

Journal #2654 from sdc 8.10.12

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The Great Drought: Agruculture, a Harbinger of America's Future
[Raymond J. Learsy, Author, 'Oil and Finance: The Epic Corruption Continues'](#)
Posted: 08/06/2012

The bold headline on the front page of the *Financial Times* some two weeks ago, "US Drought Triggers World Food Crisis Alert," reported that the worst U.S. drought in fifty years was pushing agricultural commodities to record prices. The situation has only become aggravated over the past two critical weeks.

Accentuating the growing emergency, the *Wall Street Journal* was to [inform](#) us on August 2nd that "Drought Dries Up Cattle Market," explaining that faced with seared grazing pastures ranchers across the U.S. who can't afford to provide food and water to feed steers and heifers and are rushing to sell them while feedlots are holding back purchases because of the escalating price of feed corn.

Clearly, a disaster in the making. A disaster not only for food prices in the American market, but portending a food crisis worldwide. It is an act of nature that has unsheathed a fact of fundamental significance, but barely touched upon in either political nor civil discourse. That the United States, with its vast expanse of fertile plains reaching from sea, past the Rockies, to sea, with its efficient inland waterways transport system, with its competent and professional farming community, has become, as the world's largest grower and exporter of corn, the largest exporter of wheat and the second largest exporter of soybeans, in other words, the world's food basket. It is a realization that will vest the nation with future choices of vast import and profoundly touch upon its character.

As if to underline the dimensions of responsibility that will be vested in the U.S. in this rapidly technologically flattening world, with its burgeoning population necessitating the doubling of food production by 2050, an event took place in Cambodia that may well set the parameters of

future discourse on this vital issue.

Just last month Cambodia announced it would push for the formation of a Milled Rice Exporting Association together with Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Myanmar. Cambodia's Minister of Commerce Cham Prasdih was quoted, "The five countries will be the world's food supplier -- what we could call the food basket of the world." Cambodia's Prime Minister Hu Sen would [chime in](#), "when we form the association we would have enough power to negotiate with OPEC."

Well, clearly what is good enough for a helping of Goose and rice should be good enough for a helping of Gander and corn, or soybeans, or wheat, or meatballs. Inevitably this is the direction we are veering as the world's population grows and a planetary crisis in food looms ahead. Not only will billions of dollars be at stake, but the very lives of millions of the planet's inhabitants.

How will we engage this responsibility? Will we join forces with other major grain producers such as Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Ukraine to form a Grain Growers Export Association (let's call it the GGEA) and pervert the market as OPEC has done with oil, whereby we would play the role that Saudi Arabia plays in OPEC, as the major and indispensable contributor to the cartel.

Will we permit the continuation of unbridled commodity speculation on our poorly supervised commodity exchanges to traders/speculators/gamblers who are free to hype the pricing of foodstuffs to levels grossly out of reach of the everyday consumer, let alone the offshore markets that have become dependent on America's harvest bounty. Just days ago the FT reported that "Trading Houses Bet Corn Price to Soar," "that traders and hedge funds are betting that corn prices will soar to never before seen levels as the worst US drought in half a century decimates the global corn crop... The number of call options that would give traders the right to buy corn at prices between \$9 and \$10 has risen thirteen fold in the past month."

Can we, in the future, permit the trading houses, the Bank Holding Company trading desks, and the vast plurality of gambling profiteers playing the grain markets who are neither farmers nor commercial consumers, to push prices ever higher to their own profit and benefit at the cost of consumers worldwide thereby becoming the arbiters of those who have access to food and those who do not?

These are serious issues of economic resonance, morality, and national conduct with worldwide implications. Given the devastation that this year's drought has brought about, this is a wake-up call that needs be addressed.

