

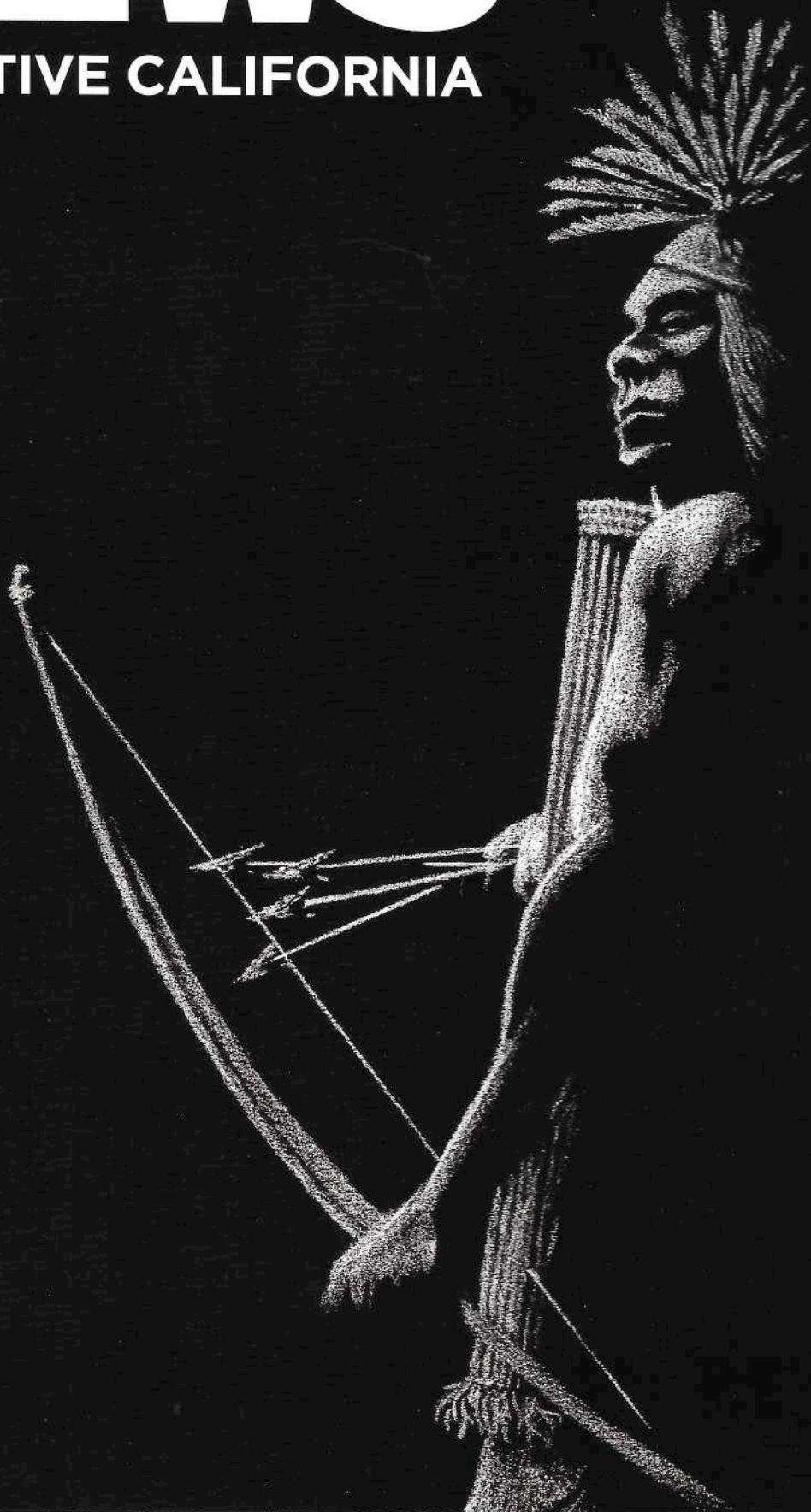
# NEWS

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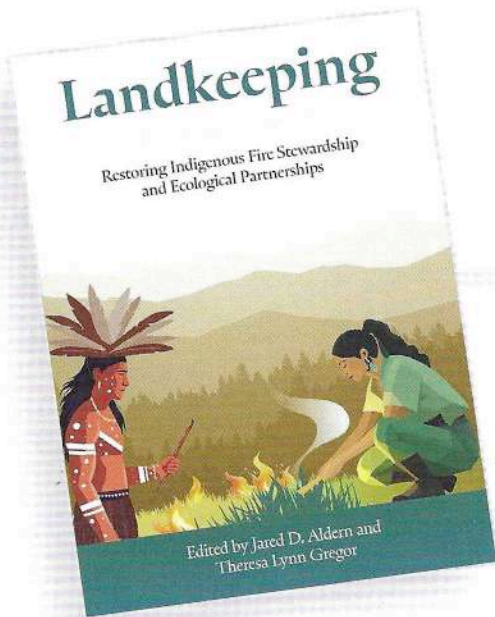
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## LANDKEEPING: RESTORING INDIGENOUS FIRE STEWARDSHIP AND ECOLOGICAL PARTNERSHIPS

*Edited by Jared D. Aldern and Theresa Lynn Gregor*

Oregon State University Press, 2026, 360 pp, \$34.95

*Reviewed by* **Jeanne Ferris**

**GENERATIONS OF GOVERNMENT FIRE SUPPRESSION AND FORCED REMOVALS** have disrupted Indigenous peoples' relationships with their lands and traditional stewardship, undermining vital cultural and ecological connections. In response to fire suppression, land dispossession, and marginalized Indigenous governance, editors Jared D. Aldern, a historian and veteran fire practitioner with over thirty years of experience, and Theresa Lynn Gregor, a Kumeyaay (Iipay Nation of Santa Isabel) and Yoéme scholar, produced this interdisciplinary anthology.

In their foreword, the editors explain that "landkeeping" means "care, attention, responsibility, and sovereignty." This anthology unites Indigenous fire practitioners, researchers, emergency and forest managers, and Tribal community members, who provide firsthand perspectives. While most chapters focus on California (including the border region and into Baja California), the collection also includes case studies and fire histories from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, New Mexico, New York, and Oregon. These examples clarify fire's role as both an ecological agent and a sustaining force on Indigenous homelands.

The volume is organized thematically. Part I, "Rematriating Fire," opens with viewpoints from Indigenous elders. Margo Robbins, a Yurok citizen, is cofounder and executive director of the Cultural Fire Management Council and a key Culture Burn Training Exchange (TREX) planner. She emphasizes that Native women are reclaiming cultural fire through matrilineal governance and caretaking.

