



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management

A YEAR TO REMEMBER

2021 showed us just how resilient we all can be. Despite major setbacks due to COVID in 2020, our partnerships and determination to restore and conserve our natural areas stayed strong. Many CISMAs were new and just getting their feet under them, and had big plans for 2020. But even though many things had to be paused or altered, everyone showed up in 2021! There were a record amount of Weed Wrangles throughout the state, trainings and workshops continued, and many more landowner surveys were conducted by our Regional Specialists and CISMAs. The 4th CISMA conference was held, and field days were coordinated throughout

the state as part of that conference to bring people together safely. We added staff, changed our name to reflect our growth in Indiana, and are charged and ready to go for 2022. Thanks for joining us in this journey!



A MESSAGE FROM OUR SICIM CHAIR

Last year ended up being another rather challenging year, but SICIM has still managed to keep pressing forward. We've learned to adapt to the ebb and flow of virtual and in person events and meetings as conditions moved back and forth throughout the year.

One of the big highlights of the year was expanding our team again with the hiring of our new Executive Director, Stephanie Schuck. Stephanie is energetic and passionate about conservation, and we are thrilled to have her help our organization grow, build capacity, and gain momentum.

Another big change was the rebranding of our organization from Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management to State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management.



While a new name, we will use the same acronym (SICIM). With the success of the Indiana Invasives Initiative and the continuation of the program past 2022 likely, the SICIM Board thought it was time to officially switch from being a southern Indiana based nonprofit to a statewide nonprofit. We want to reduce confusion and make sure citizens and organizations around

the whole state know we are here to help them with their invasive species concerns.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of our sponsors (listed on page 11 of the report) and partners in 2021. You all make it possible for us to keep growing and continue working towards addressing the problem of invasive species statewide.

Sincerely,
Will Drews

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PROJECT COORDINATOR

As the invasive management industry evolves, we know we need to reach new audiences and remove barriers that prevent people from acting. We recognize many are working to mitigate the impacts of invasive species and we are grateful for your dedication. This Indiana Invasives Initiative project is about thinking big, embarking on a new course (taking a risk), and taking action to manage invasive species across jurisdictional boundaries. We recognize that nature needs to thrive not only in our preserves and parks but also where we live because much of the state is privately owned and our choices impact the health of our green spaces.



Harrison County Native Habitat Alliance,
Annual Glade Appreciation Day at Buena Vista
Glade, photo by Kaila Knies

Thanks to your dedication and hard work we are engaging neighbors and finding resources and solutions to address invasive species infestations. Thanks to the willingness of homeowners, we are finding new infestations of invasive species as well as populations of native plants we didn't know existed. One would think finding new infestations is a negative, but we first must be aware of a problem before we can find a solution. And solutions abound when citizens take ownership and are involved. We have much to do, but that will not immobilize us

or deter us from the task at hand. After all, we have species to save and a planet full of wonder to enjoy!

Over the past four years we have visited over 800 landowners and have written management plans for roughly 90% of them, approximately 22,000 acres. Many landowners have not only maintained communication with us but have invited us back to do more. For many, the fruit of our labor has been a return of native plant species,

which support pollinators and insects! We have also held over 200 Weed Wrangles in Indiana! These are powerful events that engage our communities and help them prosper. They are opportunities to network, do, learn, grow your CISMA membership and have fun.

Success lies within all our hands. Invasive species have been around for many years. Therefore, it will take years of work to keep them at bay. It is worth it! Research shows

that nonnative landscapes have 75% fewer native caterpillars than those with native plants. Who doesn't want to see a caterpillar that looks like a pile of bird poop, a stick, or a leaf? I know this alone will inspire you to keep the management flame burning, so I will end on that note and bid you wonderful days outside enjoying nature.

Sincerely,
Dawn Slack





The Indiana Invasives Initiative is a collaboration between the State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to manage invasive species and raise public awareness of the devastation they cause.

