

# GLOBAL HOMESTEAD



UPDATE - SUMMER 2008

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Brian Francoise  
Connie Malamed

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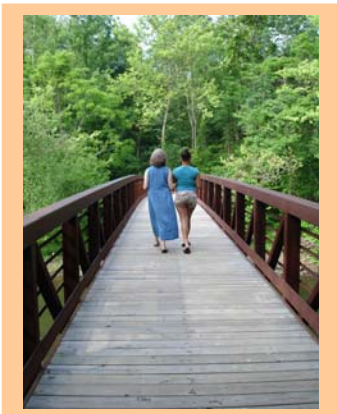
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## An Invitation

In these pages you will find an expanded format for our newsletter as well as an invitation to reach for our common goals in a variety of ways. Besides the usual appeal for financial support—which this definitely is—we invite you to:

- interact with some of the resources we will be presenting
- tell us how we may coordinate with other like-minded efforts
- volunteer with Global Homestead as a member of our board or in another capacity
- offer thoughtful guidance as to strategies you suggest we employ to bring about the just and welcoming world that we envision together.

Please let us hear from you via a note along with your check, a call, or an email. We want to make this a dialogue!

Over the next several months, Global Homestead will issue Updates spotlighting a particular community in the region of our headquarters as a part of the development of our “Mountain Missive” project. The project will culminate in the development and touring of a performance work that weaves together contemporary voices navigating the preservation of identity and community in a sometimes hostile cultural and economic climate.

Several of us recently accompanied board president Betty Ellzey and daughter Cathy on a 3-day trip to southern West Virginia to learn more about the coal industry and the communities it surrounds. We were fortunate to connect with Coal River Mountain Watch, a grassroots activist organization. We came away from the meeting better informed and inspired to learn more and share information about the impact of mountaintop removal on the local economy, environment, and communities. Our visit to the Marsh Fork Elementary School site (highlighted on page 3) allowed us to witness firsthand the dangers posed to these children and teachers from the seeping of sludge and the coal silo in such close proximity to the school grounds.

We urge you to return the enclosed SASE with a contribution to Global Homestead today, and assure you that the next several Updates you receive will appear in a more streamlined format and contain no such expensive support materials. We ask that you read what we send, distribute as you see fit, and join us in these projects as your time and skills allow. Your contribution to Global Homestead, Inc. is fully tax-deductible. Please let us hear from you!

# Global Homestead Spotlight:

## Coal River Mountain Watch

Although mention of the coal industry often conjures images of subterranean tunnels, in fact, mountaintop removal mining is a growing method of surface mining. Mountaintop removal, unlike underground mining, blasts away the tops of mountains, exposing lines of coal that are then harvested from the surface. The debris from the blasting is disposed of in the valleys, permanently altering the once-mountainous region. There is great controversy surrounding the issue of mountaintop removal: while this mining method provides one of the few employment opportunities in southern West Virginia paying more than minimum wage, the detrimental impact on the local environment, economy, and human health and communities is enormous.

Coal River Mountain Watch is a grassroots organization begun in 1998 in response to the fear and frustration of people living near or downstream from huge mountaintop removal sites. The mission of CRMW is to stop the

destruction of our communities and environment by mountaintop removal mining, to improve the quality of life in our area and to help rebuild sustainable communities. The information maintained on CRMW's website ([www.crmw.net](http://www.crmw.net)) offers a compelling exposition of their mission and actions, some of which is presented in these pages.

Economy: Coal industry employment has sharply decreased as a result of the mechanization involved with mountaintop removal coal mining. In 1950, West Virginia coal mines employed 143,000 miners; by 2002, that number was down to 13,653. Although coal production rose 32 percent between 1987 and 1997, mining jobs dropped 29 percent during that same period.

As more coal is produced in mountaintop removal strip mining, the number of coal mine workers decreases. Coal River Mountain Watch is proposing wind power as an alternative energy source. Wind farms would create jobs: 200 local jobs during the construction of the farm and 50 permanent local jobs during the life of the wind farm. It takes only 27 years for a wind farm to provide a greater number of one year jobs than the four surface mines combined. It would also allow for concurrent uses of the mountain including harvesting of wild ginseng and valuable forest plants, sustainable forestry, and mountain tourism.

