
3. Drizzle in oil while processor is running;
4. Mix in parmesan cheese (if freezing leave this step until you are using the pesto).

(This recipe is courtesy of Willoughby City Council. The Council runs regular 'bush tukka' workshops. Call them for more information on (02) 9777 1000).

## Q&A Trivia

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Ned Kelly was an Aboriginal bush ranger.                           | True or False? |
| 2. Carbon dating is the only way to date Aboriginal Sites.            | True or False? |
| 3. All Aboriginal people speak the same language.                     | True or False? |
| 4. Aboriginal People pre-1788 had no written language.                | True or False? |
| 5. Aboriginal People have several treaties dating back to 1788.       | True or False? |
| 6. Aboriginal Australians have always had the right to vote.          | True or False? |
| 7. The Sydney basin is over 200 million years old.                    | True or False? |
| 8. Wianamatta Shale covers more of Sydney than Sydney Sandstone.      | True or False? |
| 9. The Sydney Tribal Group is called the Wiradjuri.                   | True or False? |
| 10. The east coast of Australia has changed in the past 30,000 years. | True or False? |

Answers in next month's Newsletter!

Aboriginal Heritage Office contact details:  
Mail: PO Box 12 North Sydney NSW 2059  
PH: (02) 9949 9882 FX: (02) 9958 2799

Location: 39/137-145 Sailors Bay Road, Northbridge  
Website: [www.aboriginalheritage.org](http://www.aboriginalheritage.org)  
Email: [info@aboriginalheritage.org](mailto:info@aboriginalheritage.org)