Wallace recognized for tribal leadership

Brian Wallace of the Washoe tribe was recognized by Ecotrust as one of the Westâ€™s most innovative indigenous leaders for his efforts to improve conditions in his community.

The recipients were selected by a panel of tribal leaders. The winners' efforts span the areas of youth advocacy, education, renewable energy, cultural restoration and scholarship.

The Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Award has quietly become one of the preeminent programs honoring and supporting tribal, First Nation, and Alaska Native leaders in the West. Tribes and First Nations are more than an ethnic or minority demographic; they are nations and representative governments, major land owners, committed co-managers in natural resources, and they are major drivers of local and regional economies, according to a press release.

The awards – $45,000 total – were given out Dec. 3. Jim Manion, received $25,000, and the four finalists each received $5,000.

A press release said, â€œBrian Wallace is honored for his tireless efforts to protect, restore, and strengthen Washoe ancestral homelands, community programs, youth programs, and tribal culture. The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California was removed from the heart of its homeland – the Lake Tahoe basin – during the 19th century gold rush, but it withstood extinction and continues to build strength. Wallace contributed by serving four four-year terms as tribal chairman, all while working to protect cultural and environmental resources at home and abroad through true innovation and a unique type of leadership. In 2002, Secretary of State Colin Powell nominated Wallace to serve on the U.N.

Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, and he has served in multiple leadership capacities associated with the environment, social services, child welfare, and cultural resource protection.â€

Other finalists include Janeen Comenote, Allen Pinkham Sr. and Patricia L. Whitefoot.