

Press Release

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Potlatch Fund Awarded First Nation's Sweet Grass Model Grantee Award

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SEATTLE—The Potlatch Fund has been selected out of 416 grantees by First Nations Development Institute to receive First Nation's prestigious Sweet Grass Award for Outstanding and Model Grantee.

"We are deeply honored that First Nations, one of the cutting edge national Native organizations, is recognizing our efforts on behalf of Northwest Native people." said Andrea Alexander, executive director of the Potlatch Fund. "Many volunteers have worked hard to bring us to where we are today, and it is a testament to our dedication and to the visionary grassroots Native leadership that founded this groundbreaking foundation."

The Potlatch Fund, a non-profit Native American organization, was created in 2002 to inspire the Native tradition of giving in Northwest Indian Country through grantmaking and Native leadership development. Potlatch Fund works to increase giving to Northwest Native people to encourage economic development, natural resource protection, education, cultural preservation, civic participation and the overall health of Native people and their communities. To date, Potlatch Fund has trained over 200 Native people, educated mainstream donors on the needs and opportunities in funding Native communities, and directly awarded grants to 23 Native programs and organizations representing more than a dozen tribes from the Northwest.

This award recognizes Potlatch Fund's success in these efforts in its short history. Rebecca Adamson, Founder and President, and Michael Roberts, Vice President, of First Nations, in a joint letter to the Potlatch Fund, wrote:

"Our grantmaking has involved us with hundreds of phenomenal community initiatives. Yet among all of this Native innovation and commitment, the Potlatch Fund stands out. This award recognizes the extraordinary work of a First Nations grantee in advancing grassroots leadership development and addressing social ills within Native communities through culturally appropriate training and technical assistance. Moreover, it acknowledges the strong efforts of a Native community to restore community control over Native assets. As an organization that inspires the Native tradition of giving to better serve Native people, the Potlatch Fund has supported and made a significant impact on Native American communities in its short history. We are proud of the work of the Potlatch Fund and its growth in the last three years."

Potlatch Fund will be recognized with the Sweet Grass Award at First Nation's 25th Silver Anniversary Awards Celebration and Dinner on October 22, 2005 at the National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall in Washington D.C. This exciting event will host up to 300 members of the philanthropic community, corporate representatives and national and grassroots Native leaders. This occasion will celebrate the accomplishments of First Nations in building the assets of Indigenous peoples over the last 25 years, and will honor the individuals and organizations that have helped shape First Nations into the successful model it is today.

Through a three-pronged strategy of education, advocacy, and capitalization, First Nations Development Institute works to restore Native control and culturally-compatible stewardship of the assets they own - be they land, human potential, cultural heritage, or natural resources - and to establish new assets for ensuring the long-term vitality of Native communities. First Nations was an early investor in the development of the Potlatch Fund through a capacity-building grant in 2003.