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[Colossal statue of Neo-Hittite warrior king found](#)

[Tuesday, July 31st, 2012](#)

The [Tayinat Archaeological Project](#) in southeastern Turkey continues to prove itself a bonanza of Bronze and Iron Age archaeological wonders. To [last year's roaring lion sculpture](#) that once guarded the gates of the citadel of Kunulua (aka Kinalua), capital of the Neo-Hittite Kingdom of Patina (ca. 1000-738 B.C.), we can now add the top half of a [colossal statue of Patina's warrior king Suppiluliuma](#).

The statue is the head and torso of the king, depicted with a neatly curled beard and head of hair. His wide eyes are made of inlaid white and black stone. His arms are bent at the elbow, forearms extended and hands clenched in tight fists. He wears an armband above each elbow and bracelets on his wrists adorned with lion heads facing each other. In his right fist he holds the head of a spear; in his left a shaft of wheat. He wears a pectoral piece or necklace shaped like a crescent.

The statue is almost five feet tall and intact from the waist to the top of his head, but the bottom half is missing. Archaeologists estimate that when legs were attached the complete statue was between 11 and 13 feet tall. He too was a guardian, positioned at the gateway leading to the upper citadel to the royal city, and must have been a highly impressive one at that.

It's a long inscription on the back that identifies him as the king. A raised relief carved in Hieroglyphic Luwian, an Anatolian language used solely in royal seals and monumental inscriptions, extols the military campaigns and many accomplishments of King Suppiluliuma. We don't know exactly who he was, but he was named after two kings of the Hittite New Kingdom: Suppiluliuma I (ca. 1344–1322 B.C.) who had revived the flagging kingdom with many military successes including wresting Syrian territories from the control of Akhenaten's weakened Egyptian empire, and Suppiluliuma II (ca. 1207–1178 B.C.), the last known king of the Hittite New Kingdom who defeated Cyprus in the first recorded naval battle in history.

Experts believe this Suppiluliuma fought against the powerful Neo-Assyrian king Shalmaneser III as part of a coalition of Syro-Hittite states in 858 B.C. Shalmaneser's father Ashurnasirpal II had conquered Kunulua in the 870s B.C. without encountering any resistance whatsoever. Kunulua King Lubarna caved before the first spear was thrown, handing over huge quantities of silver, gold, tin, iron, oxen, sheep, a large female monkey, linen, furniture, female hostages

including the king's own niece, plus numerous infantry and cavalry troops. Suppiluliuma's victory 15 years or so later was an important vindication for the humiliated state.

In the same location, archaeologists found a second sculpture lying on its side next to the colossal statue. This one is a semi-circular column base about three feet tall and nearly three feet in diameter. There's a winged bull figure carved on the curved side with a sphinx to its left. The flat side is bare, because it was probably originally meant to be placed against a wall.

Both sculptures appear to have been ritually buried under the central passageway of the citadel gate, as was the lion found last year. The Neo-Assyrians conquered the area in 738 B.C., destroying the monumental gateway of the citadel. They buried the statues and then paved them over, turning the one-time royal citadel into a sacred precinct and its gateway into a courtyard.

Posted in [Ancient, Treasures](#) | [9 Comments](#) »

Tomb of Mayan prince found in Mexico

Monday, July 30th, 2012

University of Bonn archaeologists have [discovered the untouched tomb of a local prince](#) in the royal palace complex at Uxul, a Maya site in the Mexican jungle near the border with Guatemala. Most of the 11 known buildings in the complex have been prey to looters looking for valuable ceramics and jewelry. Although there was a looting tunnel leading to this building (called K2) as well, the grave was discovered five feet under the floor and was untouched. It's the first intact grave the team has discovered in four excavation seasons.

The tomb is a single chamber with brick walls and a corbel vault. Inside archaeologists found the skeleton of a young man lying on his back with his arms folded over his stomach, five ceramic cups and four ceramic plates, some of them elaborately decorated with paintings and reliefs. One of the plates decorated in Mayan Codex-Style (a black outline drawing that uses the Mayan hieroglyphics seen in their surviving pre-Columbian books) was found on the young man's skull. He was probably about 20-25 years old when he died, and one of the cups has an inscription bearing a date of 711 A.D. which is likely to be the year of his death, or at least near to it.

