



The Heron **February, 2014**

Upcoming Club Meeting:
February 24, 2014 7:30 pm
VISITORS WELCOME

Wing 404/Rotary Adult Centre
510 Dutton Drive, Waterloo

www.kwfn.ca

February 24, 2014 Meeting

Speaker: Peter Rasberry, Gaia's Gifts
Slide Show Presentation

Gaia was the Greek earth goddess, or Mother Earth, who in mythology gave birth to the Mountains, Sea and Sky. This presentation is a slideshow of flora, fauna (and more), celebrating the beauty, complexity and diversity of Earth's inhabitants.

You'll be introduced first to a number of common species and their amazing - though often overlooked - habits and adaptations, and then enjoy a collection of captivating images set to music.

Peter's photo website: <http://peterrasberry.zenfolio.com>

Outdoor Ed blog: <http://outdooredguys.wordpress.com>

Twitter account @outdoor_ed

IN MEMORIAM

The KWFN is sad to announce the passing of long-time member:

Gord Cassidy
October 20, 1937 – January 3, 2014

A Celebration of Gordon's life is being planned. The details will be published in a future edition of the Waterloo Region Record.

Further information may be obtained by calling the Henry Walser Funeral Home 519-749-8467.

<http://www.henrywalser.com/book-of-memories/1764384/Cassidy-Gordon/obituary.php>

Mark Your Calendars

Mon. March 24 – 7:30 pm
David Brewer- Penguins

Mon. April 28 – 7:30 pm
Sheila Colla -
The Bumble Bee Decline

Sat. May 10
at rare ECO Centre
KWFN's 80th Anniversary
Celebration
Ceremonial planting of
8 native trees

Mon. May 26 – 7:00 pm
Celebrating KWFN's
80th Anniversary with a
special meeting

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February 11 is the next
submission deadline.
Restrict submissions to a
maximum of 700 words.

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K-W Field Naturalists 2013/2014 Young Naturalist Program

Who Are We?

We are a club sponsored by the K-W Field Naturalists to encourage kids to enjoy nature. It's a great place for kids (7-12 years of age) to get together, share exciting nature experiences and stories, and learn more about our amazing local environment. The programs will be held at the Laurel Creek Nature Centre, and will take place on Saturday mornings from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon unless otherwise announced ahead of time.

Contact: Shailyn Drukis at
shailyn.drukis@gmail.com

Sat. Feb. 22 – Shelter Building
Sat. March 29 – Sugar Shack
Sat. April 26 – Salamander Hike
Sat. May 24 – Bats and Moths

Winter Weather Notice

In the situation where a winter storm may arise, please tune to 105.3 Kool FM or 99.5KFUN for meeting cancellation notices. Weather cancellations should also be provided on their websites. Information will also be available on our website www.kwfn.ca.

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February Outings and Events Schedule

Owl Prowl

Karen Buschert karen.buschert@gmail.com

Meeting Time/Place

Friday, Feb.7 at 730 pm. at the Laurel Creek Nature Centre, 525 Beaver Creek Rd.

(storm reschedule to Sat., Feb. 8)

Come and explore Laurel Creek at night, searching for Great Horned and Screech Owls during their mating season. Meet at the Nature Centre at 525 Beaver Creek Rd., Waterloo, at 7:30 pm. If weather is stormy, we will go Saturday night the 8th instead.

Cressman Woods - Tree ID

Fraser Gibson

519-576-9287

Meeting Time/Place

Thursday, February 13, 2014

9:30 at the parking lot at the south end of Wilson Ave

Are you interested in improving or practising your winter coniferous and deciduous tree identification skills? Why not join Fraser on a tree identification walk through Cressman Woods?

Cressman Woods is part of Homer Watson Park which is Kitchener's second largest natural area (85 hectares). Cressman Woods is one of the best examples of old growth forest in the Kitchener area, protecting some trees more than 200 years old.

We will search out some of the big trees, learn a few basic ID skills and identify as many tree species as possible while also learning a few interesting facts about each.

As always we will keep our eyes and ears open for any other signs of animal activity. Dress warmly as sections of the hike will not be fast paced.

