

State of the Park Report for the Ecological Integrity of Stanley Park

Robyn Worcester, Conservation Programs Manager

The State of the Park Report for the Ecological Integrity of Stanley Park was completed by Stanley Park Ecology Society (SPES) and accepted for information by the Vancouver Park Board (VPB) on May 3, 2010. This culmination of over two years of work by SPES staff and volunteers represents a milestone in the history of Stanley Park as this is the first time a complete biophysical inventory and assessment of the state of the Park's ecological health has been undertaken.

One of the greatest benefits of this report is that it identifies and outlines recommendations which will inform SPES conservation and stewardship actions through the coming years. This outcome was identified by our advisors during our 2007 forum for the long-term ecological management of Stanley Park, during which it was recommended that an assessment of the Park's current state was fundamental to guide our efforts.

By assessing priority areas of concern and identifying gaps in ecological information, we are now better equipped to pursue our goal to preserve and restore the ecological health and biodiversity of Stanley Park's ecosystems.

The report immediately garnered interest by the VPB and the media as several key findings came to the forefront.

continued on page 2...

Summer 2010 Issue

Sneak Peek

A Batty Discovery...	3
Public Programs and Events	4
SPES Stewardship Happenings	6
Making a Difference! SPES SYEP	6
Rangers Relate with EcoRangers	7



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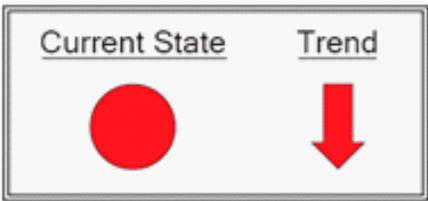
Stanley Park Ecology Society
PO Box 5167
Vancouver BC V6B 4B2
www.stanleyparkecology.ca
Tel: 604-257-6908
Fax: 604-257-8378
info@stanleyparkecology.ca

School Programs: 604-257-6907
Public Programs: 604-718-6522
Urban Wildlife: 604-681-9453
Volunteers: 604-681-7099

...continued from cover.

Terrestrial ecosystems were rated as fair with an anticipated improving trend, mainly due to changes as a result of the 2006 windstorm and the new Stanley Park Forest Management Plan. The state of the Park's aquatic ecosystems, however, are of greatest concern as they are rated as poor with a declining trend.

Aquatic Ecosystems

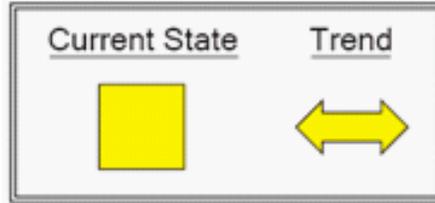


These overall findings are based on nine ecological indicators including such things as: water quality, diversity and extent of wetlands, and diversity of native intertidal species. The rating of each indicator is based on findings within the biophysical inventory and the evidence shows that freshwater habitats are suffering from a variety of stressors including unnatural water regimes, decreasing water quality, and invasive species invasions. The main reason that a declining trend was assigned to these ecosystems is because the Park's healthiest natural system, Beaver Lake, is rapidly infilling due to invasive plants and changes to its hydrology and Lost Lagoon is suffering from poor water quality.



In April, SPES was granted a \$48,000 grant from Vancity EnviroFund to support ongoing action related to the State of the Park Report for Ecological Integrity. Left to right, Hormus Karat, Branch Manager of 4th Ave. Vancity Community Branch, presents a framed plaque and cheque to Robyn Worcester and Patricia Thomson of SPES.

Native Biodiversity



Another finding highlighted in the report which received attention upon its release is the decline in native biodiversity. There were six environmental indicators used to describe this component of ecological integrity, all of which were rated as either 'poor', 'cause for concern' or could not be rated due to lack of information. The overall rating for native biodiversity is 'cause for concern' mainly because -- although there is still a large diversity of animals living in and using the Park -- there has been a decline in recent years, especially in reptile and amphibian species. Recent SPES surveys and the observations of local naturalists both confirm that once common species such as native turtles, tree frogs and garter snakes are no longer observed in the Park. Although the report does not



Introduced green frogs and bullfrogs in Beaver Lake may have a role to play in the disappearance of our native amphibian species (Photo Robyn Worcester).

claim to know the reasons for these disappearances, it is believed that stressors such as habitat fragmentation, climate change, and invasive species may each play a role. It is thought that the current state of biodiversity is relatively stable at this point, but more baseline data is needed for several groups of wildlife including herptiles, bats and small mammals.

