



Nez Perce National Forest

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions

January – March 2004



United States
Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Grangeville, Idaho

NORTHERN ROCKIES LYNX AMENDMENT AND DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

**NPNF LYNX OPEN HOUSE: FEBRUARY 11, 2004
4:00 – 7:00 PM
FOREST HEADQUARTERS, GRANGEVILLE, IDAHO**

The Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment is a proposal to add direction to land management plans that would conserve lynx and their habitat on 18 national forests in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and Utah; and on 4 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) units in Idaho and Utah. The direction would apply to mapped lynx habitat estimated at 18.5 million acres, or 48 percent of national forest lands and 1 percent of BLM lands. Limited direction would also apply to areas linking lynx habitat.

The purpose of this effort is to establish direction that conserves and promotes recovery of Canada lynx, while preserving the overall multiple-use direction in existing plans. Three Forest Service regional foresters and two BLM state directors will make this decision for lands under their jurisdiction.

The proposed management direction relies primarily on the science and recommendations in two publications:

- Ecology and Conservation of Lynx in the U.S. (2000), which summarizes current knowledge, and

- Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy (LCAS) (2000), recommends conservation measures for activities that could place lynx at risk by altering their habitat or reducing their prey.

Why amend plans to include direction for Canada lynx?

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed Canada lynx as a threatened species in March 2000, saying the main threat was the lack of guidance to conserve lynx in 10-15 year-old forest and BLM plans.
- The Forest Service and BLM signed conservation agreements with the Fish and Wildlife Service to consider the *Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy* during project analysis, and the Forest Service agreed to not proceed with project determinations of "likely to adversely affect" lynx. Amendments would replace these agreements.

Information on the WWW

Nez Perce Forest Information

www.fs.fed.us/r1/nezperce

FS Northern Region Information

www.fs.fed.us/r1

National USFS Information

www.fs.fed.us

What's Inside

Forest-wide Projects	Page 2
Salmon River District projects	Pages 3
Clearwater District projects	Pages 4
Moose Creek District projects	Pages 5
Red River District projects	Pages 6-8
Lynx (continued)	Page 9
Categorical Exclusions	Page 9
Mailing list info/Forest directory	Page 11-12

Nez Perce National Forest – Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions
January – March 2004

Forest-wide Projects

Project/Activity Name	Location ¹	The Date Scoping either Began or is Planned to Begin	Estimated Date of Decision ²	Status of the NEPA Process	Forest Service Contact
**Supplemental EIS to Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Noxious Weed Treatments, Environmental Impact Statement signed August 1999.	Nez Perce, Bitterroot, Payette, and Salmon-Challis National Forests	November 1, 2003, for supplemental EIS	March 2004	FEIS completed August 1999, scoping for supplemental EIS	Howard Lyman Nez Perce NF 208-983-1950 Ken Wotring Salmon Challis NF 208-756-7900
Salmon River Canyon Project	Salmon River Canyon - Nez Perce, Payette, Bitterroot, and Salmon-Challis NFs	July 1998	**Winter 2004	Finalizing decision document (ROD)	Ken Stump (208) 983-1950

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² Date the Record of Decision, Decision Notice, or Decision Memo will be signed.

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Nez Perce National Forest – Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions
January – March 2004