The Great Backyard Bird Count

Mary Ann Vanden Elzen

741-8272

Saturday, Feb. 15, 2014

Meeting Time/Place

930 a.m. at the beer store at Highland Rd. and Fisher-Hallman

You may chose to come for the full tour or meet us at 1 of the stops along the way. We will attend 4 backyard feeders and their environs. Below is a rough schedule of the stops:

1. 10:00 at 2774 Sandhills Road at Jim Cappleman's
2. 11:30 at 37 Springdale Dr., Kitchener at Larry Lamb's
3. 2:30 at 122 Lakeside Dr., Kitchener at Brenda Holvey's

Each of these "hosts" will be expecting us at these approximate times. For more information about GBBC, visit the website at www.birdcount.ca

February Outings and Events Schedule

Amherst and Wolfe Islands

The Burrells

519-699-4695 or burrellsc@golden.net

Meeting Time/Place

Saturday, Feb. 22

8:30 a.m. at the ferry dock in Milhaven, Ont.

This is an all day outing to birding hotspots in eastern Ontario. Participants would have to travel to the area and back on their own. We will spend the morning touring Amherst Island and the afternoon on Wolfe Island. These islands are well known as raptor wintering areas, especially owls and hawks. Each participant must supply his/her own food and drink as there are no facilities on the islands.

If you wish to participate, call Jim for further details.

Photos by Derek Hitchens from the Sandhill Outing.

The feature leader was Peter Russell, former Curator of the Earth Sciences Museum at the University of Waterloo



Moving Forward, Looking Back- Young Naturalists Celebrates 15 Years!

By Karen Buschert

On a very cold, blustery Saturday on November 23 in 2013, the Laurel Creek Nature Centre was packed to the brim with children and adults listening to a presentation about Ontario's native snakes and reptiles. Over 100 kids, parents and volunteers from both the local KWFN Young Naturalists and the Nature Guelph group were participating in a joint program despite the snow storm and nasty driving conditions that day. Even without the Guelph members there, our club was bursting at the seams with approximately 45 registered kids, not including the parents who also participate! In the new year, the decision was made to split them into a morning group and an afternoon group so that we can re-create the smaller, more intimate feel we have had in the previous years. A bit of well-timed marketing via the KW Record seemed to have gotten the word out rather effectively! So moving into the future, the Young Naturalists are a keen, thriving and highly active component of the KW Field Naturalists and the family focus seems to be a major attractive element.

But how did we get to this point? Success doesn't just happen. Looking backward, it is interesting to follow the birth of the club in the late 1990's to the present day. One constant during this whole time has been Pat Bigelow - an ever-faithful volunteer who has helped with behind-the-scenes registration, program planning, events and just about anything that was needed. She was part of the early committee that consisted of herself, Janet Ozaruk and Stacey Buss that planned the first meeting on January 30, 1999. Then, like now, it was targeted for children aged 7-12 with a keen interest in nature as they met the last Saturday of the month at 10:00 am. The early bare-bones structure did not require registration or a fee of any kind.

Fast forward a couple of years and some new people showed up. Returning to KW after years in BC, I came to my first KWFN meeting in 2001 and during the introductions, I got up, said my name and mentioned that I had been a part of a Young Naturalist Club in Vancouver. During break, Janet hunted me down, introduced herself and mentioned the KW Young Nats. I was in! In addition to becoming fast friends with her, I met the other members of the committee that included Janet Dance, April Morrissey, Ann Maricic (Grant), and Janet and Pat.

Together, we would plan each month's event and one of us would take the lead, meeting out of the Bridgeport United Church and heading over to Bechtel Park for events such as Owl Prowls, Egg hunts, winter tracking and more. We began a registration system and a very low annual fee of around \$25 per child.

A year later, Mary-Anne Cain offered the Laurel Creek Nature Centre as a home base and we have met there ever since. She, Josh Shea, Kiirstin Mackie, Heather Hughes and eventually myself were part of the GRCA staff who had keys to let everyone in there! Initially, they donated their time and the centre, but as the program grew and insurance requirements changed, eventually the decision was made to pay for the centre's use and staffing. Other KWFN members like Al Woodhouse and Sean McCammon would occasionally lend a hand leading a program.