On May 3rd, the VPB commissioners unanimously approved the report for information and at a subsequent planning meeting, the Park staff were asked by the Board to return in the fall with recommendations for potential actions.



Tiny planktonic creatures such as this Daphnia form the basis of aquatic food webs and can be used as water quality indicators
Photo: Peter Woods

It cannot be overstated how essential the work of our dedicated volunteers was in enabling this project to come to completion. Volunteers from a variety of backgrounds participated in collecting and managing data, creating maps and graphics, editing and reviewing text, and providing photographs. Thank you to everyone who participated and to our sponsors, HSBC and Vancity, who granted us financial resources to fund this multi-year project!

To view the report please see:
www.stanleyparkecolgy.ca/programs/conservation/SoPRfEI/

A “Batty” Discovery in Stanley Park!

Brian Titaro,
Environmental Educator

Every now and then you accidentally stumble upon something amazing! In this case that something was a male silver-haired bat (*Lasiorycteris noctivagans*) which was recently discovered by a staff member of the Stanley Park Ecology Society while exploring near South Creek Trail.



The first and only silver-haired bat ever discovered in Stanley Park was found near South Creek Trail in Spring 2010.

Silver-haired bats occur only in North America from Alaska into Canada and the southern United States. Although we suspected that these bats should be found in the park, this is the first confirmed sighting in Stanley Park’s history. Silver-haired bats are scarce throughout their wide range, and stumbling upon one in its day roost makes this find even more spectacular!

Unlike the uniformly-coloured brown fur of Yuma and Little Brown bats which are more commonly found in the park, silver-haired bats have deep chocolate brown fur tipped with white on the back. They live solitary lives in forested areas feeding upon insects at night and roosting under the bark of trees or in empty logs during the day. When the colder temperatures of fall arrive, they congregate with other silver-haired bats and migrate to the southern United States. Silver-haired bats are one of the slowest



SPES Conservation Programs and School Programs Managers, Robyn Worcester and Mariee Devereux, carefully measure, weigh, and assess the health of the bat. Only trained professionals with permits and rabies vaccinations should ever handle wild animals.

flying bats in North America. They can live for up to 12 years in the wild.

You never know what you’ll find in Stanley Park! If you think you’ve found something amazing in the park take a picture of it and bring it to the Nature House at Lost Lagoon to show our staff. Maybe you’ll make the next big discovery!

Dignitaries Dive in to Support SPES



Mayor Gregor Robertson and MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert put their backs into stewarding Stanley Park!

On Earth Day 2010, SPES hosted 50 alumni of the Canada World Youth Forum on a Stewardship Event. Greeting the guests, and contributing to the “ivy pull” were Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson; Members of Parliament Don Davies, Ujjal Dosanjh and Hedy Fry; MLA Vancouver West End Spencer Chandra Herbert; Park Board Commissioner Loretta Woodcock. Also in attendance were City Counsellor Heather Deal, Park Board Chair Aaron Jasper, and Co-Acting Stanley District Manager Thomas Soulliere.

Celebrating the International Day of Biodiversity, May 22, 2010, Federal Minister of the Environment, Jim Prentice, took a podium in Stanley Park to announce an EcoAction community grant for stewardship by Stanley Park Ecology Society. Left to right: Vancouver Park Board Chair Aaron Jasper; Minister of Environment Jim Prentice, SPES Executive Director Patricia Thomson, MP West Vancouver John Weston.



Vancouver Park Board Commissioner, Loretta Woodcock, joined SPES staff for the opening of ‘The Lagoon’ by Jamie Dolinko, a digital installation of 108 auto-rotating photographs in the Stanley Park Nature House. Catch this presentation until the end of June.

