



LEGENDS OF ALASKA

THE FIRST OTTERS

If the people grew careless the otters would leave, never to return, and the people would face starvation.

Through thousands of years, the peoples of Alaska have come to know and respect the land and its creatures.

Legend tells us that the first pair of playful sea otters was created from an Aleut brother and sister. The otters kept some of their human ways. For instance, they would always wash their food carefully and they would not stay for long in a place that was not clean.

The people of the north came to depend on the otters not only for food and furs, but also as a sign that all was well with their environment. It became the responsibility of all the villagers to see that the herding grounds were kept in good order, which would appease the sleek little animals. But if the people grew careless the otters would leave, never to return, and the villagers would face starvation.

The sea otter legend illustrates the give-and-take relationship that is still the foundation of life in the North. That relationship commands respect, because the otters — like all of us — must have a clean and beautiful abiding place.



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