Over the years, there have been many different programs with popular ones being offered every year. These ones included snowshoeing, pond studies, bug hunts, winter animal tracking, shelter building, tree identification, nature crafts and even photography! We often called in guest speakers such as the fine snake presentation mentioned above, plus Birds of Prey, and Flying Squirrels among others. Occasionally we would take road trips to places like the Butterfly Conservatory in Cambridge.

Today, I have the privilege of leading this fine, enthusiastic group together with my host of faithful and hard-working volunteers that include Shailyn Drukis, Kelly Holdaway, and several others that help out when and where needed. What's next? Perhaps a senior Young Nats group targeted at ages 12-17.... Stay tuned.....

Membership Report

By Carol Foxall

Income tax receipts:

Income tax receipts for 2013 membership dues and donations will be available for pickup at the January and February club meetings. Please see our treasurer Paul Bigelow at the back of the room. Receipts not picked up at the January or February meetings will be mailed in late February.

President's Ramblings By Graham Macdonald

Well, we are now hearing that Harper's minions are at it again – this time dismantling scientific research libraries in government departments – continuing their attack on inconvenient science and environmental realities.

"Environmentalism" has become a pejorative word in the English language, not just in the political sphere. Thinking about why the average man in the street doesn't "get it" causes me to note the many instances of environmental negativity attached to English words and idioms. When I was growing up, a lad who was skinny, perhaps weak or sickly, not very energetic, was called a "weed", which is also an unwanted plant or a plant in the wrong place. Ever notice that "weed" has been erased from the names of garden plants, though it occurs as part of a multitude of native wildflower common names?

Then there is "bog" and "swamp" and "mire" and "slough" all of which evoke horrors of gaseous miasmas, stinking mud, danger of being lost, or swallowed in a quaking morass – even though these are wetlands that have a huge value to our planetary system in providing water control and purification services, and habitat for a wonderful array of creatures and plants. Which is why we are trying to save Hidden Valley!

And what about "dirt" and "soil" or "mud"? Oh, these three cause city parents to scold us kids for playing in a dangerous commodity, when really "earth" is the source of all food, the top layer of the planet's crust that nurtures us all, and is a marvelous eco-system all of its own, one that we destroy at the drop of a hat by paving over the land. Which is why we are lobbying to contain urban sprawl and curb open pit mining in the Ring of Fire.

Our birds and animals are not immune from this negativity: the wolf - in sheep's clothing; the vulture - preying on unsuspecting investors; the snake - in the grass, and of course the rat - leaving the sinking ship or telling unpleasant secrets.

I suppose it is small wonder that people don't "get it"! Nature is not always convenient for the use of humans. But there are some reasons to hope.

Before Christmas, Margaret & I attended two public meetings: the first was the public input meeting of the Waterloo Region Public Works and Transportation Committee regarding the River Road Extension Project - i.e. Hidden Valley. There were perhaps 15 people from the public in attendance. Over the last ten years some very dedicated people from our club have achieved a great deal. The latest, and preferred, solution to the Region's needs seems to me to go as far as is possible in achieving a viable road system while also minimizing the impact on the ecologically sensitive lands and species at risk in Hidden Valley. I seriously doubt that this project can be stopped, but the ideas and compromises proposed and accepted by both sides have produced a plan that all but the most ardent of environmentalists (there's that bad word again, sorry, champions of the environment) should be able to accept. I expect that this project will now proceed to detail design and construction quite rapidly.

The second meeting was a panel discussion on urban sprawl presented by Smart Growth Waterloo. Four speakers made impressive presentations about the shifts required, and already starting to take place, in Waterloo Region to change the way we live, work, travel and shop. Rob Horne, Commissioner of Community Services for the Region, was impressive and persuasive in explaining the future vision of the Region in developing transit and increasing population density. The OMB decisions about the Region Official Plan and the reaction to them by public, private sectors, and governments were termed "extraordinary" and "unprecedented". The room was full and the preponderance of youth and young working people, both speakers and audience, was noticeable, and to me very encouraging.