Summer 2010 nature programs

All Discovery Walks meet at the Stanley Park Nature House at Lost Lagoon unless otherwise indicated. \$10.00 adults, \$5.00 members and children. For further information call 604-718-6522

Beginning in July, going forward, Discovery Walks on Sundays will go from: 1:30-3:30 pm



Keep an eye for the SPES table at Special Community Events such as Car Free Day , the West End Senior's Network and Pride Week Activities.



The Young Naturalists' Club of Stanley Park

This monthly event is a chance for children (with their parents) to enjoy two hours of nature exploration. Activities include hiking, games, wildlife observation, outdoor art, and more! Presented by the Stanley Park Nature House at Lost Lagoon and the Young Naturalists' Club of BC, please call 604-718-6522 for more information or to sign up.

For more information, visit www.stanleyparkecology.ca or call (604) 718-6522

Sun, Jun 13
1-3 pm

The Perfect Storm: Stanley Park Recovery Since 2006

On December 16, 2006, hurricane force winds swept unchallenged across Vancouver. Stanley Park lay directly in its path. Thousands of trees were toppled, habitats were devastated and a city lay heart-broken in its wake. Three years later, tour an area of the park especially hard hit. Witness the age old cycle of destruction and the amazing natural forces of renewal with naturalist David Cook. Meet at the Third Beach Concession Stand.

Sun, Jun 13
11:30 am -
2:30 pm

Life in the Rocky Intertidal Zone - The Young Naturalists' Club of Stanley Park

Join special guest leader, Sheila Byers of Nature Vancouver's Marine Biology Section for an exciting exploration of life in the rocky intertidal zone at Stanley Park. Search for fascinating creatures such as crabs, barnacles, sea stars, worms, and mussels to learn about where they live and how they interact with each other. Learn to practice good beach manners, and come get your hands dirty – this is marine biology at its finest! The Young Naturalists' Club is for children ages 5-14 with their parents. Register at 604-718-6522.

Sun, Jun 20
12 to 6 pm

The Stanley Park Nature House on Denman Street? Car-Free Day West End

That's right! We're bringing the Nature House to Denman Street for Car Free Day. Skulls, scat, claws...animal track mould making... guided bike tours ...walks to the Nature House...who knows what else we might get up to!? Stop by the Stanley Park Ecology tent.

Sun, Jun 27
9-11 am

Birds of a Feather

Join naturalist and expert bird watcher Cathy Aitchison for a two-hour walk exploring Stanley Park's varied and beautiful bird life. By donation.

Sat, Jul 3
10am-12pm

Young Naturalists' Club of Stanley Park Please see sidebar

Sun, Jul 4
1:30 -
3:30 pm

Rainforest Delight

Join Sonya, SPES Environmental Educator, for an engaging tour of the temperate rainforest of Stanley Park. Explore how this rare rainforest works and expect to catch glimpses of some of its creatures.

Sun, Jul 11
1:30 -
3:30 pm

Power Politics of Ants

After over 80 million years, are ants changing their social order? Scientists studying ant super-colonies made a startling discovery: the largest super-colonies on Earth function as a single mega-colony! Spanning half of the globe, it signifies an immense evolutionary leap for ant species that once functioned as competing family units. Join ant enthusiast, Andrew Scott, on this walk to find out what is going on.