Salmon River Ranger District

Project/Activity Name	Location ¹	The Date Scoping either Began or is Planned to Begin	Estimated Date of Decision ²	Status of the NEPA Process	Forest Service Contact
Clean Slate Ecosystem Mgt Project	T27N, R3E, Sections 2-11, 14-36	January 1997	Oct 2003	**Record of Decision signed, appeal period ends Jan 5, 2004	Mike McGee (208) 983-1950
	<u>Proposed Action:</u> An ecosystem management project (including timber harvest) that will integrate prescribed fire, aquatic restoration, and terrestrial habitat improvement.				
Gold Lake Tunnel Stream Restoration	T25N, R3E, Section 12	December, 2002	Oct 2003	Finalizing Decision Memo	Garry Seloske (208) 839-2211
Elkhorn Creek Bridge Replacement	T24N, R3E, Section 21	January, 2002	**May 2004	**Complete, awaiting final approval on BA(s) from NMFS	Daryl Mullinix (208) 983-1950
French Creek Bridge Replacement	T24N, R3E, Section 13	January, 2002	**May 2004	**Need decision for final	Daryl Mullinix (208) 983-1950
Avista - Joe Springs Road Aggregate Source	T27N, R1E, Section 29	March 2003	Aug 2004	**Complete, awaiting decision	Daryl Mullinix (208) 983-1950
Boulder Ck Outfitters proposed boundary mod	T28N, T29NR2E, R3E	February 2003	July 2004	Scoping completed	Don Sorensen (208) 839-2211
Moore/Black Butte Trail V	Portion between Anchor Creek and Moore's Guard Station	March 1999	**March 2004	Analysis ongoing	John Fantini (208) 839-2211
**Rapid River Trailhead	T23N, R1W, Section 1	October 2003	May 2004	Scoping completed	John Fantini (208) 839-2211
**NF Slate Cr. Trails 320, 385, 836 - Reconstruction	T27N, R3E, Sections 2-11, 14-36	January 1997	Oct 2003	**Part of Clean Slate Analysis - Record of Decision signed, appeal period ends Jan 5, 2004	John Fantini (208) 839-2211

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Nez Perce National Forest – Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions
January – March 2004

Clearwater Ranger District

Project/Activity Name	Location ¹	The Date Scoping either Began or is Planned to Begin	Estimated Date of Decision ²	Status of the NEPA Process	Forest Service Contact
Templeton Dredging Project	Approximately ½ mile upstream of John's Creek	Ongoing	Deferred	Pending NPDES permit requirements	David Harper (208) 983-1963
	Proposed Action: Request for permit to dredge approximately ½ mile of the South Fork of the Clearwater River.				
Mill Creek Culvert Replacement	Various sites within the Mill Creek Drainage	Ongoing	**Mar 2004	Analysis ongoing	Wayne Paradis (208) 983-1963
	Proposed Action: Replace 1 to 3 culverts within the Mill Creek Drainage.				
Trout Creek Outfitters	Mill Creek and portions of Johns Creek Drainages	Ongoing	**Jan 2004	**Decision pending	John Fantini (208) 839-2211
	Proposed Action: Add trail rides to permitted activities.				
Blacktail Fuels	Clearwater Ranger District All or portions of T29N, R3E; T29N, R4E; T30N, R3E; T30N, R4E; T30N, R5E; T31N, R5E	July, 2002	**Sept 2004	Analysis ongoing	Kristen Sanders (208) 983-1963
	Proposed Action: Fuels treatment by thinning, harvesting, and/or prescribed burning to reduce fuel hazard and to restore/maintain open Ponderosa/Douglas fir stands.				
Avista – Power Line Special Use Permit	Clearwater – Red River Districts	Complete	**Jan 2004	**NEPA Complete, awaiting final ESA consultation for decision signing	Daryl Mullinix (208) 983-1950

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Nez Perce National Forest – Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions
January – March 2004

