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California Indians and Their Environment: An Introduction. By Kent G. Lightfoot and Otis Parrish. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009. 270 pages. \$50.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

This long overdue book about California Indians offers a different perspective on a stereotypical perception that Native Americans who occupied the vast expanse of land in California lived a harmonious, simplistic hunter-gatherer lifestyle in a land of plenty. This is my opportunity to take a sneak preview of Kent Lightfoot and Otis Parrish's synthesis and offer my impressions, not from a teaching point of view, but from the perspective of a cultural resources practitioner. *California Indians and Their Environment* begins with a well-organized context that sets the stage for a section designed as a resource guide. The guide allows the reader to understand better the Native uses of plants, animals, and minerals within six geomorphic provinces (Northwest, Central and Southern Coasts, Northeast, Great Central Valley and Sierra, and Southern Deserts). Tucked between the context chapter and resource guide are twenty-nine pages of stunning photographic plates of plants and animals once, and now periodically, used by Native Californians.

Lightfoot and Parrish introduce the notion that California Indians not only relied on natural fires to assist in the management of their food, medicine, basketry materials, and other material culture but also were competent as fire managers (or pyrodiversity collectors). The Indians actually managed particular tracts of land to their advantage. The authors present the concept of "pyrodiversity economies," the main principle of which is "not to transform the natural world into a humanly constructive artifact, but rather to enhance the diversity, productivity, and availability of the wild resource base by complementing and working with ongoing natural ecological processes" (45).

The book clearly demonstrates the unique nature of California and its precontact populations. It offers interesting and provocative reading for the general public, scholar, and resource practitioner, pointing out that Native Californians faced many challenges when it came to how they interacted and managed resources during the late prehistoric period and prior to contact. Even though stereotypical images are still prevalent among the public, readers will gain a better, more in-depth appreciation of California Indian culture, which was unquestionably much more sophisticated than what we have been led to believe.

In their preface, Lightfoot and Parrish make clear that they were tackling the daunting task of updating Robert Heizer and Albert Elsasser's book, *The Natural World of the California Indians*. According to its authors, this 1980 work was designed to appeal to "any reader" interested in California Indian culture and to serve as a convenient survey of California Indian ethnography. I believe Heizer and Elsasser's book achieved its goals and presented an adequate descriptive overview of California Indian culture. In the current synthesis there is some reliance on data presented by Heizer and Elsasser, including the use of a few of their figures; however, the main theme of *California Indians and Their Environment* is based on more in-depth research from contemporary ethnographers, archaeologists, and others (ix).

The authors draw from recent contributions that bring to light advances both in archaeological method and theory and in the study of hunters and gatherers during California's prehistoric past and focused studies on cultural ecology and the application of fire management (for example, M. K. Anderson, *Southern Sierra Miwok Plant Resource Use and Management of the Yosemite Region* [master's thesis, 1988]; J. M. Erlandson, *Early Hunter-Gatherers of the California Coast* [1994]; T. Jones and K. A. Klar, eds., *California Prehistory: Colonization, Culture, and Complexity* [2007]; and E. Wohlgenuth, *The Course of Plant Food Intensification in Native Central California* [PhD diss., 2004]). In general, the book is well referenced, and those mentioned here are only meant to illustrate a sample of contemporary works (and new ideas) that explore topics such as sociopolitical organization and management of regional landscapes.

The context of this book is based upon eight chapters in part 1, "Rethinking California Indians." It is important, as the authors suggest, that one carefully read these chapters as a means of using the resource guide. The chapters have somewhat catchy titles but definitely contain substantive information that holds the reader's attention. Occasionally, the senior author provides a candid firsthand story to introduce his subject matter. I find this approach worthwhile as it typically encourages one to continue reading enthusiastically. As an example, in the first chapter, "Why California Indians Matter," Lightfoot begins by explaining that he is standing in front of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology (University of California Berkeley) with a group of undergraduate students. A student poses the "relevancy" question asking "what bearing does studying California Indians have for our lives in California today?" This sets the stage for other applicable and interesting firsthand experiences that are sprinkled throughout many sections of the book (a nice touch) and allows the authors to expound on the uniqueness of California, its inhabitants, and what makes them different from other complex hunter-gatherer groups (7).

Lightfoot and Parrish persistently remind the reader that Indians sought out and managed particular areas through the use of fire and other means in order to enhance the growth of economically viable plants and animals in local regions (20). The authors are careful to include the debate among ecologists and geographers with anthropologists, as the former believe that natural ecological processes (especially fire regimes) resulted in habitat diversity (93). We are also reminded that although California Indians were not avid agriculturalists (except for tobacco and other foods grown in the extreme northwest and Colorado Basin region), their use and management of natural wild plants and animal areas required a certain level of sophistication (or quasi-agricultural techniques [8]). It has been inferred that they were nurturing land managers who constructed anthropogenic landscapes through controlled burns, tillage, pruning, seed broadcasting, and weeding (for example, L. J. Bean and H. Lawton, *Some Explanations for the Rise of Cultural Complexity in Native California with Comments on Proto-Agriculture and Agriculture* [1976, 82]).