STANLEY PARK ECOLOGY SOCIETY

Sun, Jul 18 1:30 - 3:30 pm	State of the Park Regarding Ecological Integrity In April 2010, SPES released a groundbreaking report on the ecological condition of the diverse habitats of Stanley Park. It compiled a bio-inventory of the park's flora and fauna and identified stressors on the park's ecological systems. Join Sonya, SPES's Environmental Educator for a tour of areas and issues highlighted in the report.
Sun, Jul 25 9-11 am	Birds of a Feather Join naturalist and expert bird watcher, Cathy Aitchison, for a two-hour walk exploring Stanley Park's varied and beautiful bird life. Donate What You Can.
Sat, Aug 7 10am-12 pm	Young Naturalists' Club of Stanley Park Please see sidebar
Sat, Aug 7 10am-12pm	Celebrating Diversity in Nature What is the point of diversity? How does it play a role in nature and in the evolution of ecosystems – or does it? Join Sonya, SPES Environmental Educator, to explore the many twists and turns nature takes as it provides a rich variety of species, genetics and habitats.
Sun, Aug 8 1:30 - 3:30 pm	Secrets of Beaver Lake Beaver Lake, a beautiful little gem snugly nestled in the middle of the forest, has a past! All will be revealed on this walk looking at the plants and organisms on the lake edge. What are their special attributes? Do they have a "lifestyle"? How was the lake formed and what is its future? Join naturalist Terry Taylor for all the dirt!
Sun, Aug 15 1:30 - 3:30 pm	Insects: Our Friends & Foes Insects and humans have a complex relationship that stretches into prehistory. We compete and co-operate, and exploit each other's attributes. Join insect expert, Andrew Scott, to find out more on how insects have acted to limit the human population and why the mosquito is the most dangerous animal in Africa.
Sun, Aug 22 10am-12pm	Twenty Million Years of Rock Join geologist, David Cook, on a walk along the seawall, and explore how 50 to 70 million year old rivers laid the foundation for Stanley Park as we know it today. This walks meets and leaves from the Third Beach Concession Kiosk.
Sun, Aug 29 1:30 - 3:30 pm	State of the Park for Ecological Integrity In Spring 2010, SPES released a groundbreaking report on the ecological condition of the diverse habitats of Stanley Park. It compiled a bio-inventory of the park's flora and fauna and identified stressors on the park's ecological systems. Join Sonya, SPES's Environmental Educator for a tour of areas and issues highlighted in the report.
Sat, Sep 4 10am-12pm	Young Naturalists' Club of Stanley Park Please see sidebar
Sun Sep 5 1:30 - 3:30 pm	Wild at Art! Cedar orbs, tree weaves and more! Check out Stanley Park's Environmental Art Project. Four semi-permanent pieces have been produced in the wilds of Stanley Park from Lover's Trail to the Totem Poles. We will visit as many as time allows while bridging art, ecology and the dialogue between the two.

Summer Conservation Programs

Bats are Beautiful

Join SPES staff to learn all about bats living in Stanley Park and our conservation programs to study them. A short indoor slideshow presentation about these mysterious nocturnal creatures is followed by a walk outside to see bat habitat and a bat colony.

Leader: Robyn Worcester,
SPES Conservation Programs Manager

Cost: by donation (\$5.00 suggested)
When: Sun July 25, 7:30-9:30 pm



How Citizen Science is Assisting in Bird Conservation

Bird Studies Canada (BSC) is Canada's leading non-profit bird research and conservation organization. This presentation will describe current results from the Coastal Waterbird Survey and Beached Bird Survey, and provide an update on a global conservation initiative in Canada, the Important Bird Area program. Come out to learn more!

Leader: Karen Barry,
BC Program Officer, Bird Studies Canada
Cost: Free
When: Wed July 21, 7-8 pm

Both programs will meet in the Stanley Park Dining Pavilion. Pre-registration is required.

Please call 604-681-9453 to register.

SPES Stewardship Happenings

Greg Ferguson,
Stewardship Programs Coordinator

Environmental stewardship is an ethic that represents personal and cooperative care, responsibility, and action for the health of our local and global environmental resources for both current and future generations. SPES's stewardship department fosters this ethic in individuals, groups, and organizations through our programs and partnerships.

The following are a few examples of programs SPES is working on in 2010 to help achieve our goal of environmental stewardship in Stanley Park and beyond:

Removing invasive species and restoring habitat is a significant role SPES plays in maintaining the ecological integrity of Stanley Park. Since January, SPES has focused conservation efforts on important riparian (shoreline) habitat around Lost Lagoon and Ceperley Creek.

- This has included the removal of 52.83 m³ of Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*), 8.04 m³ of yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), and 4.7 m³ of English ivy (*Hedera helix*).

- Six hundred and sixty three native species have been planted to restore and

enhance key wildlife habitat in these areas.

- We have also conserved 22 mature riparian trees against beaver (*Castor canadensis*) damage through wrapping with wire mesh. A large, cleared and unvegetated area on the south central side of Lost Lagoon will be the focus of future riparian restoration works in conjunction with the Park Board and volunteers.