Moose Creek Ranger District

Project/Activity Name	Location ¹	The Date Scoping either Began or is Planned to Begin	Estimated Date of Decision ²	Status of the NEPA Process	Forest Service Contact
Noxious Weed Control	Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Moose Creek & Shearer Administrative Sites & Airstrips	Accomplished 2000	**March 2004	Continuing Analysis	Joe Hudson (208) 926-4258
	Proposed Action: Reduce knapweed population by applying selective herbicides on administrative sites and associated airstrips to reduce vector potential and prevent export of weeds to other backcountry airstrips and areas.				
Bilk Mountain/Spook Creek Trail Reconstruction	Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Trail #517	November 2002	Jan 2004	Continuing Analysis	Paul Christensen (208) 926-4258
	Proposed Action: Reconstruct nine miles of the Bilk Mountain Trail #517 from the trailhead near Elk Mountain to its junction with the Copper Butte Trail #602. Install drainage.				
Fog Mountain/Indian Hill Trailhead Reconstruction	Fog Mountain and Indian Hill Trailheads	**April 2004	**Sept 04	Analysis	Paul Christensen (208) 926-4258
	Proposed Action: Reconstruct railhead facilities at Fog Mountain Trailhead and Indian Hill Trailhead, which are major Wilderness portals. The reconstruction includes site-hardening, stock handling facilities, signing and vault toilets.				
East Moose Trail Reconstruction	Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Trail #421	**June 2004	**March 2005	Scoping	Paul Christensen (208) 926-4258
	Proposed Action: Reconstruct trail to Opportunity Class III guidelines, for approximately 18 miles.				
Three Links & Cup- board Creek Bridges	Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Trail #4	**Dec. 2004	**June 2005	Scoping	Paul Christensen (208) 926-4258
	Proposed Action: Replace bridge over Three Links Creek and replace bridge at Cupboard Creek.				

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Nez Perce National Forest – Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions
January – March 2004

Red River Ranger District

Project/Activity Name	Location ¹	The Date Scoping either Began or is Planned to Begin	Estimated Date of Decision ²	Status of the NEPA Process	Forest Service Contact
Crooked River Channel Project	T28N, R7E, Section 1 Crooked River Drainage	December 1996	Aug 2003	**Supplemental Information Report signed, project implementation scheduled for FY 2004	Nick Gerhardt (208) 983-1950
	Proposed Action: Maintenance of in-channel structures and extension of berm. Rationale: Improve sediment transport in main channel, decrease risk of capture of main flow by side channel.				
Genesis Minerals Exploration	T28N, R9E, Sections 6&7; Country Road 222	September 1998	July 2004	On hold pending NPDES permit from EPA	Jo Ellis (208) 842-2245
	Proposed Action: Commercial suction dredging.				
Nugget Pt. Trail #828	Newsome Creek Drainage	June, 1999	**Mar 2004	Analysis ongoing	Gary Loomis (208) 842-2245
	Proposed Action: Locate and reconstruct tread through clearcuts, switchbacks, post signs, install drivable drain drips and outlet ditches. Rationale: This trail receives moderate to high OHV use. The current tread has been created by these OHV users and is a resource problem due to lack of drainage.				
Avista – Power Line Special Use Permit	Clearwater – Red River Districts	Complete	Dec 2003	NEPA complete, awaiting final ESA consultation for decision to be signed	Daryl Mullinix (208) 983-1950
Cache Creek Bridge	T26N, R11E, NE Sec. 32	December 2001	** Mar 2004	Minimum requirement analysis ongoing.	Gary Loomis (208) 842-2245
	Proposed Action: Replace stringers with native material on site.				

