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Linseed impregnated bowl with six fernroot beaters and two digging stick footrests adhered to the linseed oil on its base.

Historically waterlogged wood artefacts were frequently treated with linseed oil in an attempt to prevent damage during drying.

This ineffective treatment typically resulted in surface deterioration and a layer of jellylike, polymerised oil deposited on the artefact's surface.

Reversal of this treatment and reconservation of the artefact to facilitate stability and safe storage and/or display is one of the services offered by The University of Auckland Conservation Laboratory.

Photograph: Conservation Laboratory, The University of Auckland.

Permission: Puke Ariki, Taranaki.

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National Conservation Laboratory for Wet Organic Archaeological Materials



Waterlogged organic archaeological materials

Frequently the vulnerable nature of waterlogged archaeological materials presents atypical conservation challenges. These at-risk artefacts require immediate treatment in order to avoid irreversible damage.

We are committed to conserving this aspect of New Zealand's cultural heritage by providing professional conservation for recovered artefacts and *in-situ* preservation of wetland archaeological sites.

Clients

Each year numerous field and laboratory conservation projects are undertaken by this facility for iwi, runanga, government agencies, museums, archaeologists and other heritage professionals wishing to protect, store, study and display their taonga.



This ornately carved waterlogged tauihu (canoe prow) was discovered on Mason Bay, Stewart Island and subsequently delivered to the laboratory for treatment by eight kaumatua from Southland. It has now returned home and is on display at the Southland Museum and Art Gallery. Photograph: Conservation Laboratory, The University of Auckland. Permission: Murihiku, Southland.

Expertise

Dilys Johns is a Senior Research Fellow in Conservation at The University of Auckland. She studied archaeology at The University of Auckland (MA Hons 1 1985) and conservation at the International Center for the Study of the Preservation of Cultural Property in Rome and the Canadian Conservation Institute.

Dilys is a member of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, Museums Aotearoa, the Wetland Archaeological Research Project (UK), a founding member of the New Zealand Conservators of Cultural Materials – Pu Manaaki Kahurangi, an executive member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) New Zealand and an Assistant Coordinator for ICOM, Committee for Conservation, Wet Organic Archaeological Materials Group.

With over 20 years of experience in this specialised area of conservation, Dilys has completed a variety of projects throughout New Zealand and the Pacific. She currently directs conservation in The University of Auckland laboratory and six satellite facilities in Muriwai, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill and Takaka, Golden Bay.

Other areas of expertise associated with the laboratory include tohunga whakairo, archaeologists, material culture specialists, botanists, geologists, chemists and a professional photographer.

Facilities

The purpose-built Auckland conservation laboratory is a unique national facility, well equipped for wet organic conservation. In addition we have access to other analytical techniques on campus including: scanning electron microscopy, radiography, electron microprobe, x-ray diffraction, and x-ray fluorescence for the analysis and examination of artefacts.

The laboratory offers a complete range of specialist services including: wetsite evaluation and management, artefact assessment, chemical / physical analysis, documentation, collection surveys, treatment and archival packing.

Research

Current field projects include monitoring the sustainability, in-situ preservation and resource management of important wetsites in Taranaki, Hawkes Bay and the Bay of Plenty.

Please see Dilys Johns' webpage on The University of Auckland website for further publications and information.

www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/anthro

Conservation course taught at The University of Auckland

ANTHRO 340 Heritage Conservation in Aotearoa 15 points, lectures, laboratories, field trips

Lecturer / convenor: Dilys Johns

This course addresses the main principles of heritage conservation focusing on rationale rather than treatment. Special emphasis is given to the fields of: conservation of place, Māori buildings, marae based paper collections, textile, fine art and archaeological conservation.

Studies provide students with a cultural orientation to conservation where issues are examined through several contexts, including anthropological studies and conservation science.

The course includes two weekly lectures and a fortnightly laboratory or field trip to heritage institutions and selected conservation projects in the Auckland region.

Prerequisite: ANTHRO 100 and 101, and 200 or 201 or 203 or HERITAGE 200 or MUSEUMS 200, or 120 points passed



Archaeological conservation in progress. A waterlogged hinaki or eel trap made from sapling Manuka and Kieke aerial roots during excavations at Kohika, near Whakatane, Bay of Plenty. Here the taonga is being prepared for lifting and transportation to The University of Auckland Conservation Laboratory for treatment. Photograph: Conservation Laboratory, The University of Auckland. Permission Ngati Awa, Bay of Plenty.