- Three wood duck (*Aix sponsa*) and 9 swallow (*Tachycineta sp.*) nest boxes have been placed around Lost Lagoon and Beaver Lake to help enhance the population status of these species.

- We have also continued enhancing blue orchard mason bees (*Osmia lignaria*) with boxes at the Dining Pavilion and our pagoda style "super-condo" near the Rose Garden. Volunteers have been central in the maintenance, installation, and monitoring of these boxes.

SPES's tree ivy management program has recently reached its first full year of activity, with its goal of slowing the spread of this invasive species and conserving the park's native plant species. Over the year, a total of 1,500 native shrubs and trees have been cleared of ivy, much of this effort resulting in the conservation of mature specimens.



Community volunteers remove Himalayan blackberry, a common invasive species of riparian areas. Photo: Greg Ferguson

Education and hands-on involvement continue to be the driving force behind SPES's goal of instilling a stewardship ethic in program participants, while at the same time taking substantial steps in conserving Stanley Park's biodiversity for the benefit of all species.

Contact our Stewardship Coordinator if you'd like further information on how you can help Stanley Park (stewardship@stanleyparkecolgy.ca).

Making a Difference! SPES's Summer Youth Ecology Program



SPIRYT members remove yellow flag iris from the shorelines of Lost Lagoon.

Have some extra time this summer? Looking for a great place to volunteer with a fun group of people? Interested in learning new skills and helping with an important cause? Volunteer for SPES's Summer Youth Ecology Program / aka SPIRYT.

The SPIRYT Program provides youth aged 14 - 20 with the opportunity to earn volunteer hours and work in teams to undertake conservation initiatives in Stanley Park. Volunteers participate in habitat restoration and enhancement activities, learn about west coast ecology and conservation issues, and develop organizational and leadership skills. Join us for a full week of programming within July or August. Team members are enthusiastic, enjoy interacting with people, have an interest in ecology, and enjoy doing physical work in the outdoors.

For more information, please contact:

Greg Ferguson, Stewardship Programs Coordinator:
stewardship@stanleyparkecolgy.ca ; 604-718-6522

Rangers Relate with EcoRangers

Phil Dubrulle,

Co-Existing with Coyotes Coordinator

As we transition from spring to summer and the days get longer, we are able to observe migratory birds and other seasonal wildlife in our Vancouver Parks. While enjoying park spaces you may also come across another seasonal point of interest, Park Rangers. True, they may not be wildlife; however, they do have a growing connection to conservation and education within the over 200 Vancouver Parks.

Park Rangers have diverse roles that cover the majority of the heavily utilized areas on a daily basis from early in the morning until dusk, seven days a week. You will often see Rangers handling public enquiries about park services and rules, monitoring of play field and general park activities (including filming and “busking”), by-law infractions, bike patrol, and liaison work with park partners and stakeholders.

In recent years, SPES and the Park Ranger program have been collaborating with the intention of strengthening communication and information-sharing between the two organizations.



Park Rangers patrol Stanley Park from the May long weekend to September's Labour Day

This year SPES's Conservation and Public Programs managers spoke at the Park Ranger training sessions where Park Rangers learned about SPES programs and resource materials such as the State of the Park Report for the Ecological Integrity of Stanley Park.

As a result, Park Rangers will be better prepared to inform park users about ecological interests while directing those requiring more in-depth needs to the Nature House on Lost Lagoon and the SPES website.

In turn, Park Rangers will assist in training SPES's EcoRanger volunteers so that they will best understand bylaws, conflict resolution, and park support services.

From a conservation perspective, Rangers will also do their utmost to protect city parks' sensitive areas by asking dog owners to keep their dogs on leash, deter the intentional feeding of wildlife as well as enforcing the no-smoking in Vancouver parks by-law that takes effect on September 1st.

News from the Nature House

Have you dropped by the Stanley Park Nature House on Lost Lagoon lately? You might be surprised to find a whole new look. Located underneath the Viewing Plaza on the southeast corner of Lost Lagoon, you will find all the skulls, scat, feathers and guidebooks you would expect to find at a Nature House plus new displays and interpretive panels.

