

BOOK REVIEW

ED CROWELL. 2019. **Barton Creek**. (ISBN-13: 978-1-62349-729-3, flexbind with flaps). Texas A&M University Press, John H. Lindsey Building, Lewis St., 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.tamupress.com). \$27.00 US, 140 pp., 63 color, 4 b&w photos, map, bibliography, index, 9" × 10".

From the Publisher:—While Barton Springs Pool is an iconic landmark of Austin and many people are familiar with the end of Barton Creek and its seven miles of public greenbelt, less is known about the forty-odd miles beyond that tumble and twist across private lands, eventually feeding the Colorado River. Legendary fights saved Barton Springs in the 1980s and 1990s, when the pool repeatedly was closed because of pollutant runoff from streets, nearby construction, and leaking sewer lines. In 1992, a highly publicized campaign resulted in land protections and stricter water standards.

But will the creek and its springs become fouled again? That possibility arises upstream where tributaries and other creeks flow across mostly rural acreage, attracting new housing and business developments. Not only would city bathers lose access to the pool, but endangered species of salamanders and birds that depend on the Edwards Aquifer and its unique habitats face an uncertain future.

Following the creek from downtown Austin's Barton Springs Pool to its source as a cow-pasture trickle, longtime resident and journalist Ed Crowell explores the creek's contentious political history, its historic and current residents, and the mounting environmental pressures threatening it. *Barton Creek* highlights the passionate individuals involved in the stream's preservation, from city scientists to local landowners, who want to see the creek running clear and clean for future generations. Striking photography and vivid description will entice readers to fall in love with Barton Creek all over again.

ED CROWELL is an award-winning journalist and freelance writer. During his tenure at the *Austin American-Statesman*, he served as city editor, state editor, and features editor. He is coauthor of *Barefoot Pirate: The Tall Ships and Tales of Windjammer*, and he resides in Austin.

Barton Creek by Ed Crowell, is an ethnographic map of a body of water that flows across North Central Texas and eventually empties through stunning waterfalls into the Colorado River, by the city of Austin. A foreword by Andrew Sansom, the executive director of the Meadows Center for Water and Environment, sets the tone of the human account of connection to nature, conservation efforts, and heroic battle for the conservation of natural life in Texas. The author accounts through first person story telling the tumultuous past of Barton Creek. In twelve idyllic chapters, Crowell presents the story of industrialization and human apathy towards natural ecosystems to a change in perspective and redemption of a city in the eyes of the world. The book contains stunning photographs of the natural landscape of Barton Creek and its tributaries, the people involved in the conservation efforts of the creek, highlights of endangered species and accounts of their conservation efforts, and the redemption of the city of Austin after a long fought, tumultuous battle for preserving its surrounding nature. Overall, the writing style is descriptive, contains many personal accounts and historical records, and presents a well-crafted narrative arc from failure to prevailing in spite of the harsher natures of human greed. It is a brief and enticing example of conservation efforts in Texas, and highlights how people have the power to transform their surrounding and live harmoniously in nature. The author should be celebrated for presenting a redemptive story of humans and nature, particularly in retrospect to the current political climate.—*Farahnoz N. Khojajori, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.*