MEET THE INDIANA INVASIVES INITIATIVE TEAM



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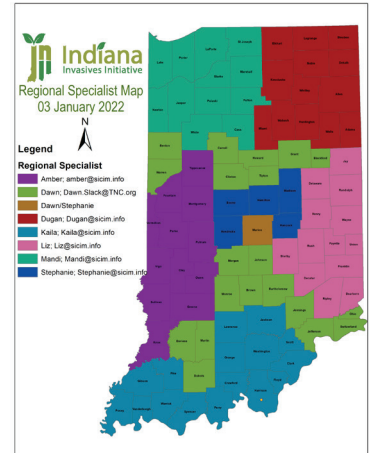
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INDIANA INVASIVES INITIATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OUR PROGRESS BY THE NUMBERS



655 Outreach Events



800 Property Assessments



71 Counties we are actively working in



22,000 Acres with Management Plans



15 Trainings Conducted

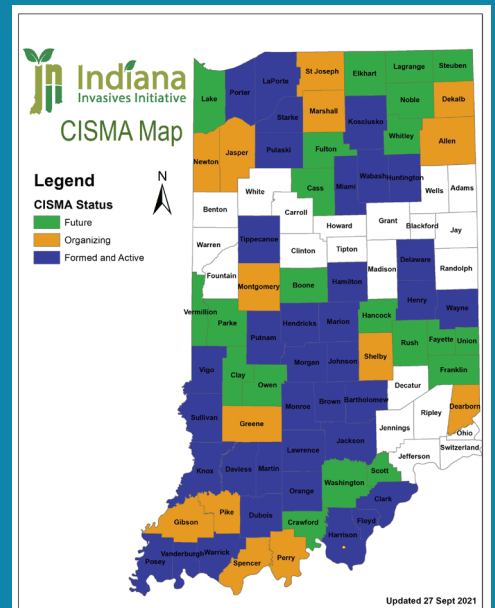


32 established CISMAs (in 36 Counties)

Totals reflect progress of Indiana Invasives Initiative since launch in 2018 unless otherwise indicated



INDIANA CISMA MAP



- Established CISMAs
- Working on CISMAs
- Others we are working with to develop CISMAs

SICIM ANNUAL MEETING GOES VIRTUAL AGAIN IN 2021

Our annual meeting was held virtually on March 25, 2021, with over 100 people attending. Participants were able to hear about the successes and challenges of 2020, updates on the Indiana Invasives Initiative, and hear from esteemed speaker John Shuey from The Nature Conservancy. Awards were given to those who have gone above and beyond in their volunteerism and partnerships with SICIM.

AWARDS:

The Chair recognized Bill Schmeltzer as 2020 Volunteer of the Year. Bill produced a video on invasives for the IFWOA conference last year and is currently working on a video of the history of SICIM. He has long been involved with the SICIM Communications Committee and has contributed greatly over those years.

The 2020 Partner of the Year Award was presented to Purdue Extension. They have been working diligently to produce publications such as a new Master Gardener section on invasives and Master Gardener signature course, as well as a new publication on swallowwort. Thanks for all you do to help educate our citizens!

The 2020 President's Award was given to Dan Shaver, NRCS Indiana State Forester, for his great job with native plant work in Brown County. His passion for invasives work predates SICIM and we are proud of all the great work he's done in Indiana.

PRESENTATIONS:

III Project Coordinator Dawn Slack gave an overview of all the amazing work that is being done through the III. Weed Wrangles and landowner survey numbers skyrocketed this year despite the

ongoing challenges with COVID. There have been over 650 educational presentations throughout the state as well! She explained that invasive species control can feel very daunting, but if we take the time to build the partnerships and find what motivates our local communities it is possible. Following that, each Regional Specialist provided a short update featuring exciting and interesting things going on in their areas.



Keynote Speaker, John Shuey, TNC

Keynote speaker John Shuey spoke on "Working Toward Resiliency in an Uncertain World". He talked about how topography and geology influence plant communities, and discussed the components of site resilience: landscape diversity and local connectedness (how sites are more or less resistant to the movement of species). By mapping these, we can identify where the best biodiversity remains within the most resilient sites. He stated that we can't focus on how the area looked 100



Volunteer of the Year, Bill Schmeltzer

years ago; we need to adapt to manage in face of climate change and think about resistance. The elements of effectively conserved land is legal protection, continuity of management, and maintaining a desired composition and structure that can tolerate a changing climate.