You will also find that a space has been created to explore nature in other ways. We were delighted to have Park Board Commissioner, Loretta Woodcock, join us for the opening of this space, which premiered with, 'The Lagoon' by Jamie Dolinko: A digital installation of 108 photographs selected from a decade of walks around Lost Lagoon, this exhibit will show on weekends until the end of June.

In the future, expect to see events such as Green Cooking Demonstrations, Children's Activities, Wet Labs, Wood Carving, Biodiversity Displays and so on. Public Programs is committed to providing space for all our visitors to explore nature in ways traditional and innovative. Keep an eye on our Events Calendar over the coming weeks for announcements of new events. As nature changes, so does the Nature House!

<http://www.stanleyparkecology.ca/WebCalendar/month.php>



In late rainy April, SPES led a personal birdwatching tour in Stanley Park: Supporting research for The Big Year, a comedy movie in production about bird watchers, SPES Board Director and global birder extraordinaire, Don Enright, took popular actor, Jack Black, along with his real-life character protege, Greg Miller, and several film crew members on a walk throughout the park. A soggy - but good - time was had by all!

THANKS TO OUR RECENT DONORS AND SPONSORS



Keith Lord Sports Foundation Fund held at the Vancouver Foundation

Thanks Also To Recent Donors:

Spectra Energy, Accenture, Turning Point Brewery, Happy Planet, Ethical Bean, Brita 2010 Earth Month tour, Telus, Mark Anthony Group, Judith Macpherson, Stuart MacKinnon, Joyce Craig, Rosalyn Kaardal, Victor Balon, Shannon LaBelle, Lois Ballance.

Globe Foundation and Turning Point Brewery Co. hosted SPES at the June 2010 EPIC Sustainability Fair at the Vancouver Convention Centre. The popular 'Stanley Park 1897 Amber' drew robust crowds that supported Stanley Park conservation through individual donations tallying \$3,000. The original Stanley Park Brewery was located on the edge of Lost Lagoon at the site of the current Nature House.



Megan and Jeremy of Turning Point Brewery serve Stanley Park 1897 Amber with a smile!

Canada Helps! Donating to the Stanley Park Ecology Society has never been easier, thanks to CanadaHelps! This online donation portal is accessible through our website, www.stanleyparkecology.ca. Simply click the "Donate Now" icon on our homepage. CanadaHelps provides secure service for monthly or one-time gifts. Tax receipts will be issued for donations over \$30.

STANLEY PARK

ECOLOGY SOCIETY

...promotes awareness of and respect for the natural world by providing a leadership role in the stewardship of Stanley Park through collaborative initiatives in education, research and conservation.

SPES Members Enjoy:

- Discounts on Discovery Walks, hikes, Family Programs and Events
- Seasonal activities calendar and our quarterly newsletter
- Special perks and promotions from community partners
- Free preview nights on Christmas Bright Nights and the Halloween Ghost Train

SPES Membership Supports:

- School and Public Programs helping more than 30,000 children and adults to discover nature each year through hands-on stewardship adventures
- The Stanley Park Nature House at Lost Lagoon, Vancouver's only ecological interpretive centre, welcoming over 15,000 visitors each year
- Wildlife monitoring, habitat restoration and biodiversity conservation in Stanley Park

YES! I Want To Contribute!

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 Address _____
 City _____
 Postal Code _____ Phone _____
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I Want to Become A Member

- Family (\$40) Individual (\$20)
 Junior <19 (\$15) Senior/Volunteer (\$15)
 Renewal membership
 Send newsletter by e-mail

My Gift Is Enclosed

- \$20 \$50 \$100 \$_____

I Want to Make A Monthly Donation

I authorize the following monthly credit card donation to the Stanley Park Ecology Society:

- \$10 \$15 \$25 \$_____

All information will be kept confidential according to the Personal Information Protection Act.

Payment Method

- Cheque Visa Mastercard

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Cheques are payable to:
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 Vancouver, B.C. V6B 4B2 Canada

SPES is a registered charity #11916 6890 RR0001. Charitable Tax Receipts issued for donations of \$30 or more



Prospect Point Cafe and Stanley's offer Stanley Park Ecology Society members

20% OFF

full service dining (excludes liquor)

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Valid until Sept 30, 2010

for more information:
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