That vessel also bears an inscription labeling it as "the drinking vessel of the young man/prince." Since he was found in the largest building yet discovered in Uxul's royal palace complex, archaeologists feel secure in pronouncing him the latter since a non-royal "young man" would not get such prime funerary real estate. The absence of jade jewelry marks him as a minor prince, not directly in line for the throne.

Scientists believe that Uxul, originally a smaller independent kingdom, was inhabited and ruled from time to time by the leaders of the ruling Kaan Dynasty in Calakmul. But the influence subsided after 705 AD, and there is a strong likelihood that a local ruling family came to power for a few generations. At the start of the 9th century, Uxul was almost completely deserted.

The Uxul palace complex was completed around 650 A.D. when the Kaan (Kaaaaaan!) dynasty had been in control for two decades. Relief panels found last year in the same building where the grave was discovered depict four of the Kaan kings playing the ballgame. The local royal family that took over after the Calakmul dynasty lost power probably still had some dynastic links to the previous rulers.

The city of Uxul was an important trade hub between the two major Mayan urban centers of El Mirador to the south and Calakmul to the northeast. It had trade links south into Guatemala and north to the Central Mexican Plateau, hence its appeal to its powerful neighbor.

Located deep in the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, Uxul is difficult to reach. The sole access is 75 miles of jungle paths, and archaeologists can only dig for two to three months during the dry season. Undaunted, the archaeological team hopes to find more unlooted graves in the K2 palace building that will provide valuable information about the shifting power dynamics of the late Calakmul period. Posted in [Ancient Treasures](#) | [2 Comments](#) »

First Dynasty solar boat found outside Cairo Thursday, July 26th, 2012

A team from the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology excavating the ancient site of Abu Rawash 15 miles northwest of Cairo has [unearthed the remains of a solar boat](#) dating to the reign of the First Dynasty pharaoh Den (ca. 2975–2935 B.C.). The boat is nearly intact, composed of 11 planks of local wood 20 feet long and five feet wide. The wood is in good condition, thanks to the preservation power of the dry desert environment.

Pharaoh Den was not actually buried at Abu Rawash. His tomb is in the royal necropolis of Early Dynastic kings at Abydos in Upper Egypt. His seal has been discovered at Abu Rawash, however, which may be how archaeologists were able to date the solar boat to his reign. Abu Rawash is best known as the site of the ruined pyramid of the pharaoh Djedefre, son of and successor to Khufu, builder of the great pyramid at Giza. Djedefre was a king of the Fourth Dynasty who reigned from about 2566 to 2558 B.C., 400 years after Den.

His pyramid complex at Abu Rawash actually includes a solar boat pit, a ditch 115 feet long cut out of the living limestone next to the pyramid, which was intended to hold his solar boat. No boat was found within. Instead, archaeologists recovered thousands of fragments of statues from the pit, which when put together turned out to be sculpted heads of Djedefre, now [in the Louvre](#).

Although none of the articles I've found explicitly state this, I think the boat was probably found in the protodynastic cemetery on a rocky outcropping above the Abu Rawash pyramid site. Called "M" after archaeologist Pierre Montet who first discovered it in 1913, the necropolis contains 25 mid-First Dynasty tombs made out of mud bricks. These tombs belonged to elite members of early Old Kingdom society and have been a rich source of information about the development of monumental pharaonic funerary architecture, artifacts and practices in Lower Egypt. Finding a virtually intact solar boat is therefore extremely significant.

Solar boats were ritual vessels that were buried near kings to carry their souls to the heavens where their father, the sun god Ra, awaited them. Ra traveled on two boats during the course of his daily duties, the morning boat that carried him across the heavens during the day, and the evening boat that carried him through the underworld at night. There is some debate among Egyptologists as to whether the solar boats were used to carry the pharaoh's body over water during the funerary procession or whether they were made just to be buried for the pharaoh's posthumous use. The most glamorous of solar ships, Pharaoh Khufu's 140-foot-long and 20-foot-wide cedar yacht discovered in a pit at the foot of the Great Pyramid of Giza in 1954, shows

some signs of having been in contact with water, but cedar shavings found in the pit suggest that it was built on site.