Environment: The forests of southern Appalachia are the most biodiverse temperate forests in the world and are some of the best forest habitat in the United States. Over 400,000 acres of this mountainous terrain has been blasted into moonscape by mountaintop removal coal mining and over 1,200 miles of streams buried. On October 11, 2000, in the what the EPA called the worst environmental disaster ever in the South East, an impoundment near Inez, KY failed, spilling 250 million gallons of slurry and waste-water (more than 20 times the amount of oil lost by the Exxon Valdez in the nation's worst oil tanker spill). The spill killed all aquatic life in more than 70 miles of West Virginia and Kentucky streams. Flooding has increased dramatically in areas around mountaintop removal sites due to the hard and barren surfaces, resulting in water rushing down to the valleys leaving hundreds dead and thousands homeless. Forty-five other impoundments in West Virginia are considered at high risk for failure, and 32 are at moderate risk. While the land cleared for mountaintop removal is



### What you can do:

- Educate yourself and your community about the effects of mountaintop removal by viewing resources listed on the following page
- Enter your zip code into the homepage of CRMW ([www.crmw.net](http://www.crmw.net)) to see if your electricity is derived from coal harvested by mountaintop removal.
- Visit [www.globalhomestead.org](http://www.globalhomestead.org) for a downloadable flyer with this information to distribute in your community.
- Conserve energy! The less electricity you use, the less coal gets burned.
- Join the Coal River Mountain Watch action network and find out about local actions you can participate in.

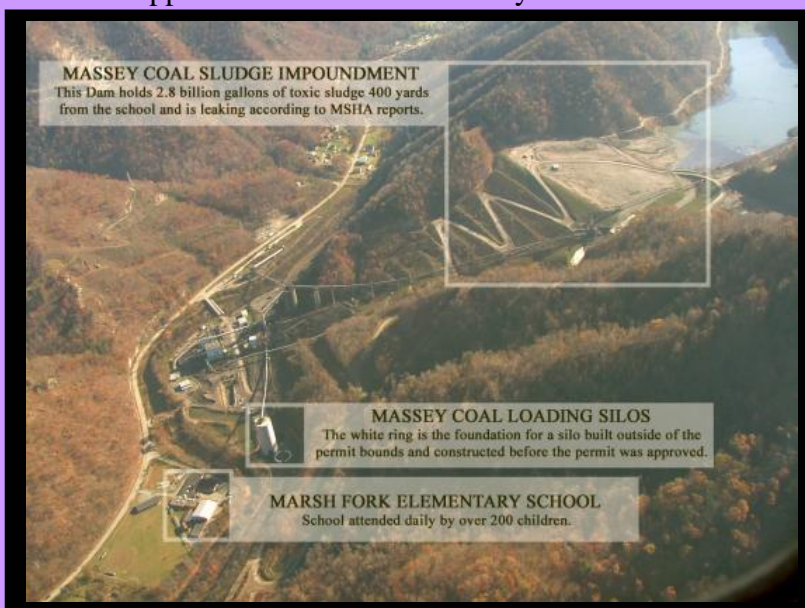
purported to be reclaimed equal to or better than it was prior to mining, current reclamation practices are converting these forests into grasslands, which may significantly impact neotropical bird populations and other sensitive species if left unchanged. Additionally, while in the original mining permit application companies are required to include specific details which demonstrate that the land can and will be put to some productive use (such as recreational, commercial, agricultural, etc.), a number of mountaintop removal permits have been approved which included no specific details about post-mining land use.

**Communities:** As a result of the nation's demand for cheap, low-sulfur coal--the kind found in Appalachia--residents in the small mountain communities are losing nothing less than their entire way of life. Many small towns are losing their populations and economies because of the negative effects that mountaintop removal mining has on jobs and the environment. In many instances, citizens are being forced to abandon their family lands due to the intense water pollution and the danger of living in the vicinity of the blasting. Property values plummet from communities near mining sites leaving life long residents no option but to sell to the coal companies or live with the continual blasting from 24 hour a day mining operations. A paper published by H.L. Snyder, a Charleston

### CRMW in Action: Marsh Fork Elementary School

Marsh Fork Elementary School is located in the Coal River Valley of West Virginia. Goals Coal, a Massey Energy subsidiary, owns and operates a coal processing plant and a massive toxic waste storage facility (sludge dam) near the school. This seeping dam sits 400 yards from the school, and a coal silo ominously looms 150 feet from school grounds. This silo loads powdered coal onto trains and sprays it with a chemical binding agent. Another Massey subsidiary, Independence Coal, operates a 1,849-acre surface strip mining operation above and around the school and dam.