So I do believe that some people "get it" and I have to continue to hope and ask you to do whatever you can to promote the protection of the environment, change the usage of the English language, and make "environmentalist" a word that is welcomed by all. Happy New Year.

From the Editor:

Larry Lamb has kindly provided permission to The Heron Editor to publish 'Attracting Animal Life to Your Garden' as space permits. Due to the length of the article, one section has been scanned and is provided below. Other sections will appear in future Heron editions.

Attracting Animal Life to Your Garden by Larry Lamb

Much wildlife habitat is lost daily to urban and agricultural land use conversion resulting in a substantial reduction in numbers of desirable native plant and animal species. However, we need not end up with a desert environment replete with English sparrows, Rock Doves, starlings, rats, and roaches; all hayfever sufferers, in a sea of Kentucky bluegrass. Actually, the situation could never be this grim, for certain species such as nighthawk and chimney swift, which nest on gravel roofs or in chimneys respectively, would be virtually absent here without our commercial or industrial buildings.

We can make up for habitat loss and actually improve upon the original situation, at least for some species of birds, mammals and insects, through judicious landscape reconstruction on an individual lot basis.

Herein, I will outline ways by which one can develop or improve a property's potential for animal attraction or habitation. I will deal mainly with means to attract butterflies, birds and small mammals, primarily through vegetative plantings.

Before you begin, here are some general considerations before planting a certain species. Does your site meet its requirements for moisture, pH, soil (texture and drainage) or exposure (sun or shade)? Is it climate hardy? How big will it get? Does its roots go down deep or spread out at the surface? If you have children around, avoid species

with toxic fruit. Will the fruit dent cars or stain sidewalks? Are there overhead wires or underground services where you want to plant? Your plants' sex life is important also. If it is dioecious, you will need a male and a female plant to produce fruit.

Try to create a natural looking habitat. Use forest or savannah as a model if your yard is shady. If it is sunny, put in shrubby old field systems, meadow, prairie or woodlot edge.

Avoid a manicured look. Nature is unordered. Avoid symmetry but maintain balance.

Keep shorter materials in the foreground. Plant clumps of the same or different species. Clumps provide good cover. Maximize use of space by planting shrubs under trees, vines twining up them, then herbaceous plants under the shrubs; thus creating a layered effect. Evergreens provide shelter and are interesting winter accents. Site evergreens carefully so as to not block views or valuable winter sun. Introduce elements such as rocks, tree stumps, and a diversity of trees, shrubs, vines and herbaceous plants of different species, height, flowering and fruiting time, leaf shape and colour.

Consider installing a water element. A pond, bird bath, even a margarine container weighted down with a rock, are excellent ways to draw in thirsty animal visitors.

Don't clean up your garden until spring, avoiding the removal of egg cases and pupae, potentially valuable cover and a seed source for wintering birds.



NESTING SITES FOR POLLINATORS by Anne Morgan

Our pollinating insects are in serious trouble, so everything we can do help is important. I will write more about gardening for insects in the coming months. Meanwhile why not use the wintertime to think about other ways that you can help our pollinator friends?

About one third of our native solitary bees nest in wood, including hollow or pithy-stemmed plants or old snags (e.g. carpenter bees, leaf-cutter bees, masked bees, and mason bees). Nesting blocks, drilled logs, or tube/stem bundles are easy to construct as substitute nesting spots and ideally they should be protected from the elements. A simple wooden structure can house a variety of twigs, logs or

wooden blocks with holes of different sizes suitable for different species of bees (see photo). For detailed instructions on constructing the appropriate sizes of nesting sites visit www.pollinationquelfh.ca and www.xerces.org

Unlike the nests built for solitary bees there are no strict size requirements for bumblebee nests. In natural conditions, bumblebees will nest in old mouse or chipmunk holes in the ground. I have even had a nest under a large clump of perennials in a dry, sunny spot in my garden, perhaps helped by a rodent digging there initially. You can build a simple wooden box made from preservative free wood with drainage and ventilation holes and an entrance tunnel. Detailed instructions can be found at www.xerces.org

About 70% of our native bees nest in the ground and need access to the soil surface to dig their nest. Where possible simply clear the vegetation to leave some bare patches (anything from a few inches to a few feet) in open, well drained sunny spots, preferably in different areas varying from slopes to flat ground for different species. This means not mulching your entire garden! If you have clay it may help to dig some pits and fill with sandy loam, create a raised bed or fill an old window box with sand.