[Extreme summer heat linked to climate change, scientists say](#)

Neela Banerjee, Los Angeles Times

Exceedingly high summer temperatures, longer summers and related catastrophes, such as wildfire and drought, are poised to be the norm, and they are driven by climate change, according to a new research paper published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Midwest Fish Kills Exacerbated By Record Heat AUDIE CORNISH, NPR

This summer, extreme heat and drought have brought on larger than normal "fish kills" throughout the Midwest. Fish are dying by the tens of thousands. All Things Considered host Audie Cornish speaks with Aaron Woldt, Fisheries Program Supervisor for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Midwestern Region, about what's happening in these waters.

Man wants to farm shellfish in federal waters Associated Press

A Southern California entrepreneur already has a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provision permit to harvest a million pounds of mussels and oysters from an underwater shellfish farm nearly five miles offshore. The project, described as a milestone in aquaculture, now needs California Coastal Commission approval.

NV IMPACT: We Can't Wait: Obama Administration Announces Seven Major Renewable Energy Infrastructure Projects that Would Power 1.5 million Homes to be Expedited **Date:** Aug 7, 2012 6:50 AM

Moapa Solar Energy Center (RES Americas) State: NV

*Coordinating Agency: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Target date for completing Federal permit and review decisions: December 2013*

This solar project is being developed in cooperation with the Moapa Band of Paiute Indians on a 2,000 acre site on the Moapa River Indian Reservation and on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Clark County, Nevada. If approved, the 200 MW project would employ 100 MW of photovoltaic technology and 100 MW of concentrated solar power technology. Once constructed, this proposed project would be one of the first large-scale solar projects on tribal lands in the U.S.

Silver State South (First Solar) State: NV

Coordinating Agency: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management Target date for completing Federal permit and review decisions: March 2013

The Silver State South Solar Energy project is a solar energy generation plant proposed on 13,043 acres of public land. If approved, it would produce an estimated 350 MW of clean energy utilizing photovoltaic technology– enough to power approximately 105,000 homes – and help the State of Nevada meet its renewable energy goals. Construction on the 50 MW Silver State North project has been completed, making it the first solar project on public lands to be delivering power to the grid.

THE WHITE HOUSE Office of the Press Secretary FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 7, 2012

We Can't Wait: Obama Administration Announces Seven Major Renewable Energy Infrastructure Projects that Would Power 1.5 million Homes to be Expedited

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, as a part of his *We Can't Wait* initiative, President Obama announced that seven nationally and regionally significant solar and wind energy projects will be expedited, including projects in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Wyoming. Together, these job-creating infrastructure projects would produce nearly 5,000 megawatts (MW) of clean energy – enough to power approximately 1.5 million homes, and support the President's all-of-the-above strategy to expand American made energy. As a part of a Presidential Executive Order issued in March of this year, the Office of Management and Budget is charged with overseeing a government-wide effort to make the permitting and review process for infrastructure projects more efficient and effective, saving time while driving better outcomes for the environment and local communities. Additional expedited infrastructure projects will be announced in the coming weeks.

“As part of President Obama's all-of-the-above strategy to expand domestic energy production and strengthen the economy, we are working to advance smart development of renewable energy on our public lands,” said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. “These seven proposed solar and wind projects have great potential to grow our nation's energy independence, drive job creation, and power economies across the west.”

The renewable energy projects announced today build on the Obama Administration's record of success in permitting an unprecedented number of utility-scale renewable energy projects. Thanks to a coordinated and focused review process, in the past three years, the Department of the Interior has approved more utility-scale renewable energy projects on public lands than in the past two decades combined – a total of 31 new projects. When constructed by the companies, these projects are expected to generate enough renewable energy to power 2.3 million American homes.

Mohave Wind Energy (BP Wind) State: AZ

Coordinating Agency: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation

Target date for completing Federal permit and review decisions: January 2013

The proposed Mohave County Wind Farm is a wind-powered electrical generation facility that would be located on approximately 38,099 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and 8,960 acres of land managed by the Bureau of Reclamation in Mohave County, Arizona. If approved, it would produce up to 425 MW of wind energy and help the state of Arizona meet its targets for renewable energy.