Extension



President's Award Recipient Dan Shaver, NRCS Indiana State Forester

CISMA GRANTS:

2021 marked the first year for CISMA grants. 9 CISMAs were awarded funding and those projects were announced at the meeting. See page 8 for details on the CISMAs and projects that were funded!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

Indiana is truly paving the way on invasive species management through grassroots efforts and partnerships. Since the inception of the III, so many organizations and citizens have partnered with SICIM to create CISMAs and host educational events, Weed Wrangles, professional workshops (both virtual and in-person), and more. Even with the recurring pandemic occurring directly in the middle of our 5 year agreement with the NRCS, Indiana citizens and conservation organizations continue to prevail and we are so proud of their accomplishments. While we can't highlight everything going on in Indiana, we wanted to give you a little taste of it all. Pat yourselves on the back, folks, you are doing great things and we can't wait to see where 2022 takes us!

TRAILBLAZERS! *Those that are using creative and innovative ways to get their message out*

We love to see your creativity! These CISMAs are thinking outside the box in order to get their message out.

- FFA Students from Sullivan High School partnered with the Sullivan County CISMA for a Weed Wrangle and billboard campaign. The students, along with their teacher, Kevin Cross, hosted an educational event and posted a billboard on bush honeysuckle.
- Newton County Nature Partnership (NCNP) partnered with Friends of the Sands for an event where they held an evening hike and learned about moths! NCNP is also a new CISMA, and we are very excited to see what they come up with next!
- The Blazing Stars in Bartholomew County hosted a Weed Wrangle® 5K in Columbus to create awareness on invasive species. Educational signs were placed along the way highlighting different invasive species present. Over 70 people showed up to run, volunteer, or to just show their support! They partnered with many organizations and even the local high school students, who were key in the planning process. We hope this becomes an annual event!



SUPER PARTNERS! *Those who are partnering in amazing ways to get things done*

We all know that partnerships are where it's at! Partnerships and working together are what make us successful, and here are some great examples of how CISMAs and conservation groups are partnering with their local communities.

- New partnerships were formed thanks to funding from Clean Water Indiana, acquired by Fayette and Union County SWCDs for private landowners to remove their invasives as well as set aside funding for a park in each county. This work will continue for the next few years. Union County Parks also hosted the 2021 CISMA Conference Field Day at their brand new park.

- Kosciusko Water & Woodland Invasive Partnership (KWWIP) has partnered with local tool manufacturers (Seymour Midwest), mountain biking organizations (Kosciusko County Velo), Grace College, Wawasee Area Conservation Foundation, IDNR Fish and Wildlife (via Tri-County Fish and Wildlife) and others to reduce costs, enhance networking, synergize workload and goals, and expand the knowledge and reach of invasive species management in Kosciusko County.
- Allen County groups (Little River Wetland Project, Save Maumee, Ft. Wayne Parks and Recreation, Allen County Parks, Indiana Native Plant Society, ACRES Land Trust, LC Nature



Vigo Vine Removal program, photo by Amber Slaughterbeck



Marshall and St. Joseph Counties CISMA, Marshall Memorial County Forest Weed Wrangle photo by Mandi Glanz



Hamilton County Invasives Partnership with a boot brush station funded by a CISMA grant



HC-RIPS Strike Team, improving views and habitat throughout Henry County

Park, IDNR, and dozens of volunteers) shared signage, tools, resources, volunteers, expertise, and cross-promoted 12 Weed Wrangle events in the months of October and November of 2021.

- Posey Invasive Partnership (PIP) hosted a field day for the Japanese Chaff Flower Summit on August 14th as part of a virtual conference that was held for professionals and landowners nationwide. Organizations involved were PIP, SICIM, DNR, University of Illinois, and more. Visit our YouTube page to watch the video about the event!
- Clark County Harmful Invasives Removal Project (CCHIRP), Clark County SWCD, and Charlestown Mayor Treva Hodges partnered for a grant from Indiana American Water for Callery Pear removal from the median on the main strip in town.