When parents alerted the group to their children's health problems, CRMW began to approach and alert a number of government agencies. Members of the group took action to support Marsh Fork Elementary children and to show that this problem is



one of the many devastating impacts mountaintop removal has on Appalachian communities.

For a complete list of the events surrounding the fight to make Marsh Fork Elementary School safe, visit [www.crmw.net/page.php?id=3](http://www.crmw.net/page.php?id=3).

lawyer who represents mainly energy and land companies, actually suggests massive relocation of West Virginia residents who have lived here for generations as a solution to the problem of these deleterious effects of the mountaintop removal. Mountaintop removal strip mines regularly set blasts with 10 to 100 times the force of the Oklahoma City bombing. These blasts shake and crack homes, destroy wells and roll huge rocks into peoples' yards and public roads. Mines have blasted rocks and debris into homes and cars, making it dangerous in some areas for people to work in their yards or allow children to wait outside for the school bus.

### Resources for further information:

- Global Homestead, Inc., Washington County, MD: [www.globalhomestead.org](http://www.globalhomestead.org), (301) 834-9291
- Coal River Mountain Watch, Whitesville, WV: [www.crmw.net](http://www.crmw.net), (304) 854-2182
- Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, Huntington, WV: [www.ohvec.org](http://www.ohvec.org), (304) 522-0246
- Mountain Justice Summer: [www.mountainjusticesummer.org](http://www.mountainjusticesummer.org)
- Christians for the Mountains, Dunmore, WV: [www.christiansforthemountains.org](http://www.christiansforthemountains.org), (304) 799-4137
- Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment, Lewisburg, WV: [www.appalachian-center.org](http://www.appalachian-center.org), (304) 645-9006

# Updraft Update

**Updraft: a conspiracy of movement** will be expanding performance prospects by attending the annual Performing Arts Exchange in September, this year taking place in Atlanta. This will be Updraft's third year attending the PAE, and the group looks forward to new performance opportunities and creative contacts.

The company will soon acquire a new piece of equipment--the lyra, or aerial hoop. This suspended steel ring will add new movement and choreographic capability to Updraft's future work.

Updraft has a line-up of performances scheduled for this fall, including a concert at the Folly in Shepherdstown on September 19 and 20, a benefit performance at Frederick's Evening on the Riviera on October 10, and a studio showcase at Slipperyslope on November 22 and 23. Information is available on our website: [www.globalhomestead.org](http://www.globalhomestead.org).

And last but certainly not least, on June 2, Wyatt James was born to Kerianne Hinerman and Mike Tolker. After a pre-natal performance in December, Wyatt is eager to finally begin his aerial training outside the uterus, and Updraft company members are thrilled to have Kerianne back in the studio and onstage again.



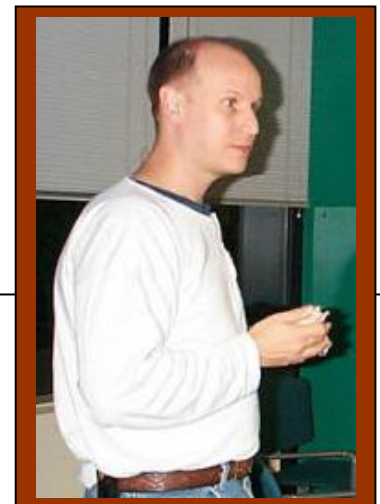
## Your Gift

Your contribution to Global Homestead, Inc. is fully tax-deductible and may be earmarked toward a specific project or program, or to support the organization in general. Make checks payable to Global Homestead, Inc., and send them to 1233 Hoffmaster Road, Knoxville, MD 21758. Many thanks!

## Global Homestead Welcomes Brian Francoise

Global Homestead is pleased to welcome a new member to its board, Brian Francoise. Brian is a professional actor, a theater professor at Goucher College, a teaching artist, and co-founder of Theatre Action Group (TAG), a collective of citizen artists empowered with the language of theater to promote dialogue, encourage social action, and build community. You can learn more about Brian and his work by visiting his website: [www.communityperformance.org/teaching/3001](http://www.communityperformance.org/teaching/3001).

If you know of someone who may be interested in supporting Global Homestead as a board member, please contact us. We are especially seeking those with fundraising or legal skills, but are open to other skills and abilities. Let us know whatcha got.



[www.globalhomestead.org](http://www.globalhomestead.org)