



“Radiant Lands”

Medium: Digitally illustrated photograph

KELLY REDFEARN KINDER

Kelly Redfearn Kinder is a Yurok artist whose work is sourced from personal navigation of the physical and cultural boundaries of natural landscapes, documented through photographs and drawings. Her artwork makes visible the hidden landscape of governance, and brings into question the definitions of stewardship, conservation, and preservation, and the authorities that determine those boundaries.

In the bordering desert between Nevada and California are two solar power plants—in Tonopah, Nevada, and Ivanpah, California. Their tall collection towers radiate captured solar energy as intense pillars of light that can be seen for hundreds of miles. “Radiant Lands” is imagined as a third solar tower at the midpoint of those two structures, forged of traditional Indigenous knowledge and representing a future of sustainable technologies. This photo was taken in Death Valley National Park and augmented to reflect on selective protection of landscapes and ongoing dialogues around clean energy technology, land use, and Indigenous sovereignty. Here, Indigenous wisdom is represented by a basketry pattern, called *hlkwerterkws-chewes*, “frog’s hand,” in the Yurok language, integrated both physically and conceptually into the landscape. This weaving pattern is a shared cultural motif among many Tribes in California. It embodies the shared cultural responsibility among Indigenous Peoples, both to our own ancestral territories of which we are knowledgeable, and to the global ecosystem of which we are all a part.

Indigenous land stewardship is based on practices that go back for millennia, but formal co-stewardship alongside existing governmental bodies is a contemporary process that is still being written. “Radiant Lands” imagines a reality of co-management that integrates ancient Indigenous wisdom into a future that we make with our own hands.

Ed. note: “Radiant Lands” is featured on the cover of this issue of Parks Stewardship Forum.