The Abu Rawash boat has been removed to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo for conservation. Once it's in stable condition, it will go on display at the National Museum for Egyptian Civilization which is still under construction. The solar boat is expected to be ready for public display sometime next year. Posted in [Ancient, Treasures](#) |

Medieval Laws of Hywel Dda on display in Wales Wednesday, July 25th, 2012

In a delightful change of pace from the way these stories usually go, a rare 14th century Welsh manuscript of enormous historical import was sold at auction earlier this month and purchased not by an anonymous private collector, but by a public institution in its country of origin [where it is now on display for all to see](#). The manuscript is a pocket-sized bound volume of the Laws of Hywel Dda, a 10th century compendium of laws codified by Welsh King Hywel Dda, a.k.a. Hywel the Good, and it was purchased by the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth for \$840,000 at a [Sotheby's auction in London](#) on July 10th. The seller was the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston.

The earliest surviving manuscripts of the Laws of Hywel Dda date to the mid-13th century, so this particular copy is just 100 years newer than the oldest ones in existence. The language itself is also extremely rare. There are only 80 manuscripts written in medieval Welsh known to survive. It's been nearly a century since a medieval Welsh language manuscript was offered for public sale, and this one is the earliest ever sold.

Experts believe the manuscript was written by a professional scribe for an itinerant lawyer to carry with him and use in his practice. There are handwritten notes indicating the books' practical use as a reference and living document. Somehow, from 14th century Wales, the manuscript wound up in the hands of the Massachusetts Historical Society of Boston. Researchers have an idea of its winding path, but no explicit evidence.

The first appearance of the manuscript in the historical record is a reference by antiquarian Edward Llwyd in his 1707 book *Archaeologia Britannica*. He says the manuscript was discovered in Brecon, South Wales, in the library of town official and barrister William Phillips. William Wotton, the first editor and translator of Welsh laws, used it as a source for his work in 1721. That same year, Phillips died, leaving his library to his daughter Anne and her husband William Scourfield of New Moat, Pembrokeshire.

A Morris Scourfield from Narbeth, Pembrokeshire, just eight miles from New Moat, was one of the first people to buy land in the Pennsylvania Welsh community. The last name is rare and his point of origin strongly suggests that Morris was a descendant of William. He or one of his relations most likely brought the manuscript of the Laws of Hywel Dda with them to America in the second half of the 18th century. The Massachusetts Historical Society thinks they received it as a gift in the 19th century, but they don't have a complete record on the donation.

The Laws were Wales' first codified uniform legal system. Many of them focus on restorative principles, establishing monetary values for everything from property to household pets to body

parts so that any damage or theft would be resolved by payment. Some of them are somewhat progressive in their approach towards women's rights, in marked contrast to contemporary laws in Anglo-Saxon and Norman England. For instance, the dowry was the amount of a married couple's communal property which would belong only to the wife should the couple break up before seven years. The amount was determined solely by her social status. Should they break up after seven years, she was entitled to half of their communal property. Women could own, buy and sell property. Women could not be forced to remain in a marriage they wished to leave.

On the other hand, women were not allowed to be enlisted as witnesses for or against a man, and they could be legally beaten by their husbands for three reasons: 1) for giving away something that they did not exclusively own, 2) for being caught in adulterous embraces, 3) for wishing a blemish on her husband's beard. Beards were a big thing with them. They come up repeatedly.

This unique and fascinating legal system is a key element in Welsh identity, culture and history. Before Hywel's time, Wales was divided and ruled by a number of kings at a time. Hywel ruled almost the entirety of Wales excepting solely the southeastern regions of Morgannwg and Gwent. His laws were an important unifying factor bringing the country under a single set of administrative rules. When King Edward I of England conquered Wales in 1283, he attempted to eradicate most native legal practices to make the Welsh subject to English law. That this manuscript was commissioned and put to active use 70 years later shows that the Welsh still practiced their way, Longshanks and his heirs be damned.

You see why, therefore, it was of particular importance that this manuscript not wind up in some anonymous collection — especially a British one — never to be seen again. The National Library of Wales secured a grant of \$723,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to buy the manuscript, and the rest of the money came from the library's own budget and the Welsh government.