BRAND NEW! Welcome to our brand new CISMA's

We currently have 32 active CISMA's in 36 counties, and wanted to welcome our newest groups!

- Montgomery County became official in late 2020 and hit the ground running in 2021 with being awarded a CISMA grant for tools and other supplies for Weed Wrangles.
- Marshall and St. Joseph Counties CISMA is currently building partnerships in their community and planning stewardship events.

They plan to finalize their CISMA name and logo in 2022.

- Dearborn Invasive Removal Team (DIRT) is a newly formed CISMA this year who started the spring

off with a Weed Wrangle with 40 people in attendance, which is always a great way to kick off a new group!

DETERMINED! Those who never say never and never give up

We know that all of our CISMA's are relentless in their own way! We thought we'd highlight a few that seem to go above and beyond with their projects throughout the year.

- Vigo Invasives Management started the second year for their Vine Removal in 2021, saving 23 neighborhood trees from wintercreeper.
- Henry County Removes Invasive Plant Species (HC-RIPS) had another great year logging over 1000 volunteer hours in 2021, and have developed a strike team working in rotation on 9 different sites weekly in Henry County, in addition to hosting Weed Wrangles and providing landowner surveys.
- Hamilton County Invasives Partnership (HIP) is active on all fronts! They have a Strike Team that regularly works in 6 locations, and installed several boot brush stations throughout the county using a CISMA grant along with other funding. They held an invasive tree trade-in, and are initiating an invasives mapping project.

WEED WRANGLE UPDATE

Weed Wrangle® Indiana is part of a national movement that highlights the importance of managing invasive species and connects communities to volunteer opportunities with local natural areas. Each event offers expert-led, hands-on invasive species identification and management. Weed Wrangles in Indiana really took off in 2021, with more than 160 for the year, bringing



it to over 200 since the inception of the Indiana Invasives Initiative! These events are key to the education and outreach that our CISMAs provide to their local communities, while also providing a way for citizens to get involved. Weed Wrangles are events that are repeated in the same locations for at least three years in a row, which gives participants an opportunity to see the impact with their own eyes while bringing everyone together to see the bigger picture. They not only see the results of the first day of removal; they see and are involved in the progression of restoration over the years. These events are impactful on so many levels and we can't wait to see what 2022 brings!

2021 CISMA GRANT AWARDS

The 2021 CISMA grants were a new funding opportunity that we were able to provide because of generous CISMA conference sponsors. Projects are underway, and below is a list of those who received the grant and their proposed projects:

- Posey Invasive Partnership (PIP): replace 60 burning bushes and provide community outreach
- Warrick Invasive Species Partnership (WISP): replace 100 Callery Pears and provide community outreach
- Knox County CISMA: teacher training
- Hamilton County Invasives Partnership (HIP): install boot brush stations, provide community outreach and a native seed give-away
- Lawrence County Keep Invasives in Check (KIC): replace 50 Callery Pears and provide community outreach
- Montgomery County CISMA: organize Weed Wrangles and create signage
- Clark County Harmful Invasives Removal Project (CCHIRP): organize Weed Wrangles,

create a native plant garden, and provide community outreach

- Sullivan County CISMA: conducting an Indiana Land Management course
- Upper Wabash Invasive Network: 28-acre restoration and provide community outreach

We are offering these grants again in 2022, and can't wait to see what projects will happen next!

INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT IN PROGRESS

For resources on controlling invasive plants on your property visit www.montgomerycoswd.com/cisma



Montgomery County Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area



SCAN ME

2021 INDIANA CISMA CONFERENCE: WHY DO WE MANAGE INVASIVE SPECIES?

The CISMA Conference was virtual again this year, but there were a few changes made to enhance the experience of participants. Similar to last year, several pre-recorded sessions were made available prior to the conference and remained available afterward to give everyone ample opportunity to watch on their own time. For those interested in networking, a virtual session was offered on the evening prior to the conference, with about 50 attending. And new this year, were the optional in-person field events on the two days following the virtual live conference.