With the exception of stumbling across a few minor editorial mistakes, and being slightly uncomfortable flipping back and forth whenever an

asterisk appeared in part 3, "A Guide to California Indian Uses of Natural Resources," this book represents a special and useful contribution to the study of California Indians. The authors impart a synthesis to California's indigenous population that relies on new and thought-provoking research about how Native inhabitants interacted and managed their highly varied resource base in California, a landscape unparalleled to any other in North America. They provide examples of extant California Indian groups who actively work with public agencies in order to facilitate their quest to harvest and use wild foods and nonfood resources (for example, prescribed burns to augment bear grass habitats in northwest California: Six Rivers, Klamath, and Shasta-Trinity national forests [150]). Although not alluded to in the book, there are programs available to the public that allow firsthand observation and hands-on learning about how Indian communities such as the Karuk and Yurok of northwest California actively use burning and other measures to collect bear grass for basketry (for example, Following the Smoke, a cooperative program sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management and Six Rivers National Forest).

In California, we are taught that Native inhabitants relied on food staples such as deer, elk, salmon, and the acorn crop. *California Indians and Their Environment* does a good job explaining why this was not always the case for a variety of reasons, such as drought or El Niño (wet) years. The ethnohistoric literature certainly supports this notion (for example, C. Hart Merriam working with the Sierra Miwok in 1907 and noting that the black oak crop had failed in that year [unpublished field notes, 1907]). It further explains the stress factor of various Indian communities whenever their preferred food resources were impacted by natural disasters and down years. They postulate that pyrodiversity practices would lead to plant and animal diversification and minimize severe food shortages through storage, trade, and mass harvest when resources were plentiful. Such scenarios would have resulted in less stress on Indian communities.

The text sheds light on other food resources commonly sought out (complemented by the photographic plates and the resource guide) and managed by using controlled burning. In the 1980s during my research on Central and Northern Sierra Me-Wuk village geography, Me-Wuk elders (then in their eighties) pointed out many areas preferred for plant collecting. Although prescribed burning was not integral to these forays to favored collecting spots (typically within close proximity to where they lived), an emphasis was placed on other natural foods such as sour berry, black mushrooms, manzanita berries, wild grape, watercress, and wormwood (J. G. Maniery, *Six Mile and Murphys Rancherias: An Ethnohistorical and Archaeological Study of the Two Central Sierra Miwok Village Sites* [1987]; J. G. Maniery and D. Dutschke, "Northern Miwok at Big Bar: A Glimpse into the Lives of Pedro and Lily O'Connor" [*American Indian Quarterly*, 1989]). S. A. Barrett and E. W. Gifford, in their book *Miwok Material Culture* (1933), point out that Miwok controlled vegetation by burning off dry grass close to August in order to have better growth the following year. They also make a point of mentioning the frequency of natural fires in the Sierra in contrast to what measures Miwok

might have taken, if any, to prevent the spread of fire to trees. Lightfoot and Parrish add perspective to this question in their explanation of small, frequent, low-severity surface fires that would burn floor debris, grasses, and shrubs but minimize damage to the overstory (100).

Anthropology students and cultural-resource specialists interested and/or working in California should gain considerably from Lightfoot and Parrish's book. Although it offers a summary of California Indian culture found in other texts, its importance lies in the model of fire management. Basically, the model suggests that inhabitants actively worked to enhance the diversity and productivity of economically important plant and animal resources. Using a rotational system of prescribed burns, they created a patchwork of heterogeneous habitats containing plants of different stages of succession (36, 111).

Resource specialists who periodically find themselves excavating prehistoric sites in various parts of the state can and should apply some of the lessons brought forward in this new book: that is, a research perspective that Native life was not always a rosy picture of abundant acorns and deer; thus one might expect to find more diversity and persistence of varied plant remains in deposits (for example, Wolgemeuth [2004], which lends credence to the notion of Native Californians as fire managers). The authors have also demonstrated how combining research from multiple disciplines—ecology, ethnography, ethnohistory, and archaeology/paleoecology—has its advantages, a fact that students and practitioners easily should ascertain from the book.

Finally, *California Indians and Their Environment: An Introduction* definitely opens doors to understanding some of the dynamics that challenge decision makers in our society today. For example, the use of prescribed burning and effects of global warming are problematical areas for government; however, they are issues that Native Californians and their prehistoric predecessors certainly experienced through time. The authors offer further insight regarding the potential benefits of introducing some vestiges of Native habitats within contemporary farms, an alternative to modern industrial agribusinesses (148). Clearly, this new book articulates a fresh viewpoint that explains why studying California Indians and their unique roles as fire managers was and still is important.

James Gary Maniery

Par Environmental Services

Chiricahua Apache Enduring Power: Naiche's Puberty Ceremony Paintings.

By Trudy Griffin-Pierce with a foreword by J. Jefferson Reid. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006. 185 pages. \$75.00 cloth; \$32.95 paper.

This is a unique and amply illustrated little book combining personal quest, ethnographic expertise, artistic expertise, and historical background. *Chiricahua Apache Enduring Power* is theoretically informed in terms of contemporary anthropological views with a focus on agency, landscapes, resistance,