

# Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

Preservation through Education and Stewardship

Russian River District State Parks

Volume XXV, Number 1, Spring 2010



## Working Hard to Save State Parks

*Michele Luna, Executive Director*

**W**e have now begun our third year devoting a considerable amount of time to Saving our State Parks. Beginning in January we started collecting signatures for the California State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010. Statewide we need to collect 700,000 in order to qualify 477,000. With the help of many organizations like Stewards and paid signature gatherers we are well over half way to our goal. I am very proud to report that Stewards is one of the most successful grassroots organizations collecting signatures in the State. We have surpassed our original goal of 5,000 and are now trying to reach a new goal of 7,500 before April 15th. Sonoma and Marin Counties are making a huge contribution to the statewide effort. I want to thank all of you who are posting yourselves at markets and parks around the county. You are wonderful!

After April 15th we will regroup and prepare for the campaign to convince 50% plus 1 to vote in favor of the initiative on the November ballot. While I think we will have the support we need in Northern California, we have work to do in Southern California. For more information you can go to [www.yesforstateparks.com](http://www.yesforstateparks.com). We greatly appreciate your help in spreading the word to your families and friends around the state.

### State Park Advocacy Day (PAD)

This year's PAD was another success and we had a great group of State Park advocates from Stewards in attendance. Special thanks to Fred Luna, Annie Cresswell, Amy Racina, Greg Fearon, Amy Southwick, Adrienne Tripp, Jan De Wald, Clara Bolster and Robin Shanda. Fred, Annie and myself were team leaders so we arrived on Sunday for our debriefing. On Monday morning, after receiving another debriefing with our teams, we set off for the capital steps with our signs for a rally with some inspirational speakers. The late morning and afternoon were spent in meetings with different legislators. I am proud to say that both Senator Patricia Wiggins and Assemblymember Wes Chesbro have endorsed the State Park Initiative. We were more challenged in other meetings where we were asked questions and needed to educate legislators or their staff about upcoming bills that would affect our State Parks. Each team member had their part in making the visits productive and informative. Our day ended with a nice reception and the honor of being recognized as one of the many grassroots heroes for our efforts to Save our State Parks in the past few years. As one of the most active groups in the state, I was given an opportunity to speak and thank all of our heroes, those of you who have been there helping us every step along the way.

*See photo on page 2*

### Mission Statement

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods (Stewards) works in partnership with California State Parks to protect and interpret the natural and cultural resources of the Russian River District.

### State Parks Supported

Armstrong Redwoods State Nat. Reserve  
Austin Creek State Recreation Area  
Sonoma Coast State Park

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods  
P.O. Box 2, Duncans Mills, CA 95430  
707.869.9177, 707.869.8252 Fax

[stewards@mcn.org](mailto:stewards@mcn.org)

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

### SAVE THESE 2010 DATES

More information about these event can be found on pages 4 & 6.

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| April 3, 10-3 | Jenner Headlands Hike (strenuous)<br>Limited to 20 people, bring a lunch, register early   |
| April 16-29   | Spring Online Auction opens - Final live event on May 1st  |
| April 17 & 18 | Fisherman's Festival - Arts and Crafts, Seafood, Games   |
| April 24, 9-1 | Earth Day Cleanup<br>RR Estuary and North Jenner Beach   |
| May 1, 10-3   | May Day in the Redwoods<br>Celebrate Stewards' 25th Anniversary with our Partners<br>Fun for the entire family! Complimentary cake and beverages |
| June 4, 11:30 | Annual Golf Tournament, Northwood Golf Course  |

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Lisa Bacon - Editing

## Contributors

Hollis Bewley  
Bea Brunn  
Ruby Herrick

## Photography

Kevin O'Connor

## E-News

To receive our E-Newsletter please go to our website and sign up for these periodic updates. You can customize your subscription.