Quartzsite Solar Energy (Solar Reserve) State: AZ

Coordinating Agency: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

Target date for completing Federal permit and review decisions: December 2012

The proposed concentrating solar power plant would be located on approximately 1,675 acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. It would produce an estimated 100 MW of clean energy – enough to power about 30,000 homes – and help the State of Arizona meet its renewable energy goals.

Desert Harvest Solar Energy (enXco) State: CA
Coordinating Agency: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

Target date for completing Federal permit and review decisions: December 2012

The proposed Desert Harvest Solar Energy project would utilize photovoltaic technology on approximately 1,200 acres in Riverside County, California. The project would produce an estimated 150 MW of solar energy, enough to power about 45,000 homes.

McCoy Solar Energy (NextEra) State: CA

Coordinating Agency: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
Target date for completing Federal permit and review decisions: December 2012

This proposed solar photovoltaic array would be situated on 4,893 acres in Riverside County, California. It would produce an estimated 750 MW of solar energy – enough clean energy to power 225,000 homes – while helping the State of California meet its targets for renewable energy.

Chokecherry/Sierra Madre Wind Energy (Power Company of WY) State: WY

Coordinating Agency: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
Target date for completing Federal permit and review decisions: October 2014

The proposed Chokecherry and Sierra Madre project, located on approximately 230,000 acres in Carbon County, Wyoming, could produce up to 3,000 MW of wind energy – enough to power over 1 million homes. The Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Farm Project is the largest proposed wind farm in North America. The project, as currently configured, avoids critical sage-grouse habitat identified as “Sage-Grouse Core Areas.” Chokecherry is a multi-tiered decision process that includes a land use plan decision anticipated in October 2012, followed by review of a series of right-of-way applications through 2014.

Vote For *We Still Live Here* at Independent Lens – [Audience Award Voting Is Now Open](#)

At film festivals, the award that often matters most to filmmakers and their subjects alike is the Audience Award. They know they’ve struck a chord when the audience applauds their efforts.

The *Independent Lens* audience has the opportunity to stand up and be counted!

Voting Is Easy

1. Simply log on to the Independent Lens Audience Award Website:

www.pbs.org/independentlens/award

2. Scroll down to *We Still Live Here* (it's one of the Fall Films)
3. Cast your vote (*feel free to click on Star Number Five!*)

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported *We Still Live Here*, attended screenings and participated in sharing its message.

[Please visit our Screenings Page for updates and complete details for *We Still Live Here*](#)

- To own the DVD and share it with friends and family, please [CLICK HERE](#)
- [Learn more about *We Still Live Here*](#)
- Make a donation to our Outreach Campaign & the Our Mother Tongues website through the Center for Independent Documentary via this special [PayPal Link](#)

[And remember to 'like' us on facebook and post your comments. We love hearing from you!](#)

[MAKEPEACE PRODUCTIONS](#)

Explore twelve language revitalization programs around the country at

www.OurMotherTongues.org

In today's excerpt - many people lament the current rancor, personal vitriol, and divisiveness in US politics, and they long for the civil politics of the past. But they forget the bitter rancor of Jefferson and Hamilton, the vicious personal attacks against Andrew Jackson and his wife, and the years of hate that brought the American Civil War.

In fact, the world's political past has had as much venom as civility, and that venom has most often come when the issues themselves have been most dire -- slavery, war, secession, and financial crisis. And so it was that at the very moment when Texas was seeking independence from Mexico, its provisional government, led by Governor Henry Smith, was degenerating into chaos. And Texas Lieutenant Colonel James Neill, in San Antonio de Bexar preparing to defend against advancing Mexican President and General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, sought in vain for his government's guidance:

"On January 8, a Comanche appeared in [San Antonio], the bearer of bad tidings.

'His nation is in an attitude of hostilities toward us,' an understated [Texas Lieutenant Colonel James] Neill wrote to the Texas General Council. The last thing the Texians needed was hundreds of Comanche warriors assaulting them. Fortunately, the Indian leaders were willing to discuss the situation, and quite possibly a treaty, but it needed to be done soon. Through the first half of January, though, Neill received no reply at all from anyone.

