

Project Objective:

To host a traditional potlatch which would bring together elders, families, youth and environmental managers to discuss changes in the environment caused by global warming and increased human activity. The goal was to gather important Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) from the elders and create a digital story so the stories could be preserved and passed on for generations to come.

Results:

A Potlatch Committee was formed. After many months of planning, post card invites were distributed and the TEK Elders Potlatch took place in June, 2010. The environmental staff researched and compared prices of environment friendly materials, to replace plastic ware and paper plates, typically found during modern day gatherings. A professional videographer agreed to work with the Kenaitze youth, free of charge to put together a video documenting the potlatch. The two day event took place bringing together youth, families, tribal and environmental staff with elders from Kenai and Southcentral Alaska.

Benefits:

- By forming the Potlatch Committee, there was increased input from tribal members and tribal employees.
- Focusing potlatch plans on environmental awareness changed the way the event was planned, and demonstrated new knowledge for tribal staff.
- Everyone loved the compostable plates, wooden forks, spoons and knives. Although a little more expensive, people realized their value and it will be more likely that these types of materials will be used at other tribal events.

Lessons Learned:

- **Recording conversations in the wind doesn't work well.** The environmental portion of the potlatch was held at the Tribe's beach location. It was a little windy which made it difficult to record conversations. There was a lot of interference.
- **Have a good plan.** It was hard to get people talking while the cameras were rolling. It might be a good idea to enlist the help of a good local conversation starter in the community. Because a lot of good conversations were taking place off camera, they ended up having to do interviews with elders after the event to capture the stories they anticipated gathering during the event.

For more information:

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ANTHC website: www.anthc.org/chs/ces/hve/2010-cedp-grants.cfm

KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE



*Elders Potlatch –
Giving the gift of Traditional Ecological Knowledge.*



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Work performed before February 1, 2010

- * An elders potlatch committee was established.
- * Compostable serving ware was researched and samples were gathered.



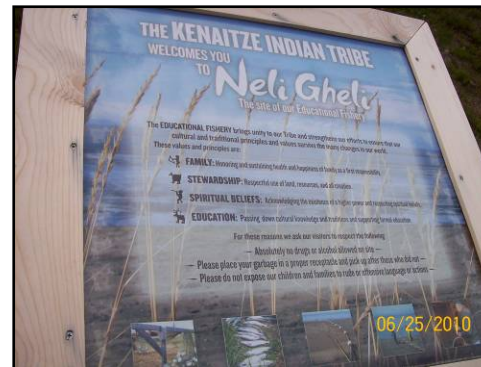
Following several meetings, the potlatch was scheduled to take place June 25-27, 2010. Invitations were created and distributed.

Contracted professional videographer, Paul Gray to record the potlatch and work with local youth to put together a video.

The potlatch took place June 25-27 and brought together youth, Kenaitze tribal members, environmental professionals and elders from across Southcentral Alaska.

*** PROJECT TIMELINE ***

Kenaitze Indian Tribe
2010 Community Environmental Demonstration Project Grant



A presentation was prepared to share during the 2011 Alaska Forum on the Environment.

Reviewed photos and interviews and began putting together digital story.



Received CEDP Grant from ANTHC

The environmental department convinced the planning committee to try compostable servingware, despite the slight increase in price. They ordered compostable plates/napkins and wooden utensils from Green Alaska Solutions to use during the potlatch. Samples were given to the Tribal council members, the elders lunch program and others to help promote more environment friendly gatherings.

The video recording captured during the beach potlatch location ended up having a lot of wind interference, making the sound quality of the discussions very poor. The Kenaitze decided to conduct separate interviews with tribal elders and their families to include in their digital story. Interviews took place from September – December 2010.

