

Book Review

Torrey Pines: Landscape and Legacy by Bill Evarts, 1994. 86 pages. Torrey Pines Association, La Jolla, California. Cloth (ISBN 0-9629917-1-6) \$27.95. Paper (ISBN 0-9629917-2-4) \$17.95.

This marvelous book, produced by Cachuma Press, the publisher of Oaks of California (an equally beautiful book), features the rarest pine species in the world, *Pinus torreyana*. Torrey Pines are found only in the Torrey Pines State Reserve near Del Mar and on Santa Rosa Island. It has been estimated that the entire species is represented by no more than 10,000 trees, which is the basis for ranking this as the rarest of pine species.

Bill Evarts is a self-taught nature photographer who apparently has put his heart and soul into this, his first book. It took him seven years to put it together, but the product is an exquisite photographic essay. Essentially this is a picture book, although the text, while limited in scope, is accurate and informative.

In the Preface, Bill Evarts credits naturalist Guy Fleming for activating his interest, while he was a child, in the enchanted place called Torrey Pines State Reserve. The reserve, rather than the tree, is the major subject of the book, although, Mr. Evarts also documents the life history of the Torrey Pine.

There are four chapters. Chapter One: "Sparing the Tree", documents the discovery of the species and the decades-long battle to save the site from development. Chapter Two: "A Spirit Captured", is a description of the species and a review of the hypotheses for the unique distribution of the species. Chapter Three: "Itself, Alone, Unimitated", describes the climate, plant communities, and archeology of the reserve. Chapter Four: "Whose Heritage It Is," discusses various philosophies of preservation, including controversies over grazing and fire ecology. In the Afterword, John Shelton of the Torrey Pines Association summarizes an important aspect of this type of book. He states "Never before has so much of the essence of Torrey Pines been captured between the covers of a single volume. We come away realizing that, by force of circumstances, we are custodians of one of the rarest remnants of natural open space in the world. And that, unlike Yosemite or the Grand Canyon whose principal assets are carved in enduring stone, Torrey Pines is fragile within and vulnerable from without. The implications are clear."

Pick up a copy of this book. Thumb through its pages, enjoying its exquisite photographs, and be ever-thankful that we live in California, one of the most beautiful places on earth.

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