The Laws of Hywel Dda are on public view at the National Library of Wales' Hengwrt Room from July 23rd until August 31st. After that, the manuscript will be removed for study, conservation and digitization. It will make an excellent companion to a [whimsically illustrated Latin manuscript of the Laws](#) they've already digitized. The library expects they'll be done by the end of 2012, whereupon the digitized manuscript will be uploaded to their website and the original manuscript will go on permanent display in the rare book gallery. Posted in [Medieval, Museums, Treasures](#)

Chief Joseph war shirt sells for \$877,500 Monday, July 23rd, 2012

Today in depressing auction news, a beaded, quilled hide shirt with white weasel fur fringe and human hair decoration worn by Nez Perce leader Chief Joseph sold at the [Coeur d'Alene Art Auction](#) in Reno, Nevada on July 21st for \$877,500 to yet another anonymous private collector. This particular garment is of major historical significance. Chief Joseph was wearing it in the first photograph ever taken of him and in a [painting by Cyrenius Hall](#) that is now in the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. The Hall portrait was also used in 1968 to make a postage stamp dedicated to the great chief.

The shirt was dispersed with the rest of his belongings at a potlatch — a ceremonial gift-giving feast in which goods both material and spiritual are redistributed and/or traded — hosted by Chief Joseph's widow the summer after his death in September of 1904. He had been buried immediately after his death, but in June of 1905, a white marble monument was erected to his memory in the historic Nez Perce cemetery in Nespelam, Washington. He was [reburied under the new monument](#) with great ceremony on June 20, 1905.

An article in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* newspaper of June 25, 1905 describes the event:

The Chief Joseph potlatch took place Friday. It was one of the greatest affairs of the kind we have any record of. The huge council lodge was filled. At the head of the lodge were gathered heaps of the worldly possessions of the late Chief Joseph. ... After dinner speeches were made, the crowning of which was made by Chief Yellow Bull. The speech was made on horseback while the old chief rode slowly three times around the outside of the big council lodge. He rode Chief Joseph's faithful old horse and besides that dignity he wore all of Chief Joseph's war clothes, including the famous eagle feather war bonnet. His speech related almost wholly to the greatness of the man whose clothes he was wearing. ...

The great war bonnets and war clothing went to the three nephews. A dozen watches were among the gifts, three fine guns and an endless array of blankets. One of the three buffalo robes was given to Three Knives, or Professor Meany.

So presumably this shirt passed into the hands of one of Chief Joseph's nephews in 1905, but there is no record of it after that for another 90 years. Its prominent presence in national iconography notwithstanding, the shirt disappeared into the market and was purchased by a collector at an Indian relic show some time in the 1990s. Neither the seller nor buyer had any idea of who had worn this shirt and when. It was sold purely as an exquisite Native American craft in excellent condition. That collector then sold it to another collector who researched the piece thoroughly and was able to identify it as the shirt worn by Chief Joseph in the 1877 picture and the 1878 oil painting. Experts confirmed that it could not have been a later forgery based on the images. The crafts and materials simply cannot be duplicated.

Pictorial evidence is the best evidence there is for the provenance of an object like this. Another war shirt attributed to Chief Joseph [sold at Sotheby's this May for \\$482,500](#) because even though there was an impressive paper trail and oral history linking the shirt step by step to Chief Joseph's cousin Peo-Peo-Tholekt who is said to have received it at the 1905 potlatch, there is no direct evidence that it was ever worn by the chief. One picture is worth a thousand words and \$400,000, I suppose.

The picture in question marks an incredibly sad period in Chief Joseph's life and in the miserably awful history of the United States' dealings with the Native Americans.

In 1855, Joseph's father known as Chief Joseph the Elder and a council of other Nez Perce chiefs signed a treaty with the US establishing a 7.7 million acre reservation covering traditional tribal lands in Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. Among them was the Wallowa Valley, the ancestral land of Joseph's tribe. In 1863, under pressure from settlers and gold rushers, some of the Nez Perce tribes signed a new treaty establishing a 780,000 acre reservation which did not include the

Wallowa Valley. Joseph the Elder refused to sign, as did other chiefs, this creating a rift between the “treaty” and “non-treaty” Nez Perce peoples.

On his deathbed in 1871, Chief Joseph the Elder told his son “This country holds your father’s body. Never sell the bones of your father and your mother.” Chief Joseph promised. He never fought the white settlers or the US government with weapons and bloodshed, but he struggled at council after council to ensure his people remained in the Wallowa Valley. Treaties were made that were of course broken whenever the US felt like it. Finally in 1877, Army General Oliver Howard gave Chief Joseph an ultimatum: move out of the valley to the Idaho reservation or we’ll consider it an act of war.

