

# Karuk Tribe of California

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Karuk Vice Chair Named Buffet Award Honoree**

*Leaf Hillman recognized for contributions to cultural and environmental preservation*

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Buffet Award for Indigenous Leadership will honor several Native American leaders for their significant contributions to improving the social, environmental, and cultural conditions of Native People. This year's award will be presented to W. Ron Allen (Jamestown S'Kallam) during a ceremony at Ecotrust's Jean Vollum Natural Capital Center in Portland, Oregon on November 30, 2005. Four other finalists will also be honored for their achievements: Leaf Hillman (Karuk) of Orleans, California; Robi Michelle Craig, (Kiks.adi Clan), Sitka, Alaska; Chief Robert Pasco (Nlaka'pamux), Ashcroft, British Columbia; and Chairman Shawn Yanity (Stillaguamish), Arlington, Washington.

The Buffet Award is supported by the families of Howard and Peter Buffett. This year, the \$25,000 Buffett Award for Indigenous Leadership goes to Chairman W. Ron Allen of Sequim, Washington. The Award's intent is to provide resources for the development and transfer of knowledge in indigenous communities. The four other finalists will each receive a \$2,500 cash award.

Chairman W. Ron Allen is honored as the recipient of the 2005 Buffett Award for Indigenous Leadership for his work protecting tribal sovereignty, treaty rights and governmental responsibilities at both the regional and national level. He has also worked with great vision and dedication to advance the political, cultural, and economic interests of the Jamestown S'Kallam Tribe. Since 1977, Allen has served as Tribal Chairman in 1977 and since 1982 as Executive Director of the Tribe.

Leaf Hillman is honored as a 2005 Buffett Award finalist for his grassroots efforts to restore the Klamath River salmon habitat, protect sacred sites and build the capacity of the Karuk Tribal government.

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Hillman has served as Vice-chairman of the Karuk Tribal Council since 2002. He previously worked as Karuk Department of Natural Resources Director. Hillman is currently the Steering Committee Chair for the Bring the Salmon Home Campaign, which seeks to remove four Klamath River dams owned by Portland based PacifiCorp.

Robi Michelle Craig is honored as a 2005 Buffett Award finalist for her efforts to improve the cultural, social, environmental and economic conditions of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Craig's innovative leadership and sensitive treatment of traditional Native knowledge is respected by her tribe. She currently serves as the Tribal Deputy General Manager and was the Tribal Anthropologist from 1996 to 2001. Craig is presently working on the Sockeye Salmon Traditional Ecological Knowledge project.

Chief Robert Pasco is honored as a 2005 Buffett Award Finalist for his contributions to the improvement of Nlaka'pamux Nation social, political, economic and environmental conditions. He has served as Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council Chair for over twenty years. Chief Pasco has also served as a presenter and educator on matters ranging from community planning, sovereignty and jurisdiction, fishing, education and language.

Chairman Yanity is honored as a 2005 Buffett Award Finalist for his leadership in the areas of intergovernmental cooperation, community development and conservation. Chairman Yanity has also helped improve the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indian's economic development opportunities and served as a catalyst for positive change in the natural resource management area. In May 2004, the Stillaguamish elected him as Tribal Chairman and he also serves as the Tribal Fisheries Manager.

Buffett Award nominees are First Nation, Alaska Native or tribal members over 35 years of age who exhibit extraordinary community leadership within the Salmon Nation region from Alaska to California. The Final Jury Panel for the 2005 Buffett Award consisted of Gerald Amos (Haisla), Dalee Sambo Dorough (Inupiaq), Antone Minthorn (Cayuse), Alan Parker (Chippewa-Cree), Leah George Wilson (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) and Ecotrust President Spencer Beebe.

In November 2004, Howard and Peter Buffett announced their intention to endow Ecotrust's Buffett Award for Indigenous Leadership. The brothers plan to donate \$500,000 over five years for the endowment fund.

Clarence Alexander (Dranjik Gwich'in) from Fort Yukon, Alaska received the 2004 Buffett Award for his many years of work advocating for environmental justice, tribal rights and protection of the Yukon River Watershed. Four other finalists were honored in 2004 for their achievements: Ivan Jackson, Sr. (Klamath/Modoc), Klamath Falls, Oregon; Sarah James (Neesaii Gwich'in), Arctic Village, Alaska; Teri Rofkar (Tlingit), Sitka, Alaska and Terry Williams (Tulalip), Marysville, Washington.

In 2003, Jeannette Armstrong (Okanagan) from Penticton, British Columbia received the

Buffett Award for her work as a community leader, educator and indigenous rights activist. Four other finalists were also honored for their achievements: Billy Frank, Jr. (Nisqually), Olympia, Washington; Susan Masten (Yurok), Hoopa, California; Nathan Matthew (Shuswap), Barriere, B.C., Canada and Agnes Pilgrim (Siletz), Grants Pass, Oregon.

Kelly Brown (Heiltsuk) of Waglisla, British Columbia received the 2002 Buffett Award for his work as a negotiator, planner and educator in the areas of cultural restoration and conservation. The other four finalists honored in 2002 were: Carol Craig (Yakama), Toppenish, Washington; Kathleen Shaye Hill (Klamath), Eureka, California; Robert Sam (Tlingit), Sitka, Alaska and John D. Ward (Taku River Tlingit), Atlin, B.C., Canada.

In addition to the Buffett Award for Indigenous Leadership, Ecotrust provides a variety of other projects and services through its Native Programs. In collaboration with the Klamath Tribes, Ecotrust published *Klamath Heartlands: A Guide to the Klamath Reservation Forest Plan*. Additional projects include land repatriation, native youth leadership, wild salmon marketing and the Elakha Alliance.

Ecotrust is a non-profit organization committed to strengthening communities and the environment from Alaska to California. For more information about Ecotrust and the Buffett Award honorees see the website [www.ecotrust.org/buffettaward/](http://www.ecotrust.org/buffettaward/).

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