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Red River Salvage	Red River drainage	December 2001	Jan 2004	Environmental analysis ongoing	Ester Hutchison (208) 983-1950
	<p>Proposed Action: Salvage merchantable dead and dying trees in the Red River drainage in areas where mortality is concentrated.</p> <p>Rationale: Recover merchantable material before it loses value.</p>				
American and Crooked River Project	T28 & 29 N, R7 & 8E American and Crooked River Drainages	September 2003	June 2004	Scoping	Phil Jahn 208-983-1950
	<p>Proposed Action: Forest proposes to harvest or otherwise treat timber stands including dead, dying, or downed trees and trees at risk of mountain pine beetle attack (primarily lodgepole pine). Incidental harvest of trees that are dead and dying from other insects and diseases would also occur within the project area. Proposed harvesting and associated treatments, including road treatments, would be conducted on approximately 3000 acres in portions of the American and Crooked River watersheds.</p> <p>Purpose and Need: The purpose of this project is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reduce existing and potential forest fuels ◆ Create conditions that will contribute to sustaining long-lived fire tolerant tree species (ponderosa pine, western larch) ◆ Contribute to the economic and social well being of people who use and reside within the surrounding area. 				
Sheep – Drumlommen Trail Reconstruction	Sheep Creek and Crooked Creek Drainages	March 2003	**Oct 2004	Analysis continuing	Gary Loomis (208) 842-2245
	<p>Proposed Action: Reconstruct 16 miles of trail tread on Drumlommen Ridge, reconstruction 1 mile of Sheep Creek Trial #201, construct a ford on E. Fork Sheep Creek, and install waterbars, tread reconstruction, brushing and signing on War Eagle Trail #203 and Arlington Ridge Trail #202.</p> <p>Rationale: The work on Drumlommen Ridge is needed to get it to a maintainable condition, the work on Sheep Creek Trail #201 is needed to repair the damage done by the floods of 1997, the work on East Fork Sheep Creek is to improve safety and War Eagle Trail #203 and Arlington Ridge Trail #202 is to reduce resource damage from lack of drainage.</p>				

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Nez Perce National Forest – Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions
January – March 2004

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Red River Drainage Defensible Space Project	French Gulch to Red River Hot Springs	August 2001	Fall 2003	**Project being implemented	Gene Delimata (208) 842-2245
	<p>Proposed Action: Reduce hazardous fuels on Forest lands adjacent to structures. Rationale: To reduce the threat of wildland fire to life, structures and property; and to improve the safety and capabilities for fire fighters in fire suppression activities.</p>				
Newsome Defensible Space Project	T29N, R7E, Section 1; T30N, R7E, Sections 30 & 31; T31N, R6E, Section 24	December 2002	Sept 2003	Environmental Effects Analysis	Tim Button (208) 842-2224
	<p>Proposed Action: Reduce hazardous fuels on national forest lands adjacent to structures Rationale: To reduce the threat of wildland fire to life, structures, and property; and to improve the safety and capabilities for fire fighters in fire suppression activities.</p>				
Whiskey-South Defensible Space Project (BLM Project)	T29N, R8E, Sections 30, 31, 32, 33	December 2002	Fall 2003	Analysis ongoing	Mark Craig BLM (208) 962-3245
	<p>Proposed Action: Reduce hazardous fuels on Forest lands adjacent to structures. Rationale: To reduce the threat of wildland fire to life, structures and property; and to improve the safety and capabilities for fire fighters in fire suppression activities.</p>				
Red Pines Fuel Reduction Project	Red River Watershed - T27N, R8, 9, 10 E; T28N, R 8, 9, 10 E	June 2003	June 2004	**Analyzing environmental effects	Kara Chadwick (208) 983-4048
	<p>Proposed Action: Treat existing and potential fuel loads with harvest and under burning activities and meet Forest Plan requirements for upward trend in fish habitat and water quality through a range of watershed improvement activities.</p>				

Nez Perce National Forest – Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions
January - March 2004

**NORTHERN ROCKIES LYNX AMENDMENT
(continued)**

- Amended plans would more clearly meet Endangered Species Act obligations to conserve listed species and the National Forest Management Act requirement to manage habitat to maintain viable populations of lynx.

The following issues have been identified and used to develop alternative objectives, standards, or guidelines that would meet the stated purpose of this effort:

- What are the effects of limiting the growth of designated over-the-snow routes on opportunities for over-the-snow recreation?
- What are the effects of the lynx amendment standards on the risks of wildland fire to communities?

- What is the effect on lynx of allowing projects in winter snowshoe hare habitat in multi-storied forests?
- What are the effects of limiting pre-commercial thinning on restoring three species and forest structures that are declining?
- What level of management direction should be applied to activities that the Fish and Wildlife Service found were not a threat to populations?