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

*Michele Luna, Executive Director*

The big news of the year is that Stewards is celebrating our **25th Anniversary**. It was 1985 when the organization was born, with the beginning of our Seal Watch program. Please join us on May 1st when we feature the partnerships that have helped us succeed in accomplishing so much in the past 25 years. For me, this is the most thrilling part of my job. Networking and bringing together a group of people who share a vision and each have some expertise to bring that vision to fruition. In our E-Newsletters I have been highlighting these partnerships and will continue to do so in the weeks ahead. Back issues of our [E-News](#) can be found on our website by clicking the RESOURCES button. Please be sure to sign up to receive our E-News on our website if you are not getting them already.

This year has started off quite busy with our efforts to gather signatures for the State Parks Initiative. This is definitely a very important focus for our year. If we can get this ballot measure passed State Parks will finally have a sustainable funding source and we can look forward to seeing our parks get the attention they need and deserve. Protecting our natural and cultural resource heritage for the future will be possible.

This month we are finalizing two multi-year projects, both funded by the State Coastal Conservancy. In 2005, Stewards received a generous grant in the amount of \$60,000 to develop docent programs in the Willow Creek watershed. With these funds we developed our Environmental Living Program for school children, enhanced our Watershed Education Program, provided docent-led hikes on the new acquisition and developed an active Trail Crew that works on stewardship projects all over Sonoma Coast State Park. We also just completed a beautiful and informative 3-part interpretive panel that is being fabricated and will be installed on the Willow Creek acquisition later this year.

The second project, funded in the amount of \$141,000 is our Willow Creek Second Bridge Fish Passage Project. This is especially exciting since our partnership with other nonprofit, private and public agencies will result in restored habitat for coho salmon and steelhead trout in the Willow Creek watershed. We are completing the design phase of the project and have applied for \$850,000 in funding to complete the construction phase of the project. We should hear about this funding very soon and expect to complete the construction of the bridge in the fall of this year.

In closing, I hope you all have time to get out into our parks. The winter rains have brought a beautiful display of wildflowers and the waterfall at Armstrong Redwoods has become an outdoor break room for the staff of Stewards. A place to reflect on how lucky we are to work for our State Parks.



*Park Advocacy Day Team*

# NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STAFF & PROJECTS

*Brendan O'Neil, State Park Senior Environmental Scientist*

Natural Resources Management (NRM) staff works to maintain the diversity of plants and animals and preserve the landscape that makes our parks so loved. NRM staff consists of Brendan O'Neil, Daniella Dekelaita and Chris Heintzelman. Our jobs start with knowing our parks. Condition assessment of parks in 2001 gave us an overview of what we have and helped prioritize management of the parks natural resources. We continuously acquire information on the condition of our parks from a variety of means such as academic research projects, staff monitoring and unit inspections, information from other agencies and the public. From this information, we make informed decisions on resource management and prepare required planning documents and obtain any necessary permits. A significant portion of protecting parks is the control of invasive species and thinning of vegetation in the face of years of fire suppression. Watershed management projects make up much of the balance of on the ground work we do (with the help of good equipment operators). Roads have been upgraded or decommissioned to reduce chronic sedimentation and portions of creeks restored. We also work to protect the parks from ourselves and outside interests. We review and comment on our own State Park projects and strive to minimize impacts from visitors. We work with other local, state and federal agencies on projects that could impact parks.

Brendan moves the paper and manages a few projects. He wrapped up another season of work in Fife Creek with the help of "Fast Freddie" Cresswell our awesome equipment operator. In the late 1960s, Fife Creek was girdled by concrete and all large root wads and trees that had fallen in the creek were removed (critters love wood in the creeks). It was quickly realized that this was a mistake. It was ugly and it made the creek featureless and lifeless. Since 2000, 44 concrete checkdams and over 100 cubic yards of sacked concrete have been removed (and recycled) and been replaced by 26 logs. There's still a bit more to do, but the rest will happen over time as we maintain/replace infrastructure, but within the reach from the picnic area to just above the lowest bridge, the concrete is all gone! Nature will do the rest! Other good news on the project front, this year we could open up fish passage in Willow Creek. As of this writing we have a mitigated negative declaration pending for a new bridge on Willow Creek Road. We've applied for permits and have two grant applications pending. Keep your fingers crossed. This project will open up 4 miles of coho and 7 miles of steelhead habitat.



