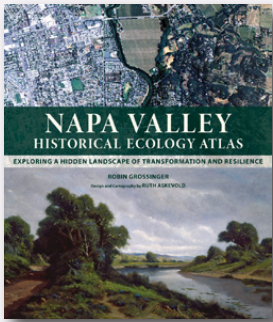


book, as well. The authors need to be commended on their thoroughness, beautiful attention to detail, and the passion they display toward the subject matter.

On the other hand, this book is certain to have a limited market. For armchair map lovers, this book's focus on double-hemispheric maps is overkill. The images all begin to look the same. In fact, some of the images do show the same maps, just as different print versions with

slightly varied coloration. From an academic standpoint, aside from the first several chapters' historical reviews, there is a dearth of new knowledge to be gleaned. The book is absolutely packed full of excellent data and information about double-hemispheric maps, but it never quite packages this data into takeaway nuggets of knowledge. And to be fair, the book never says it will do this. However, acting primarily as a detailed repository does, unfortunately, limit its marketability both to the public and academics.

## NAPA VALLEY HISTORICAL ECOLOGY ATLAS: EXPLORING A HIDDEN LANDSCAPE OF TRANSFORMATION AND RESILIENCE



By Robin Grossinger, design and cartography by Ruth Askevold.

University of California Press, 2012.

223 pages, maps, illustrations.  
\$39.95, hardcover.

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**Review by:** Lisa Sutton

The *Napa Valley Historical Ecology Atlas* is a beautiful book, richly illustrated with maps and historical photographs of the Napa Valley. Divided into eight chapters, the first looks at the Napa Valley through time, while the next six chapters each take on an ecological component of the Valley: Oak Savannas, Wildflower Fields, Creeks, Valley Wetlands, the Napa River, and Tidal Marshlands. The book concludes with chapters on Landscape Transformation and Resilience, and Landscape Tours, offering a forward-looking view of where the Valley is going from here, and how to see and enjoy this place.

The book begins with an introduction to historical ecology and some of the inherent challenges in exploring past ecologies and landscapes. It then moves on to discuss how the Napa Valley is situated within a geographical, geological, and climatic context. Several maps and diagrams are provided to illustrate the geology, drainage, and natural history of the region. A map reconstructing the habitats and environments that would have been found in the Napa Valley in the early 1800s is provided, as well as an interesting explanation of how the authors used the source data that they had to create this map. A timeline of the data sources used in the book, ranging from Mexican land-grant sketches and diaries from the early 1800s to modern

aerial photography and soil surveys, provides a nice overview of the range of data that informed this synthesis.

Each of the sections on an individual aspect of the ecology of the Valley discusses its particular characteristics and spatial patterns, as well as its cultural significance. A discussion of the loss of oak savannas and historical evidence for where they would have been found concludes with a look at where oaks have persisted and a possible plan for “re-oaking” the Valley to include these trees within the modern landscape. The chapter on creeks examines the unique conditions of water in the Valley and human impacts over time on its many creeks, as well as the roles they continue to play today. The chapter on Valley Wetlands explores the characteristics of the several varieties of wetlands found in the Napa Valley, then looks at changes to the overall wetland landscape, including a nice map comparing the historical and contemporary extents of wetlands. The Napa River, as the central component of the Napa Valley, merits the longest chapter. Parts of the historical river are explored, as well as ways in which the river has changed or been changed, and the ecology of the river in the past and present. The tidal marshlands make up the last main section of the Valley, with a discussion of their characteristics, the dredging and reclamation they have undergone, and recent restoration efforts as well as the effects of sea level rise.

The chapter entitled “Landscape Transformation and Resilience” includes a set of maps that compare the habitat types and land uses in the early 1800s and in 2010, and which show the changes that have taken place in Napa Valley. It also discusses how the historical landscape perspective can allow people to better understand the context of the land and make more conscious choices about how

to plan land use. Finally, the section on landscape tours divides the Valley into four sections and provides a guide to characteristic locations within each, complete with maps (modern aerial photography overlaid with ecological types and modern streets) and driving directions.

The landscape tours allow the reader to actually step into the landscapes being described (assuming one lives near or is making a visit to the Napa Valley), and provide a tangible way of engaging with the stories that have been told about these areas. As an ecologist, I appreciated the list of common and scientific names of the plant and animal species found in the Napa Valley that is included at the end of the book. An extensive bibliography also provides plenty of supplemental resources to readers who wish to explore any aspect of the book more deeply.

This is a well-researched and well-documented book, which provides a loving portrait of an area the author clearly knows well. The combination of an abundance of historical illustrations and diagrams to illustrate ecological and geographical processes works well to create a visually appealing and accessible book. The author's focus on ways that knowledge of the historical landscape patterns can aid in restoration efforts makes this a hopeful and forward-looking story, rather than simply a story of lost landscapes. Even those who are not familiar with the Napa Valley will find themselves drawn in to the fascinating story told here. Both the casual reader and the more highly trained ecologist or geographer will find this book interesting and engaging.