Several management concerns were also identified regarding the complexity, cost, or rigidity of management direction that did not appear to have comparable benefits to lynx.

For additional information, contact Laura Smith, Public Affairs, at 208-983-1950 or 208-983-5143.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS

In June 2003, the Department of Agriculture established five additional categories of actions that were not subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. These actions included hazardous fuels reduction in high-risk areas, certain post-fire rehabilitation activities and limited acreages of timber harvest to improve forest conditions, salvage dead and dying trees, or to prevent the spread of forest damaging insects and disease.

Based on monitoring of similar actions taken in the past, the Agency has determined that these actions do not normally result in significant effects on the human environment. That such actions do not trigger the provisions of the NEPA requiring preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) or the provisions of the Council of Environmental Quality to prepare an environmental assessment (EA) [Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500-1508].

Although neither an EA nor EIS are normally required for actions described within these categories, a number of procedural steps must

be completed before actions can be implemented. These steps include:

Project identification, prioritization, and budgeting – Projects must be identified as necessary to meet planned resource objectives and compared with other agency priorities. Prioritization includes availability of sufficient budget and personnel to complete the project.

Public Involvement, Scoping – Initial project proposals are reviewed internally and externally to assure that concerns over the effects of actions are adequately identified. Scoping includes internal reviews by agency specialists, notification of interested and/or affected parties, including tribes and other Federal and State agencies. When timing permits, projects are listed on the Forest's Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA). Concerns identified through scoping are considered by the agency and addressed in the development of the proposed action.

Extra-ordinary Circumstances – Although a project may fit within one or more of the established categories of actions, extra-ordinary

Nez Perce National Forest – Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions
January - March 2004

circumstances may be present which require a greater consideration of environmental effects. Extra-ordinary circumstances include adverse effects on such resources as Threatened and Endangered Species habitat, soil resources, wilderness and roadless resources, floodplains and wetlands, important cultural or archaeological resources and water resources identified as “impaired” in accordance with the Clean Water Act. Sufficient inventory and assessment must be conducted and documented before implementation of the project to assure that no adverse effects on extra-ordinary circumstances are likely to occur. If adverse effects on these resources are likely, then the use of a categorical exclusion is not appropriate and the agency must disclose and consider environmental effects in an environmental analysis or environmental impact statement.

Consistency with other laws, regulations, and Forest Plan Direction – Projects undertaken by the agency must be consistent with the requirements of appropriate Land and Resource Management Plans, agency direction, and resource related laws and regulations. The agency is required to conduct sufficient inventory and evaluation of forest resources to support consistency findings. Consistency requirements include, but are not limited to the following:

- Endangered Species Act – Actions located in identified habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species require preparation of a biological assessment to determine if the action may have an effect on the species or it’s habitat. If possible, effects are identified; consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service is required. If adverse effects on a species are likely to result from implementation of an action, the use of a categorical exclusion is inappropriate and either an environmental analysis or an environmental impact statement must be prepared.
- Water Resources – Timber harvest, prescribed burning and other actions included in the new categorical exclusion authorities can affect water related resources. Sufficient analysis must be conducted and documented to assure that effects are within acceptable thresholds prescribed in forest plans.
- Clean Water Act – Actions proposed in drainages identified as “impaired” must be evaluated to assure that actions are conducted in a manner which does not adversely affected the impaired uses or exacerbate the conditions which contribute to the “impaired” determination.
- Soil Resources – Actions taken in areas which have been previously harvested or otherwise disturbed, must be assessed to assure that additional actions are conducted in a manner that preserves the basic productivity of the lands as required by the National Forest Management Action.
- Inland Native Fisheries – Actions undertaken near streams and containing habitat for native fisheries are surveys and designed to assure that sufficient buffers exist to protect riparian and fisheries habitat.
- Silvicultural Prescriptions – Actions that include vegetation treatments require preparation of a silvicultural prescription. The prescription specifies appropriate treatments designed to assure that treatments will progress or at least not impede a progression toward target stand conditions as well as protect important forest resources.