It is important to have your nesting sites in place as early as possible in the spring, so now is a good time to get building and help our pollinators!





By Fraser Gibson

Ontario Government's Actions Threaten the Protection of Endangered Species

Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, Gord Miller, released a special report in late 2013 slamming the provincial government for recent changes made to the Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA).

The commissioner outlined the key points of the report entitled *Laying Siege to the Last Line of Defence: A Review of Ontario's weakened protections for species at risk*. He explained that as a result of the regulatory changes, "The full protections of the law no longer apply to activities such as forestry operations, aggregate pits and quarries, hydro-electric dams and infrastructure construction - activities that historically contributed to species becoming threatened in the first place.

By eliminating the permit process, the Ministry of Natural Resources has shed its ability to say 'no' to a proposed activity, no matter how harmful it may be to an imperilled species. And since proponents don't have to file any monitoring reports with the ministry, MNR will be blind to the effectiveness of its new rules. Proposals to harm endangered species or their habitats will no longer show up on the Environmental Registry, so the public won't have any ability to know or comment," says Commissioner Miller.

"This report validates Ontario Nature's ongoing efforts to defend species at risk from the recent changes, including our decision to join forces with Ecojustice and Wildlands League to sue the provincial government. It confirms what we already knew – recent changes to the ESA spell disaster for Ontario's 155 endangered and threatened species," says Dr. Anne Bell, Ontario Nature's Director of Conservation and Education.

With the generous support of members like you, Ontario Nature (ON) has reached their goal of raising \$50,000 to assist with the lawsuit. ON filed an affidavit in December and is awaiting the government's response.

You can find Commissioner Miller's report on the Environmental Commission of Ontario website.

Ontario Nature 2013 Conservation Awards Deadline March 31, 2014

It's time once again to recognize excellence by honouring the individuals and groups who have worked tirelessly to protect our province's wildlife and habitats. All Ontario Nature Conservation Award recipients will be honoured at our *Loon Calls on the Lake* gathering and AGM on June 21. The nominations deadline is March 31, 2014. For more information or to submit a nomination, contact Lauren Wright at laurenw@ontarionature.org

Ontario Nature Signs Letter to Attorney General

Ontario Nature has joined Environmental Defence, Canadian Journalists for Free Expression and other concerned organizations to urge the Attorney General to ensure that Bill 83, *Protection of Public Participation Act, 2013* passes second reading and is referred to Committee. Bill 83 reflects the Anti-SLAPP Advisory Panel's assertion that there is a need for anti-SLAPP (strategic lawsuits against public participation) in Ontario.

Ontario Nature Proposes 127,000 Hectares of Northern Forest be Protected

Ontario Nature's Boreal Office has identified candidate areas for protection near Thunder Bay in response to Resolute Forest Products' failure to meet the Forest Stewardship Council requirements regarding their protected areas network. These proposed candidates cover approx. 127,000 hectares in the Black Spruce and Dog River-Matawin forest management units, and are high in biodiversity and recreational value.

Condolences

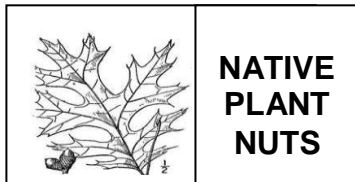
Condolences have been sent to:

Wende Gregory Frei on the death of her father Daniel and brother Shelby

Jim and Joanne Lackenbauer on the death of his mother Rose

Donna Cassidy for the loss of her husband Gord

Blue Cohosh By Wayne Buck



One of the more striking native wild plants we see in the early spring and fall as we hike the Bruce Trail is **Blue Cohosh**; (*Caulophyllum thalictroides* (L) *michx.*); *Caulophyllum*: Greek *kaulos* for "stem" and *phyllum* for "leaf". Another name I frequently encountered for this familiar plant is Papoose Root; due to the fact that it was and still is used by homeopathic practitioners to induce labour to bring on childbirth. Our daughter-in-law used it during the birth of their last child. Blue cohosh should not to be confused with **Black Cohosh**, *Cimicifuga racemosa*. The latter is apparently a more widely utilized and possibly safer medicinal plant. The names papoose root and squaw root are believed to be derived from use by indigenous people to ease pain associated with childbirth. "Squaw root" has also been applied to *Cimicifuga racemosa*, Black Cohosh