Then began a massive flight. The Nez Perce, pursued by the US Army, first fled east hoping the Crow nation would allow them to settle on their lands. The Crow did not, so Chief Joseph’s people moved north hoping to cross the border into Canada. They almost made it. Just 40 miles from the border near Snake Creek in the Bear Paw Mountains of Montana Territory, Chief Joseph and the US Army fought a five day battle. Freezing, starving, his warrior ranks decimated, Chief Joseph surrendered to General Howard. Chief Joseph’s speech, ostensibly recorded as is but very possibly embellished by Lieutenant Charles Erskine Scott Wood, has gone down in history:

Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before, I have it in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed; Looking Glass is dead, Too-hul-hul-sote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led on the young men is dead. It is cold, and we have no blankets; the little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children, and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs! I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.

The 600 or so surviving Nez Perce were forced to march 400 miles to Fort Keogh, Montana Territory, where they arrived on October 13th, 1877. It was there that post photographer John F. Fouch took the first picture of Chief Joseph ever taken. He was wearing the war shirt as he sat for the picture. From the [auction website](#):

Joseph is seated in the photo and his hands appear frostbitten. Yet, his hair is pushed up in a proud warrior pompadour and he is dressed resplendent in his shirt. Examination of details in the photo leaves no question that the shirt in the Fouch photo is one and the same as the shirt here under discussion. Note and compare the varying lengths of quill wrappings on the hair locks under the neck flap, the short fringe cuts at the end of the sleeves, and the alignment of bead decoration on the neck flap, shoulder and sleeve strips. (Color values of the orthochromatic film used in the 1870’s do not always appear as they do in the later panchromatic film.) Several of the red wool wrapped ermine skin fringes have been secured with pericardium and match up from photo to shirt, especially on Joseph’s left shoulder.

After their stay in Fort Keogh, General William Tecumseh Sherman sent Joseph and 400 of his people to the prisoner of war camp in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. At Leavenworth, painter Cyrenius Hall made his portrait of Chief Joseph, again wearing the shirt.

The Nez Perce were kept prisoner at Fort Leavenworth for eight months, then moved to Indian Territory in what is today Oklahoma. They lived there (in a manner of speaking; many died there) for seven years. During this time, Chief Joseph tirelessly fought for them to be allowed to return to their ancestral lands, personally pleading their case before presidents, politicians, intellectuals and in the press. Read his riveting account of the history of his people and the patronizing, stupid introduction to it in "[An Indian's Views of Indian Affairs](#)" from the *North American Review* of April 1879. It's enough to make you pop a blood vessel, I swear.

In 1885 Chief Joseph's Nez Perce tribe was allowed to go back to the Pacific Northwest, but not to the Wallowa Valley. Even once settled in Washington's Colville Reservation, until the end of his days in 1904 Joseph never stopped advocating for his people to be treated with reason and respect, and for their right to return to their ancestral homelands.

A few days ago the **BIA published their new list of federally recognized tribes**, the first since October 2010 <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-08-10/pdf/2012-19588.pdf>

Star Party at Washoe Lake State Park (on East Lake Blvd on the east side of Washoe Lake) this Saturday. There is no charge to attend, but the park usually wants \$2-3 to park there. His friends usually set up their mongo sized telescopes in the afternoon and are there late into the evening. We will probably bring our medium sized telescope too.

You can come and go whenever you want, but I suggest getting there before dark so you can see the layout of the parking lot area (where they set up their equipment). I also suggest you bring long pants, a jacket and a chair if you want one. The guys with the telescopes are very knowledgeable (one of them worked at Fleischman Planetarium for 20 years) and will gladly answer questions and will point things out with their mega-watt laser pointers. Oooo, ahhh

CHILDREN ARE WELCOME!!!

No RSVP needed. Just show up! It's open to the public, so feel free to invite others.

Hope to see you there!

[As Smokey Bear turns 68, a look at his career \[Video\]](#)

Smokey Bear, the mascot of the U.S. Forest Service, is planning to tour NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston on Friday to celebrate his 68th birthday.

My Journey Home of Nevada was founded by Elaine Voigt, and is a nonprofit that assists returning military men and women, as well as those recently released from incarceration. Floyd volunteered to be spokesman for the organization almost two years ago, and even promotes them on several of his radio talk shows on a few different local stations in Northern Nevada.