Nez Perce National Forest – Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions
January - March 2004

- Cultural and Historic Resources – Lands on which actions are proposed must be evaluated and/or surveyed prior to implementation to assure that no cultural, historic, or archaeological resources will be adversely affected.
- Sensitive Plant and Animal Species – Land must be evaluated and/or surveyed prior to implementation to determine if sensitive species are present and to assure that activities will not have unacceptable adverse effects on known populations.
- Forest Land and Resource Management Plans – Forest Plans provide specific goals and objectives for specific lands. Actions must be consistent with resource uses described in Forest Plan Management Area direction. Forest plans also prescribe standards related to specific forest resources, such as retention of wildlife hiding cover, retention of old growth habitat, or limits on water yield increases and sediment. Proposed actions must be reviewed to assure consistency with forest plans.

Documentation Requirements – Forest Service regulations require that actions implemented through the new authorities be documented in a project record and decision memo, as described below:

- Project Record – The project records is to contain documentation of all resource analysis and determinations listed above, documentation of public involvement processes (including scoping responses), documentation of issues considered, and any other information pertinent to the particular action.
- Decision Memo – A decision memo must contain a description of the action, issues considered, a summary of the consistency determinations, and references to the project record supporting consistency determinations. Decision memos are sent to all parties who demonstrated interest or participated in the development of a project. Actions documented in a decision memo are not subject to appeal and may be implemented within five days of signature.

Help Us Update Our Mailing List

The current quarterly report can be accessed electronically by going to our homepage at: **www.fed.us/r1/nezperce**. If you are receiving more than one copy of the NEPA Quarterly Schedule, have an address correction, or wish to have your name removed from our list, please call us at (208) 983-1950 or drop us a line at Forest Planning, Route 2, Box 475, Grangeville, ID 83530. We appreciate your help.

For Your Information

Your name and any comments that you make regarding an individual project may be subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). If you have any questions regarding the act, they may be addressed to Monica McGee, Forest FOIA Coordinator, Route 2, Box 475, Grangeville, ID 83530.

Forest Directory

The Nez Perce National Forest is in the Northern Region of the U.S. Forest Service, which is a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Nez Perce Forest has four ranger districts. Each District Ranger reports to the Forest Supervisor in Grangeville.

The quarterly list of projects is organized by ranger district. Legal notices of proposals and decisions are published in the Lewiston Morning Tribune (Lewiston). Legal notices of timber sale advertisements appear in the Idaho County Free Press (Grangeville).

You can get specific information on an individual project from the contact person listed. Feel free to phone, write, or visit. Office hours are generally from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM weekdays.

Nez Perce National Forest Headquarters

BRUCE BERNHARDT, Forest Supervisor

Route 2, Box 475, Grangeville, ID 83530
(208) 983-1950 FAX: (208) 983-4099

Salmon River Ranger District

Slate Creek Ranger Station

JACK CARLSON, District Ranger

HC01, Box 70, White Bird, ID 83554
(208) 839-2211 FAX: (208) 839-2211

Red River Ranger District

Elk City Ranger Station

TERRY NEVIUS, District Ranger

HC01, Box 416, Elk City, ID 83525
(208) 842-2245 FAX: (208) 842-2235

Clearwater Ranger District

DARCY PEDERSON, District Ranger

Route 2, Box 475, Grangeville, ID 83530
(208) 983-1963 FAX: (208) 983-4056

Moose Creek Ranger District

Fenn Ranger Station

JOE HUDSON, District Ranger

HC75, Box 91, Kooskia, ID 83539
(208) 926-4258 FAX: (208) 926-7119

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Nez Perce National Forest – Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions
January - March 2004

Nez Perce National Forest
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PRESORTED STANDARD
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