Daniella Dekelaita has been busy monitoring wildlife, plants and the general conditions of our parks over the past year. Together with biologists from other districts and agencies, Daniella has been working toward inventorying red-legged frog populations. She is collaborating with Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Sonoma County Water Agency to survey harbor seals along Sonoma Coast in order to establish a population baseline and assess impacts to the seal colony during artificial breaching events in the Russian River estuary. She has the great fortune of working alongside our dedicated and indispensable team of volunteer seal monitors who have been instrumental in this effort. Daniella monitors our resident western snowy plover population along Sonoma Coast, and will be collaborating with Mendocino District of State Parks and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service later this year to survey for endangered Behren's silverspot in Salt Point State Park. Her work focuses on inventorying and establishing a record of the flora and fauna and general condition of parks in the Russian River District. This informs resource management and provides us with a baseline reference, which is very important in the face of climate change. Baseline datasets will provide future generations with a reference for studying changes to the environment over time.

Chris Heintzelman began working in the Russian River District March 2009. Over the past year, he has familiarized himself with parks and the variety of vegetation management and succession management issues affecting the district. His goals for his first year were to identify and triage the work and then to get busy. To help we've had a few contractors out and we have hired on a small crew of senior park aids. It has proven to be a big task but he's happy with the progress made. Chris is busy collaborating on a prescribed fire plan for Ft Ross with Cal Fire and the Timber Cove VFD. We are looking to burn a relatively easy grassland site at the southern end of Fort Ross. Our prescribed fire crew from Santa Cruz has been providing us with support and may participate in the fire as well. The prescribed fire plan is well on its way and we are all excited to get fire back on the ground. Look for smoke in spring or late fall.

NRM staff is so thankful for your support. We're always happy to hear of your observations of the natural wonders in our parks and appreciate you sharing.

## SPRING ECOADVENTURE

Register for EcoAdventures online at: <http://www.stewardsofthecoastandredwoods.org/ecoadventures.htm>

### Jenner Headlands Hike with Sonoma Land Trust staff and Stewards' Docents

Saturday, April 3, 2010, 10 am, [register online](#).

Limited to the first 20 signups.

Join us for one of the first guided hikes on the newly acquired Jenner Headlands. This property was made possible through the dedication of Amy Chestnut, Ralph Benson and others from the Sonoma Land Trust (SLT). Besides SLT the property will be managed by the Wildlands Conservancy, a wonderful organization with lots of experience managing public access programs on public lands. There will be more hikes offered by Stewards and other local nonprofit organizations so if you miss this one keep watching for others. You don't want to miss an opportunity to visit this wonderful piece of property with ocean vistas, large displays of wildflowers and the old Rule ranch.



### Nesting Birds on Bodega Head with Stewards' Docents Hollis and Jerry Bewley

Saturday, June 19, 2010, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, [register online](#).

Join Hollis and Jerry for a morning of bird watching at Bodega Head. Possible nesters: Western Gulls, Pelagic Cormorants, Oystercatchers, Northern Harriers, Great Blue Herons, Ravens. Other possible sightings include pigeon guillemots, osprey, Brandt's cormorants, egrets, and if we're lucky, a peregrine falcon or burrowing owl. Bring binoculars and dress in layers - They'll bring a couple of scopes.



Gumboot Chiton - *Cryptochiton stelleri*  
Photo by Kevin O'Connor

### Tidepool Roving Naturalists on low-tide Weekends

Come out to the coast and join our Roving Naturalists as they explore the everchanging tidepools. Dress in layers and waterproof footwear if you have it. Beach locations vary so visit our online calendar to confirm the location or call the office by the Friday before at (707) 869-9177 or email Ruby Herrick, [rherrick@mcn.org](mailto:rherrick@mcn.org).

