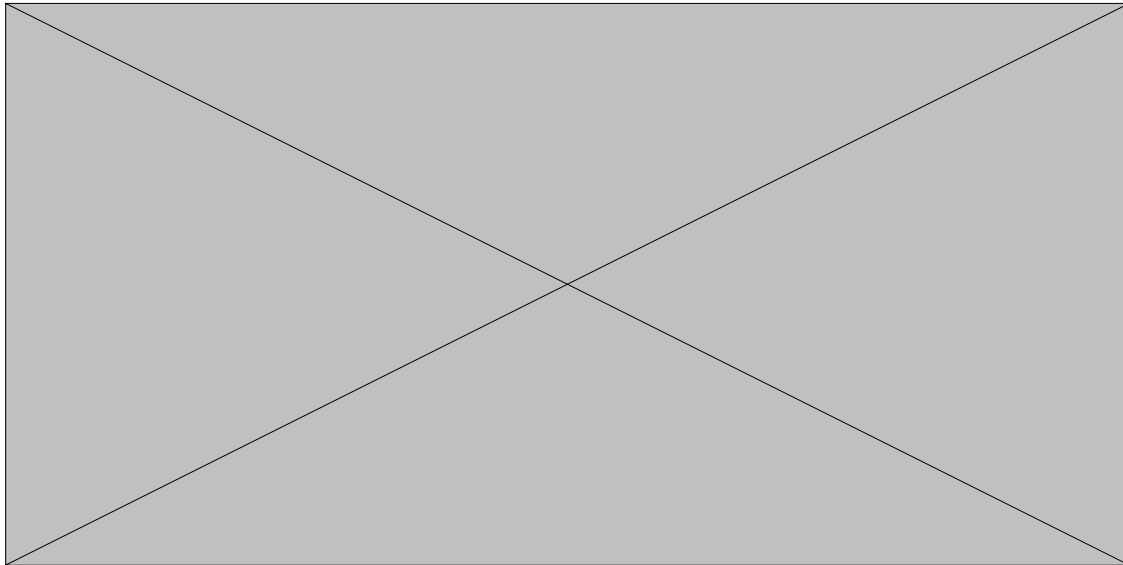


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## Summer 2017 Wilderness News

**Congress:** Unfortunately, the news about Wilderness in Congress is fairly grim. Though some good wilderness designation bills have been introduced, wilderness-damaging bills are taking center stage as anti-wilderness leaders in both chambers take aim at our precious wilderness heritage, aided and abetted by the equally anti-wilderness Trump Administration. The following are a few key bills we're working to defeat:

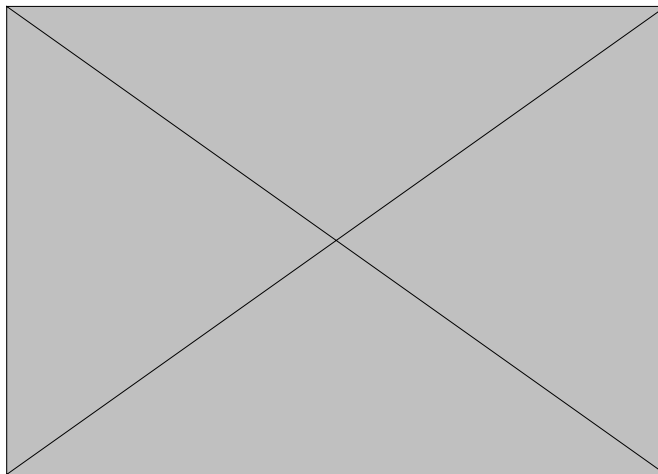
- **Izembek.** The bill (HR 218/S. 101) to force a land exchange and build a road through the heart of the Izembek Wilderness in Alaska passed the full House of Representatives on July 20 and is pending in the Senate. It has the support of the Trump Administration.
- **Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act.** A discussion draft circulated in the House this past June has the

same wilderness-damaging provisions as last year's bill that passed the full House. It would effectively repeal the Wilderness Act by allowing all kinds of habitat manipulations and motorized uses for anything even remotely connected to fishing, hunting, shooting, or fish and wildlife management. The sportsmen's bills so far introduced in the Senate do not include these provisions. [Learn more.](#)

