

THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE

BY LEE TEMPLE; CRESTONE, COLORADO

A sense of place is the sixth sense, an internal compass and map made by memory and spatial perception together. —Rebecca Solnit

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LAST NIGHT I WENT WALKING in the full-moon's light, under a cloudless, starry sky. Earth slept silently, wrapped in Her holiday snowshawl, and I could just barely see Mount Antonito a hundred miles to the south – some simple joys of high-desert living in southern Colorado's Delaware-sized San Luis Valley. Here, winter's dead stillness invites reflection, contemplation and blessing-counting. Crunching through the snow, I pondered mysterious traits of the Earth-healing *zeitgeist*: like its' overwhelming time/effort/money-intensiveness, and its' unpredictable manifestation, on its' on terms, in miraculous, grace-filled ways.

Here's an example: Several years ago, in preparation for a sustainability conference I coordinated, we asked the Crestone Charter School (CCS) to help calculate Crestone's carbon footprint. Enthusiastically, the students started sleuthing. Though we've long been branded a spiritual and sustainability Mecca, they discovered we weren't yet walking our talk: Crestone's 1100+/- souls emitted some 37 million lbs/CO2/year (91 lbs/person/day), used over half a mile of railroad coal cars, a mile's worth of propane trucks, 1.5 million pounds of mostly trucked-in food, and generated just as much trucked-out landfill garbage. What a wake-up-call!

Like many other communities, we started re-localizing. CCS began prioritizing environmental consciousness/sustainability, subsequently

master-planning for carbon-neutrality on their new campus. Astonishingly, they applied for and *actually landed* a \$6+ million BEST grant to build it. I joined other stakeholders/representatives in the design process, pushing the funding/construction system envelope ever greener – against unanticipated resistance, budgetary concerns, etc. It's looking pretty good right now. Soon, instead of a piecemeal sustainability pedagogy, our kids will *grow up* within CCS's environmentally-healing paradigm. Hallelujah!



Challenger Peak



Moon/Mountains



CCS rising!

Walking through the frozen wilderness, I imagined the different world our children will inherit, equipped and benefitted by their new school. Joining coyotes on nearby mountains, I howled at the moon, grateful to Spirit for our amazing grace. It's not perfect of course, but then, perfection-seeking often discounts Spirit's precious presence in the real. It's rather just a particularly beautiful shade of green, one of the many messy, creative ways people/places/things embody and repair their *genius loci*, all such worthy efforts laboriously uniting, albeit reluctantly now, to birth an Earth-healed future.



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This article was entirely written and e-published on carbon-neutral solar power. Learn how you and your network can be a stronger part of the global climate solution at primamundi.com.