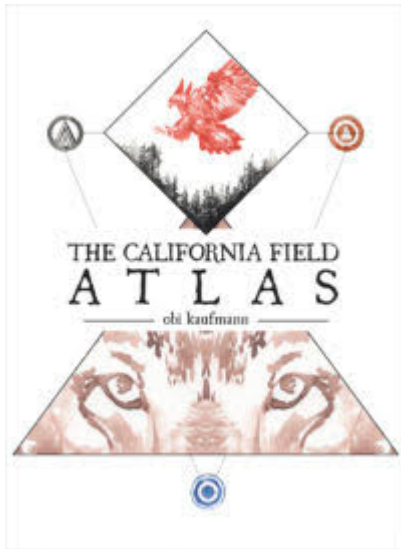


Book review: An inspired gift for Calif. nature lovers

By Kim Wyatt



“The California Field Atlas “

By Obi Kaufmann

Heyday, 552 pages, \$45

One-line review: Get lost in this singular, enchanting atlas of our golden state.

“This is a love story,” begins “The California Field Atlas,” and the instant I opened this enchanting book I was under its spell.

What is the purpose of an atlas? To help us find our way? In “The California Field Atlas,” painter, poet and philosopher Obi Kaufmann invites us to find our way around California by getting blissfully, beautifully lost in its pages. Once the book is in your hands, you’ll be hard-pressed to put it down.

Heyday Books makes exceptional books, and this is a

showstopper. More than 300 full-color maps and illustrations are detailed in the compact atlas, the result of California-born Kaufman's wide-ranging travels. Ten chapters are organized thematically and by ecosystem rather than north to south or any usual method. "Of Earth and Mountains," "Of Water and Rivers," and "Of Fire and Forests" are a few of the compelling sections. Attention is given to trail systems and natural features in more detail than roads. Included are maps of energy grids, snow levels and watersheds alongside watercolors of flora and fauna from golden eagle to gray whale. A large chapter deals entirely with each of the state's 58 counties, and I was surprised to find out something new about the place I was born. (For the readers of *Lake Tahoe News*, the features on the Sierra alone are worth the price of admission.)

Its unique key and map legends put you in the mind of the author, and encourage you to look at California in new ways. Without an index, you'll have to think about the state in broader terms, which begins to reveal a whole, California as "a single, integrative being composed of living patterns and ancient processes," as does Kaufmann. In the last chapter, "A Rewilded Future," Kaufmann lays out his conservation ethic in a way that will resonate with and inspire many.

Breathtaking and informative and one of a kind, this book will lead to fresh insights about the Golden State, promoting geographic literacy, historical understanding and perhaps, in turn, stewardship of this amazing place we call home.

The "California Field Atlas" would make an excellent gift. But buy two—you won't want to let it go.

Find out more about the author and the book at **here**. Order from Heydey Books **here**.

*Kim Wyatt is the owner of **Bona Fide Books** in Meyers.*