



Business / Corporate Responsibility

# International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples: How forests bring us together



Sustainable Forestry Initiative  
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“The more I know about our surroundings, the more I can do to help preserve them for future generations.”

*Keyana Pardilla  
at the 2018 National Indian  
Timber Symposium*

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The United Nations established the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples in 1994, and the day is observed every year on August 9. The goal is stronger international cooperation in solving issues specific to the more than 370 million indigenous peoples living in 90 countries around the globe. Focus areas include human rights, education, economic development, and the environment.

## Sustainable Forestry, a Natural Fit for Partnership & Support

The independent, non–profit Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) believes the future of our forests and our shared quality of life depends on strengthening the vital links between healthy forests, responsible purchasing and thriving communities. These shared values allow for a strong and multi–faceted link between SFI and Indigenous communities across North America.

According to Steve Andringa, Administrative Forester for the Yakama Nation in Washington state, “The timber–based economy of the Yakama Nation in Washington State is unique in that it balances economic needs while ensuring the protection of the Yakama cultural and traditional practices. To keep this balance, it’s critical that we maintain a high sustainability standard, and SFI helps us do just that.”

SFI supports Indigenous Peoples’ interests in multiple ways. The SFI Forest Management Standard is aligned with traditional values recognizing Indigenous Peoples’ rights, traditional knowledge and environmental values. In addition, 40 Indigenous communities across North America manage over 10 million acres of land certified to SFI.



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## Engaging the Future Through Project Learning Tree

SFI also operates Project Learning Tree (PLT) to include future generations in supporting the future of forests. PLT is an award–winning environmental education program for teachers, parents, and community leaders working with students from preschool to grade 12. It includes hands–on lessons for inside and outside the classroom, as well as opportunities to support students in greening their schools and communities through GreenWorks! grants.

## Students Nurture Native Plants

Through a PLT GreenWorks! grant, middle school students in Alpine, California are creating native plant gardens in collaboration with students from the local Kumeyaay tribal community. The effort includes informational plaques about the native plants, including traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), customs and historical uses of these plants.



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## “A Walk on the Tundra” Transfers Tribal Knowledge

PLT advocates the use of a wide variety of children's books in teaching and learning. As part of its programming, PLT recommends books that are culturally diverse, have a global perspective, and include traditional customs, such as folktales, myths and legends, chants and songs. For example, the book “[A Walk on the Tundra](#)” for students in grades 3 to 5 introduces native plant ecology and Nunavut Inuit traditions. Teachers can easily pair PLT’s lessons with this book to help students explore traditional language, native plant uses, and respect for nature and diverse cultures.

## Timber Symposium Goes High TEK

A PLT workshop facilitated by the Pacific Education Institute was integrated into the 2018 annual National Indian Timber Symposium hosted by the Quinault Indian Nation. The workshop connected 35 participants with traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) around sustainable forest food systems and traditional foods and medicines.

To learn more about how to support Indigenous communities, SFI outreach efforts, and the sustainable forestry connection, visit <http://www.sfiprogram.org>.



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