The pre-recorded presentations covered a range of topics including: outcome of the interactions of native herbivores with garlic mustard, Don Cipiloni, Director of Environmental Sciences and Professor, Wright State University; invasive plant mapping and its use in improving treatment efficiency and efficacy, Kevin Tungesvick, Senior Ecologist, Eco Logic LLC; promoting the growth of urban forest canopies through the planting of native tree species while removing non-native invasive tree species, Carrie Tauscher State Community and Urban Forestry Program Coordinator, Indiana DNR; long-term impacts of emerald ash borer, Kathleen Knight, Research Ecologist, US Forest Service; horizon scanning for invasive species, Helen Roy, Ecologist, UK Center for Ecology and Hydrology; and breeding for EAB resistance: what does the future look like for ash, Jennifer Koch, Research Biologist, US Forest Service.

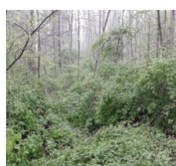
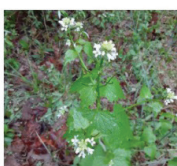
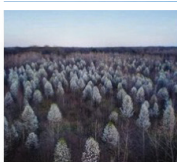
During the virtual conference, Keynote Speaker

Dan Shaver, NRCS Indiana State Forester, gave a presentation titled, "First Contact to Last Stand: The Battle with Invasive Plants". He spoke on the ongoing battle with invasives in Indiana. He highlighted strategies that could give us an advantage, and reminded us all that while it may seem like an uphill battle there have been many successes and we can continue to have successes. After the keynote, participants were able to take part in a live Q&A with the conference presenters.

Megan Abraham, Director of the IDNR, Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, gave an update on the Indiana Terrestrial Plant Rule and how her staff is navigating the new rule, and Eric Fischer, Invasive Aquatic Biologist, gave an update from IDNR Fish and Wildlife. Dawn Slack, III Project Coordinator, followed with an update on the III, and presented the Weed Wrangle Awards and CISMA Highlights.

10 field day events were scattered throughout the state, providing information on plant ID and management techniques: Indiana Dunes National Park, Pinney Purdue Ag Center, Merry Lea Environmental Center, Whistler Hare Woods, Eagle Creek Park, Carmel Clay Parks, Union County Nature Park, McCormick's Creek SP, North Woods Park, and Mosquito Creek NP.

We are deeply grateful for all our sponsors continued support of this conference in light of the pandemic. We also want to thank each attendee for your interest and engagement.



2021 WEED WRANGLE INDIANA CONTEST

We had 10 participants in the 2021 Weed Wrangle contest. We know it is a bit of extra work to enter into the contest, so we extend a heartfelt thank you to all who were able to participate! Winners were chosen via a drawing during the CISMA Conference and the two winners were Lawrence County Keep Invasives in Check (KIC) and the Harrison County Native Habitat Alliance (HCNHA). KIC received an UpRooter, which is a tool to remove large shrubs, and HCNHA received \$500.00. Join us for the 2022 Weed Wrangle contest: www.sicim.info/weedwrangleincontest.



Hannah, KIC, using the new uprooter at Murray Park, photo by Cheryl Coon

MAIN EVENTS FOR 2022

SICIM Annual Partner Meeting

Bugs and Fungi: A New Invasive and Native Solution

On March 17, 2022, SICIM will again host our annual meeting as a virtual event. Join us as we explore invasive species beyond plants and how they are affecting Indiana habitats and management. We will have two guest speakers: Elizabeth Barnes, Exotic Forest Pest Educator for Purdue University, will discuss the Spotted Lanternfly, and Lauren Pile Knapp, Research Ecologist with the US Forest Service in Missouri, will be presenting on controlling Tree of Heaven with a native fungus. This is a free event and all are welcome!

Indiana CISMA Conference

The 2022 conference will take place in August (final dates tbd). Currently we plan to meet

in person for a one day conference, while providing pre-recorded session prior to the conference. The field days were so well received last year so we are planning those throughout the state again following our in-person conference! Continuing education credits will be offered. Check our website for details as they emerge: <https://www.sicim.info/cismaconference>

Other events:

SICIM and CISMAs around the state host many events, both in-person and virtual, throughout the year. National Invasive Species Week is Feb. 28-March 4. SICIM hosts Quarterly Lunch and Learns on topics related to CISMA management and success. Additionally, CISMAs host Weed Wrangles, educational presentations, and workshops on plant identification, invasive species, and more.