"It would be a while before Neill and the Bexar garrison would find out why no answer was forthcoming. Besides the simple fact that the provisional authority had no money and no source of revenue, relying

almost solely on donations and loans -- Stephen Austin and the two other Texian ambassadors were in the United States doing all they could to drum up support in cash and manpower -- there was a more serious problem. The government was quickly degenerating into a chaotic mess. Tellingly, it had failed to take advantage of the respite from military activity afforded by the victory at Bexar on December 10. The Texian leaders had been presented with an opportunity to address the immediate problems they faced, particularly that of provisioning the army. Instead, they had done almost nothing.

"Upon receiving Neill's expresses ..., [Governor] Henry Smith forwarded them to the General Council with a letter excoriating the council for its actions. Smith was severely lacking in diplomatic skills but acutely aware of the danger of dithering while a large army was marching into Texas, a habit polished to perfection by the General Council. Smith and the General Council also differed on other matters large and small -- most important, whether Texas was a Mexi-can state (the council's position) or an independent nation, which was Smith's position. As a consequence, their relationship was rocky. Then it got worse.

"In his letter, he called the General Council members scoundrels, Judases, and wolves.... He tried to suspend the council members; they in turn voted to impeach him. Smith refused to countenance their actions and continued to exercise the powers of his office -- or at least he attempted to, given the weakened state of his support, for he was essentially powerless. The two factions spent more time blasting each other with charges and countercharges than applying themselves to the task at hand.

Several General Council members left San Felipe in disgust, and when a two-thirds quorum then failed to be reached, those remaining appointed a new governor and a small advisory committee to act for the General Council until a constitutional convention could convene almost two months later, on March 1."

The Blood of Heroes: The 13-Day Struggle for the Alamo--and the Sacrifice That Forged a Nation

by James Donovan by Little, Brown and Company 2012 Pages: 100-102

[National Plug In Day](#)

Sunday, September 23 at 10:00am at Idlewild Park, 1900 Idlewild Drive, Reno, Nevada

Mark your calendars! Right here in Reno at Idlewild Park, National Plug In Day is coming on Sept., 23rd. We're a club: We. Don't. Sell. Cars. But we will provide you with free rides/drives in club member's electric vehicles! Also, you can enter a raffle for three oppertunites to test drive a 0-60 in 3.9 seconds, 240 mile all electric range, Tesla Motors Roadster--WOW! Join us--with

other area nonprofits and the fabulous GourMelt Grilled Cheese Truck as well!

[Creative Capital creative-capital.org](http://creative-capital.org)

Led by editor Ethan Nosowsky, this 90-minute webinar covers all aspects of the grant and residency process for writers, including researching appropriate programs, putting together a competitive application, and making the most of both award and rejection letters.

[Laura Ramirez](#)

Please support my fundraiser for "Parenting the Native Way." Contributions in exchange for perks starts as low as \$10. By supporting this cause, you will help preserve the sharing of wise, humane & inclusive Native American values and my mission to raise a generation of children who know their unique strengths and use them as adults to make the world a better place for all of us. If you do not hav...See More

[Parenting the Native Way www.indiegogo.com](http://www.indiegogo.com)

Raising kids to express their genius and create a better world

- [Laura Ramirez](#) Also, a bonus: for those who contribute to my fundraiser and want to learn what I've learned from running an online fundraiser, I will do a webinar in November so you can raise money for your cause. Make sure to put CTG somewhere in the Comments form so I know that you're from Connecting the Good and so I'll know to provide you with the date and time.

[Juvenile-In-Justice: Photographs by Richard Ross - Exploring the US Juvenile Justice System](#)

[Premiere Lecture - Thursday, August 23 / 6 pm](#)

Exhibition Opens - Friday, August 24

For the past five years, photographer Richard Ross has interviewed and photographed both pre-adjudicated and committed youth in the American juvenile justice system. To date, he has visited more than 350 facilities in 28 states—including Nevada. This exhibiton features a powerful and haunting series of photographs that document and examine the placement and treatment of those juveniles.