Sunday, April 18th, 8:00 am at Marshall Gulch is a confirmed time and beach location.

### Bird of the Season - Osprey

Hollis Bewley, Docent

Migrating osprey return to their nest sites in March to prepare for the serious work of raising a family. They build huge conspicuous nests on the tops of dead trees out in the open and, as David Gessner says, in *Return of the Osprey*, these birds are neither self-conscious nor subtle so family life is easy to observe. They can be seen heading down river in the early morning to fish at the river's mouth or hovering over Bodega Harbor, head bent down intently watching for a meal. The dive is spectacular. They tuck their wings, plunge and just before hitting the water, throw their wings back and strike talons first. Rising out of the water is strenuous work, wings flapping furiously and using a reversible outer talon to reposition the catch, head facing forward, in order to reduce drag. You often hear a unmistakable "coo" overhead before actually seeing them flying nestward with the prize secured beneath them. If they know it's time for the chicks to take to the air for the first time, they'll circle the nest, dangling the fish, teasing and coaxing the hesitant youngsters to make the leap of faith and follow. If you've been observing a family throughout the season, the first clumsy flight of chicks who've spent weeks jumping up and down, flapping and exercising their wings is a thrilling climax.



*Pandion haliaetus*

# WHALE WATCH

Bea Brunn, Whale Mother

Whale Watch got started again on January 2 with our usual fog, wind and huge swells - although we actually had sunshine for a few hours before the fog settled in again. No sightings on our first day in spite of having whales around all summer and fall, including a couple of whales a few days earlier.

As usual, Ruby showed up with her annual whale cookies decorated with whale lice - thanks a lot Ruby, we all look forward to your cookies.

We had 16 volunteers on our first day in 2010 - thank you very much.

January turned out to be very windy, foggy and stormy with only a few sightings of whales still heading south.

February has not been much better as far as sightings are concerned with only a few "stragglers," what we call teenagers, some of them quite close to shore. We are expecting and looking forward to seeing our first northward whales any day.

We've actually had some very nice warm days lately.

## Docent and Community Education Program

We are again receiving rave reviews about our Docent and Community Education seminars. New volunteer Margo Eachus comments, "The Tidepool program presented on February 27 was extremely interesting and well-presented. The expert who spoke to us, Karl Menard, a director at the Bodega Marine Lab was extremely knowledgeable and gave us a very good introduction to the intertidal zones. While our hands-on tidepool experience was postponed by the potential tsunami (the day of the Chilean earthquake), Mr. Menard took us on a fascinating tour of the Bodega Marine lab and the tidepool display that the scientists there have established, along with other local aquatic environments. All the people that I have met at the Stewards programs are very well-informed and interesting people to get to know."

There will be two more new volunteer orientations for 2010 on:  
(Help us spread the word)

March 20, 2010, 9:00 am to 11:30 am

May 15, 2010, 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Register on our website:

[http://www.stewardsofthecoastandredwoods.org/seminar\\_registrationpage.htm](http://www.stewardsofthecoastandredwoods.org/seminar_registrationpage.htm)

Don't miss the following upcoming Seminars:

Back by popular demand, Breck Parkman will take docents on another intriguing hike back in time to explore the "Archeology and History of Sonoma Coast" on March 27, 2010.

Then on May 15, 2010 we welcome Sherrie Althouse from the California Flora Plant Nursery, who will lead a Plant and Wildflower ID Hike on Sonoma Coast.

Our seminars can fill up so we encourage early registration through our website.