The plant grows in shaded forests with rich soil and stands about 50 cm tall having an open structure; leaves from above the middle of the stem; 3-parted into leaflets which are again 3-parted and 2-5-lobed. I find it striking in that when it emerges from the ground in early April just after Bloodroot and before trilliums, it is a deep bluish colour; which really standouts out. As the weeks pass, the blue gradually becomes a greenish-blue although the blue colour can still be detected. A few weeks after its emergence, small 6-petalled greenish-yellow flowers are born at the ends of branches which develop into dark blue, almost black "berries", although they are actually not a berry. (More about this later.). The foliage dies and turns brown in late summer making the dark blue berries still held high really stand out.

If you were to pick one of the spherical dark bluish-black berries, you would find that it is rather hard, not soft like a berry. It would have a thin blue skin, which is actually part of the seed coat, surrounding a brown shell enclosing the embryo of the seed. If you plan to grow Blue Cohosh from seed, this blue coat must be removed as it may contain a seed inhibitor. This can be done in a blender, by abrading the skin in a sieve or on a rough surface or by fermentation. The seeds should be planted as soon as they are prepared, in late summer or early fall, as they take 2-3 seasons to germinate. According to Wm. Cullina in "The New

England Wild Flower Society Guide to Growing and Propagating Wildflowers of the United States and Canada", they germinate hypogeally (i.e. root-growth only) the following season and do not appear above ground until their second or third season. This may be, in part, why Blue Cohosh is seldom seen in nurseries other than native plant nurseries.

In 1964, a Canadian plant taxonomist, William Dore, wrote a paper stating his research had demonstrated that early flowering plants had purple flowers with long styles, while the later blooming plants had yellowish-green or creamy flowers with short styles. In 1981, taxonomists decided to call the purple flowered long styled species *C. thalictroides* and the yellowish-green long styled species *C. giganteum*. He also noted differences in geographic distribution within southern Ontario. Purple-flowered blue cohosh occurs in the northern Appalachian and eastern Great Lakes region and is the more common and widespread of the two species in southern Ontario. Interestingly however, it has a rather restricted total range. In contrast yellow-flowered blue cohosh has a broad range extending further to the north, south, east, and west, and includes a large portion of eastern and Midwestern North America. Much of this information came from the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Website.

Welcome New Members!

Terrill Diebold
David and Ann Love
Welcome back returning members:
Julie Liptak and Walter Muma





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Membership

Annual Fees

Family/Couple \$35
Senior Couple \$30
Adult Individual \$30
Senior (60+) \$25
Student (19+) \$25
Free Membership for
youth 18 and under.
Club year runs from
Sept. to August

Cheques made payable
to:

K W Field Naturalists.

Bring payment to the next
meeting or mail to:
KWFN at 317 Highland Rd
E., Kitchener, N2M 3W6

Membership details, on our
web site at:
<http://www.kwfn.ca/membership.html>

**KWFN is a registered
charitable organization.
Membership fees and
all donations are tax
deductible.**

Objectives of the KWFN

TO acquire and disseminate knowledge of natural
history.
TO protect and preserve wildlife.
TO purchase and hold appropriate parcels of land
for the advancement of conservation.
TO support public interest in nature and its
preservation by supporting the enactment of wise
legislation and by other means as falls within the
scope of the Corporation.

General Information

Meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the
month, September to May with the exception of
December. Our meetings are free and visitors are
always welcome.
Outings are scheduled almost every month.

Advertising Rates for The Heron:

Size	Per issue	Full year (9 issues)
full page	\$200	\$1600
half page	\$100	\$ 800
quarter page	\$ 50	\$ 400
1/10 page (business card)	\$ 25	\$ 200

"The Heron" is the official
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Information is written and
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members of the club. Articles
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necessarily the views
endorsed by the KWFN club.

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