SPREAD THE WORD!



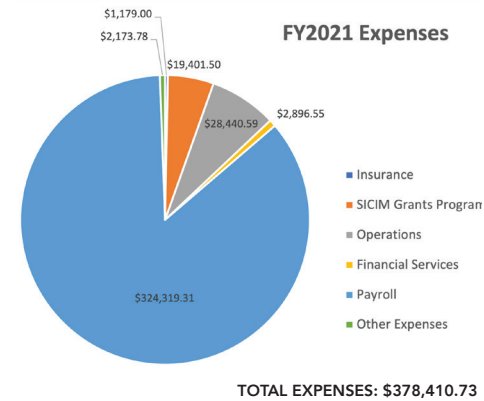
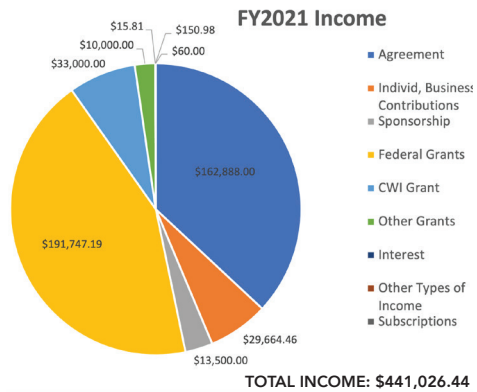
We offer both short and long sleeve versions of our Indiana Invasives shirt. These shirts are a great way to spread the word about the importance of protecting our Hoosier landscapes from the threat of invasive species. For those that are able, you can make an additional donation to directly support the Indiana Invasives Initiative during checkout (www.sicim.info/donate/#iitshirt).

LET'S COLLABORATE!

With the goal of cultivating sustainable support for invasive management, SICIM continues to advocate for state-level invasive species management funding alongside our state and local partners. We offer grant opportunities and partnerships that will expand the capacity of the Indiana Invasives Initiative. For potential collaborations, please reach out to SICIM Vice Chair and Financial Committee Chair, Troy Hinkle (troy.hinkle@in.nacdnet.net).

STATE OF INDIANA COOPERATIVE INVASIVES MANAGEMENT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization led by a volunteer board and committee members with the mission to protect, restore, and enhance Southern Indiana's landscapes by coordinating efforts to identify, prevent, and control invasive species.

2021 SICIM FINANCIAL REPORT



This Financial Statement Activity was developed by the SICIM Chair, Will Drews, and is true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 SPONSORS

GOLD LEVEL

Arrowhead Country RC&D
 Clean Water Indiana
 Indiana Association of SWCDs
 Indiana Society of American Foresters
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 Sam Shine Foundation
 The Nature Conservancy
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

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BECOME A DONOR

We are so grateful to our donors and sponsors who have made it possible for SICIM to advance invasive species awareness and management across Indiana. Our work must go on and your continued help is so important. To sustain and expand our efforts, please consider SICIM for your charitable support. The money raised goes directly to the Indiana Invasives Initiative. Please contribute today as a Student, Contributor, Patron, Bronze, Silver, or Gold Level Sponsor (www.sicim.info/donate). Working together we are building a strong and resilient network of grassroots action to reduce the harm caused by invasive species. Thank you for your support!

ADDITIONAL PHOTO CREDITS: Front cover - (TL) Brown County Native Woodlands Project, Salt Creek Trail Weed Wrangle, photo by Erin Kirchofer; (TR) Starke & Pulaski Native Plant Initiative, Tippecanoe River State Park Weed Wrangle, photo by Mandi Glanz; (BL) Hamilton County Invasives Project Strike Team, MacGregor Park, photo by Mickey Gauen; (BR) Tippecanoe Invasive Cooperative Task Force, educational scarecrow as part of a public event, photo by Amber Slaughterbeck.

Back cover - Kankakee Sands Prairie, photo by Stephanie Schuck.



State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management



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