Oregon Checkerbloom, *Sidalcea oregana*  
Photo by Kevin O'Connor

## Volunteer Opportunities

Call the Stewards office:  
869-9177 x1# or email  
rherrick@mcn.org

### Program Activities

#### Armstrong Redwoods

Visitor Center Staffing  
FAR  
Docent Tour Guides  
Trail Maintenance  
Habitat Restoration Project  
Pond Farm Interest Group

#### Sonoma Coast State Park

Visitor Center Staffing  
Seal Watch  
Whale Watch  
Tidepool Programs  
Watershed Program  
Environmental Living Prog.  
Sonoma Coast Stewardship

### Other Projects

Recycling & Firewood  
Office Help & Special  
Events

### Volunteer Program Coordinators

Joyce Bacci, ARVC  
Lanny Keyston, AR Trails, FAR  
Laura Parent, Pond Farm  
Linda Fisher, Jenner VC  
Bob Caricato, Seal Watch  
Bea Brunn, Whale Watch  
Suzanne Abrams, ELP  
Fred Luna, Recycling  
Vacant, Willow Creek Ed.  
Bill Bambrick, Sonoma Coast  
Water Quality Monitoring  
and Trail Crew  
The Sorensons, Marine  
Debris, & Beach Cleanups  
Hollis & Jerry Bewley,  
Tidepool Programs

### State Park Volunteer

#### Coordinators

Ranger Ellen Brem  
Armstrong/Austin Creek  
Ranger Ben Vanden Heuvel  
Sonoma Coast State Park

# Special Events ~ Support Stewards' 25th Anniversary

## EARTH DAY 2010 ~ APRIL 24, 2010, 9-1 PM

It's time for Stewards' Annual Earth Day Cleanup in Jenner. Every year and especially in a year with heavy storm events like this year, garbage washes down river and is deposited along the shores of the estuary and Penny Island as well as on North Jenner Beach. Volunteers are needed to haul debris on the beach to waiting watercraft at the river's edge, which will then be transported to the boat launch where a dumpster will be located. Paddlers can help with cleaning up around Penny Island and are required to register with Suki Waters at [watertreks@yahoo.com](mailto:watertreks@yahoo.com). Just show up at the Jenner Visitor Center on the morning of April 24th for registration. We will shuttle you to the trail down to the beach. We would appreciate knowing about any groups that plan to attend and be sure to dress for the weather, bring snacks, gloves and wear sturdy shoes. For more information email [stewards@mcn.org](mailto:stewards@mcn.org) or phone (707) 869-9177.

## ANNUAL YEAR-LONG RAFFLE ~ NOW UNTIL DECEMBER 3, 2010

### 25/25 Raffle - 25 bottles for 25 Years - An Instant Wine Cellar

This year the Stewards' board is featuring an instant wine cellar raffle! From now until December 3rd you can purchase tickets for 3 opportunities to win 25 bottles of a variety of Sonoma County wines to honor our 25th Anniversary. Tickets are now available online by clicking the [DONATE NOW](#) button on our website. Tickets are \$5 each, 6 for \$25 or 10 for \$40.

## FISHERMAN'S FESTIVAL ~ APRIL 17 & 18, 2010

Don't miss this annual event that takes place at Westside Park in Bodega Bay. arts and crafts booths, great seafood, wine and wonderful entertainment as well as the boat building contest, the blessing of the fleet and more fun for all ages.

## SPRING AUCTION ~ ONLINE FROM APRIL 16 TO 29, 2010

Our Spring online auction will run for two weeks before our May Day in the Redwoods event, which will take place on May 1st (see below). Stewards' auctions include wonderful items including beautiful photography by our members, enticing EcoAdventures, wine lots, B&B stays, dinners, jewelry and much more. We are now accepting donations for the auction, including gently used items that would be appealing to members of our organization. You can enter your auction item yourself on our website, [www.biddingforgood.com/stewards](http://www.biddingforgood.com/stewards) or email [mluna@mcn.org](mailto:mluna@mcn.org) or call the office at (707) 869-9177. Online bidding will begin at 10:00 am on April 16th and go until 10:00 am on April 29th. You can place absentee bids for the silent auction on May 1st.

