Kodiak Alutiiq Plantlore Publication Funded

With a $48,208 grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the Alutiiq Museum will partner with Alaskan ethnobotanist Priscilla Russell to publish her Kodiak Alutiiq Plantlore, a 1995 report on plant use traditions. Russell’s extensive report is part of an archival collection on loan to the Alutiiq Museum from the Kodiak Area Native Association. KANA’s Board of Directors gave their permission for the project, and Koniag, Inc. assisted the museum with the successful grant proposal.

“We’ve wanted to publish this resource for many years,” said Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Counceller. “Ms. Russell collected interviews about plant use in the early 1990’s with grant support from KANA and the National Park Service. She came to Kodiak in different seasons, visited every Alutiiq village, spoke with numerous people, and took wonderful photographs. Her 150-page report is the most complete, written account of Alutiiq plant uses, and it’s never been published. Moreover, many of those who contributed to the book are no longer living. Our goal, and Ms. Russell’s, is to make their knowledge accessible to future generations of harvesters, cooks, and healers. The people who contributed to the report gave their knowledge for this purpose. We will honor their contributions through this manuscript.”

Grant funds will allow the museum to edit and design the manuscript, compile and take photographs of people using plants, add Alutiiq vocabulary to the presentation, and create a print-ready document. Additional funds will be raised to transform the document into a book.

“This is the first step in a two phase project,” said Counceller. “As we develop the manuscript, we will be raising funds to pay for its printing. Our goal is to create an informative, colorful book for release by early 2018.”

The Alutiiq Museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the history and culture of the Alutiiq, an Alaska Native tribal people. Representatives of Kodiak Alutiiq organizations govern the museum with funding from charitable contributions, memberships, grants, contracts, and sales.


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