Meet photographer Richard Ross when he presents his work at the Museum, relating stories and interviews with juvenile offenders that he has collected over the past five years.

Hosted wine reception to follow.

This premiere lecture is sponsored exclusively by RBC Wealth Management.

[\\$10 / \\$8 Museum members](#)

[Limited Tickets Available - Buy Yours Today »](#)

Youth Garden Programs Supported

National Gardening Association: Subaru Healthy Sprouts Awards

The National Gardening Association (NGA) is dedicated to promoting home, school, and community gardening as a means to renew and sustain the essential connections between people, plants, and the environment. The NGA Subaru Healthy Sprouts Awards support school and youth garden programs throughout the country that use gardens to teach youth about the environment, nutrition, and the issue of hunger in the United States. Fifty programs will receive a \$500 gift certificate from the Gardening with Kids catalog as well as lessons and literature from NGA. Applicants must plan to garden in 2012 with at least 15 children between the ages of 3 and 18 years. The application deadline is October 1, 2011. Application guidelines and forms are available on the NGA website.

NEVADA GETS WAIVER FOR NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND MANDATES

Nevada no longer will answer to No Child Left Behind but will use a self-created system for holding its public schools accountable, according to an announcement Wednesday by the Obama administration.

<http://erj.reviewjournal.com/ct/uz3688753Biz14171983>

Please come join us for the Heritage of Healing Summer Encampment & Pow Wow, 17 - 19 August 2012, in Ypsilanti, MI. Special event is the Heritage of Healing Walk for Heath.

Started by Shoshana Phillips, Executive Director at Native Youth Alliance

The 21st annual Comanche Nation Fair will be held Sept. 28-30, 2012 near Lawton, Okla. at the Comanche Nation tribal headquarters.

Started by Dana Attocknie, Journalist

The Fund for Women Artists dba WomenArts

Website: <http://www.womenarts.org> Email: info@womenarts.org

Contact: [Martha Richards, Founder & Executive Director](#) Phone: (415) 751-2202

Mission Statement: WomenArts affirms and nurtures the power of women artists to create, connect, and change the world. We provide a variety of free online networking, skill-building, fundraising and advocacy services for women in all art forms with an emphasis on women in theatre, film, and video. We also organize Support Women Artists Now (SWAN), an annual international holiday celebrating women's creativity in all its forms.

FOR RELEASE Wednesday, Aug. 8, 2012 Contact: Press Office 202-401-1576 or press@ed.gov

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION APPROVES NEVADA'S REQUEST FOR NCLB FLEXIBILITY

33 States and DC Now Approved For Waivers; More than 1 Million Additional Students Protected By New Accountability Measures

The Obama Administration today approved Nevada’s request for flexibility from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in exchange for state-developed plans to prepare all students for college and career, focus aid on the neediest students, and support effective teaching and leadership. With the addition of Nevada, 33 states and the District of Columbia have now joined in a nationwide, bipartisan movement toward next-generation education reforms that go far beyond No Child Left Behind’s rigid, top-down prescriptions. In addition, more than 1 million additional students will be captured in the new state-designed accountability systems.

“Nevada joins the growing number of states who can’t wait any longer for education reform, and we’re thrilled that more than 1 million new students will now be protected under these 34 flexibility plans,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. “We still remain hopeful that Congress will come together to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, but we know states need this relief now.”

Federal education law has been due for congressional reauthorization since 2007. In the face of congressional inaction, President Obama announced in September of 2011 that the Obama Administration would grant waivers from NCLB to qualified states. The first requests for waivers were granted in February of 2012. Four additional requests are still under review, and there is still time for other states to apply. States have until Sept. 6 to apply for the next round of waivers.

The 33 states (plus the District of Columbia) that have been approved for waivers from NCLB include: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

The four states with outstanding requests for waivers include California, Idaho, Illinois and Iowa.

The 13 states (plus Puerto Rico) that have not yet requested a waiver through this process include: Alabama, Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont (request withdrawn), West Virginia and Wyoming.

For more information, visit: <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility/requests>.