## MAY DAY IN THE REDWOODS ~ MAY 1, 2010, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

### Celebrating 25 Years and Progress through Partnerships

### A Family Day in the Park

On May 1st Armstrong Redwoods SNR will come alive with lots of activity. The festivities will begin at 10:00 am with speakers and special volunteer awards. We are inviting the many partner organizations and agencies that have made Stewards and the work we have done such a great success. Partner booths will be set up in the picnic area and there will be interactive activities through the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights program for families to participate in together. We will feature horse and carriage rides through the park and food and beverages will be for sale. In addition, our silent auction will be going on in the Volunteer Center where complimentary cake, champagne and other sparkling beverages will be available.

## 25TH ANNIVERSARY GOLF TOURNAMENT ~ JUNE 4TH, 11:30 AM CHECK-IN

Stewards' Annual Golf Tournament is always a lot of fun. The event brings together an intimate gathering of golfers who have been supporting this event for many years. We even have a team that comes each year from Arizona. Our golf chairperson, Bill Dickenson always does a great job coordinating this event. A wonderful gourmet lunch is prepared by board member Bob Caricato. There are also great raffle prizes including photography, wine, EcoAdventures, wine, spa treatments and more. Those who have participated in the past will get their registration packet in the mail and others can download the form on our website in the near future. Check the [CALENDAR](#) page of our website.

### SAVE THESE DATES:

**Annual Gourmet Hike on July 17th**, a sold out event in 2009. Tickets will be available in the weeks ahead.

**Old Grove Festival on Sept. 24 & 25th**, featuring **Ledward Kaapana** and **Laurie Lewis and Tom Rozum** this year. Check out [www.oldgrovefestival.org](http://www.oldgrovefestival.org) for more information, videos and ticket sales.

# In Appreciation of our Donors

## Foundations/Agencies

Bodega Bay Fisherman's Festival  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
California State Coastal Commission  
California State Parks Foundation  
Community Foundation Sonoma County  
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A New Wrinkle · The River Choir · The Thugz · Honeybees  
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### Raffle Donors

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### \$500 plus

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Calypso Orchid, *Calypso bulbosa*

## NEW MEMBERS

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Crystal Shoaf  
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Diane Berl  
William & Patricia Brandt  
Joe Da Rocha  
Dan Deneen

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## Senior Members

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James Thies

Stewards members receive this quarterly newsletter by email or mail .

Members are also entitled to 20% discount on purchases at Stewards run visitor centers and at our special events. In addition, Members can attend our educational seminars for a \$5 donation.

## Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

Membership Form

Renewal

YES, I'd like to become a member.

Senior/Student  \$20.00  
Individual  \$25.00  
Family  \$35.00  
Contributing  \$50.00  
Supporting  \$100.00  
Business  \$100.00  
Patron  \$200.00 plus  
Osprey Circle  \$500.00 plus

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to help with an additional donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_

Payment type: Check  Charge Card  Visa MC Total tax deductible donation \$\_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to Stewards. Account # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Renewal Date: February 1 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Bequests

### Your Gift to the Future of State Park Volunteerism

With your help future generations will enjoy quality interpretation through "Volunteers in Parks" programs for many years to come. A gift to Stewards is the simplest form of giving from your estate. There are several types of charitable bequests by will (or beneficiary designation).

Sample:

I hereby give and bequest to Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of California, with a principal address at P.O. Box 2, Duncans Mills, CA 95430, \_\_\_\_\_ percent of my estate, (or) the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ dollars, (or) the following assets

For Information on contributing to Stewards' Endowment in support of Armstrong Redwoods please contact Michele Luna at the Stewards office (707) 869-9177 X4#.

CALL 800-320-0476 TO MAKE A VEHICLE DONATION IN THE NAME OF  
STEWARDS OF THE COAST AND REDWOODS

## Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

PO Box 2, Duncans Mills, CA 95430

(707) 869.9177, FAX (707) 869.8252

[stewards@mcn.org](mailto:stewards@mcn.org), [stewardsofthecoastandredwoods.org](http://stewardsofthecoastandredwoods.org)



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