Part II, "The History of Indigenous Fire Practices," examines what "good fire" means for First Peoples and traces the resilience of Indigenous fire stewardship. Today, the National Park Service and other organizations acknowledge such practices as Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).

Part III, "Pyropraxis, Stewardship, and Ecocultural Legacies," shows fire governance's ties to spiritual responsibility and cultural continuity. Pyropraxis frames understandings of Indigenous fire practices.

Altogether, the fourteen chapters highlight that fire belongs within TEK systems, governance, and the spiritual realities of Indigenous communities. The central theme is that Indigenous people view fire as a family relation, not merely an external force to be controlled. Each chapter includes numerous citations—123 in Part III alone. Throughout, the book features thirty-eight photos, four charts, and eight maps, enriching the reader's comprehension of ecocultural legacies. The book also provides a glossary and bios for the Native contributors.

Indigenous oral traditions and practices are recognized as vital for fire stewardship and fostering a balanced ecological future. For non-Indigenous allies, partners, and researchers in ecology, natural resource management, forestry, ethnobotany, or Native American studies, *Landkeeping* serves as a well-referenced handbook.

Though the book expresses hope in these approaches, it also outlines challenges faced by Indigenous fire practitioners. The key message: collaboration between Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous allies is essential for cultural revitalization, land protection, and healthy environments for future generations.