



River of Contrasts: The Texas Colorado (River Books, Sponsored by The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, Texa)

Margie Crisp

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Writer and artist Margie Crisp has traveled the length of Texas' Colorado River, which rises in Dawson County, south of Lubbock, and flows 860 miles southeast across the state to its mouth on the Gulf of Mexico at Matagorda Bay. Echoing the truth of Heraclitus's ancient dictum, the river's character changes dramatically from its dusty headwaters on the High Plains to its meandering presence on the coastal prairie. The Colorado is the longest river with both its source and its mouth in Texas, and its water, from beginning to end, provides for the state's agricultural, municipal, and recreational needs.

As Crisp notes, the Colorado River is perhaps most frequently associated with its middle reaches in the Hill Country, where it has been dammed to create the six reservoirs known as the Highland Lakes. Following Crisp as she explores the river, sometimes with her fisherman husband, readers meet the river's denizens—animal, plant, and human—and learn something about the natural history, the politics, and those who influence the fate of the river and the water it carries.

Those who live intimately with the natural landscape inevitably formulate emotional responses to their surroundings, and the people living on or near the Colorado River are no exception. Crisp's own loving tribute to the river and its inhabitants is enhanced by the exquisite art she has created for this book. Her photographs and maps round out the useful and beautiful accompaniments to this thoughtful portrait of one of Texas' most beloved rivers.

Book website: www.coloradorivertx.com

Book blog: riverofcontrasts.wordpress.com

Author website: www.margiecrisp.com

Former first lady Laura Bush unveils this year's Texas Book Festival poster designed by artist Margie Crisp, author of River of Contrasts: The Texas Colorado. The poster features cliff swallows flying over the Colorado River.

Photo by Grant Miller

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