



River in Ruin: The Story of the Carmel River

Ray A. March

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The thin ribbon of the Carmel River is just thirty-six miles long and no wider in most places than a child can throw a stone. It is the primary water supply for the ever-burgeoning presence of tourists, agriculture, and industry on California's Monterey Peninsula. It is also one of the top ten endangered rivers in North America. The river's story, which dramatically unfolds in this book, is an epic tale of exploitation, development, and often unwitting degradation reaching back to the first appearance of Europeans on the pristine peninsula.

River in Ruin is a precise weaving of water history—local and larger—and a natural, social, and environmental narrative of the Carmel River. Ray A. March traces the river's misuse from 1879 and details how ever more successful promotions of Monterey demanded more and more water, leading to one dam after another. As a result the river was disastrously depleted, cluttered with concrete rubble, and inhospitable to the fish prized by visitors and residents alike.

March's book is a cautionary tale about squandering precious water resources—about the ultimate cost of a ruined river and the slim but urgent hope of bringing it back to life.



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Frank Johnson:

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