My Journey Home refurbishes donated computers, loads them with Windows 7 and Microsoft Windows and then donates the machine to a veteran or ex-prisoner who also receives the training necessary to assist them in returning to the workplace or into society.

For more information, contact My Journey Home of Nevada at 825-8118.

Why We Need the Food From Family Farms Act

By Ben Burkett, Other Words NYT 14 August 12

Had Congress heeded our advice, farmers and taxpayers would be far better able to deal with a lack of grain, grass, and water from the drought.

Although my Mississippi community has fared pretty well this summer, the worst drought since 1956 is jeopardizing more than half of U.S. cropland. Thousands of farmers are facing tough decisions, especially if they own livestock. Dairy farmers face a triple threat - feed costs are hitting record highs, heat stress is reducing milk production, and dairy cooperatives aren't paying enough for wholesale milk, thanks in part to failed policy. Some farmers are seeking hay, grain, or silage to feed their cows; others are selling now to cut their losses.

A bushel of dried, shelled corn costs a record \$8. Weighing 56 pounds, it could feed 8-10 cows per day if they're also eating grass or hay. A livestock farmer with 100 cows could pay \$80 a day for corn and \$100 a day for hay. That's nearly \$200 per day for farmers with 100 cows- or \$6,000 per month. And the price that dairy cooperatives and processors pay for milk doesn't compensate for the extra costs.

It's not only this drought that's driving commodity traders to push prices skyward, however. An essential part of earlier farm programs, the Farmer-Owned Reserve, was scuttled as a result of international trade agreements the U.S. entered into after World War II. Despite the bumper grain crops of recent years, "free trade" pacts have left no reserves in the silos of farmers in America or many other countries. In 2012, higher prices for soy and corn led many farmers to shift acreage from conservation programs, livestock pastures, and other crops, but with no grain set aside for emergencies, there's plenty of cause for speculation and concern.

To help farmers receive fair prices for their products, maintain grain reserves, and support biodiversity, the National Family Farm Coalition proposed its Food from Family Farms Act for the 2008 Farm Bill. Instead, Congress passed the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act, including a commodity title relying largely on insurance premiums paid by farmers and supplemented by taxpayer dollars.

No one likes to hear "I told you so," (*my favorite T-shirt.. sdc*) but had Congress heeded our advice, farmers and taxpayers would have been far better able to deal with a lack of grains, grass, and water from the drought. [Economic analysis by Dr. Darryl Ray](#) at the University of Tennessee documented that if a farmer-owned reserve had been in place between 1996 and 2010, taxpayers would have saved more than \$96 billion in payments. Farmers would have fared better, too.

For farmers, programs and policies promoting maximum production lead to monocropping, which threatens a region's biodiversity. One new pest or seasonal drought could destroy entire

crops, family livelihoods, and local businesses. Monocropping also encourages the use of huge equipment that packs down the soil and eliminates on-farm jobs. It contributes to the widespread use of herbicides and pesticides, the loss of local food production, concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), and overproduction - which leads to lower prices and more monocropping, because farmers can survive only by selling more.

When Congress left Washington on August 3 for a five-week recess, its failure to act on disaster legislation and the 2012 farm bill jeopardized not only farmers and their families, but also the entire economy. The farm bill is a massive piece of legislation encompassing agriculture, food, nutrition, conservation, trade, and forestry programs reconsidered about every five years. The Senate passed its version in June, while the House Agriculture Committee passed theirs on July 11. Unfortunately, the House farm bill cuts over \$16 billion from nutrition programs, guts the government's review and approval process of biotech crops, and dismantles government oversight of poultry, hog, and meat industries.

It's time for Congress to revisit a long-term policy fix. The Food from Family Farms Act mandates ecologically sustainable planting, fair prices, inventory management, and a disaster program not based on insurance premiums. Farmers would make a decent living, youth could find worthwhile employment at home, and rural communities would thrive. The Food from Family Farms Act offers real reform that would enable farmers and their communities to address disasters before they destroy them and the economy.

Amid the Beauty of Mountains, Oil Rigs Arrive

There is beauty on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana, but there is also oil, locked away in the tight shale rock thousands of feet underground. And tribal leaders have decided to tap their land's buried wealth. A worker, in full view of Glacier National Park mountains, attached pipe to an oil fracking rig at an Anschutz Exploration site on the reservation.

- Article: [Tapping Into the Land, and Dividing Its People](#)