- **Mountain Bikes in Wilderness.** HR 1349 would also amend and weaken the 1964 Wilderness Act to allow mountain bikes and other forms of mechanical transport in every unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Rep. Tom McClintock (R-CA) introduced the bill, and since McClintock chairs the Federal Lands Subcommittee, the bill remains a very real threat to Wilderness. No Senate companion bill has been introduced in this Congress. [Read more on our blog.](#)

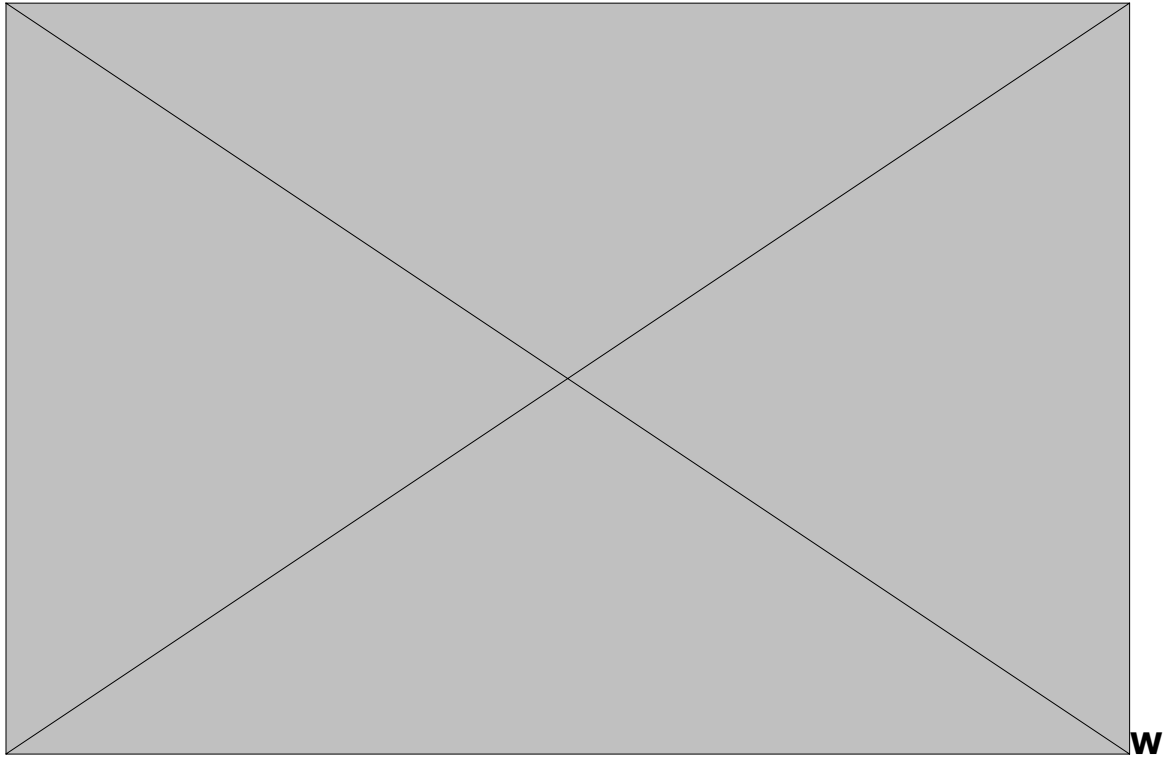
- **Superior National Forest Land Exchange.** Rep. Rick Nolan's (D-MN) HR 3115 passed the House Natural Resources Committee on July 26. The bill would force a land exchange of 6,650 acres of Superior National Forest land to PolyMet Mining Company, which wants the federal lands for a massive open-pit copper-nickel mine south of the fabled Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Copper-nickel mining is notorious across the globe for the centuries of acid mine drainage and mobilization of heavy metals that it brings. The bill would sidestep four lawsuits against the land exchange. **Take action before August 17: [urge the Forest Service to protect the Boundary Waters watershed from sulfide mining.](#)**

[See a chart of all wilderness-related legislation.](#)



Wilderness Watch has a New Logo! We're excited to unveil our new logo. It features a grizzly bear, symbol of the wild, ever watchful in a protective stance. Our new logo better

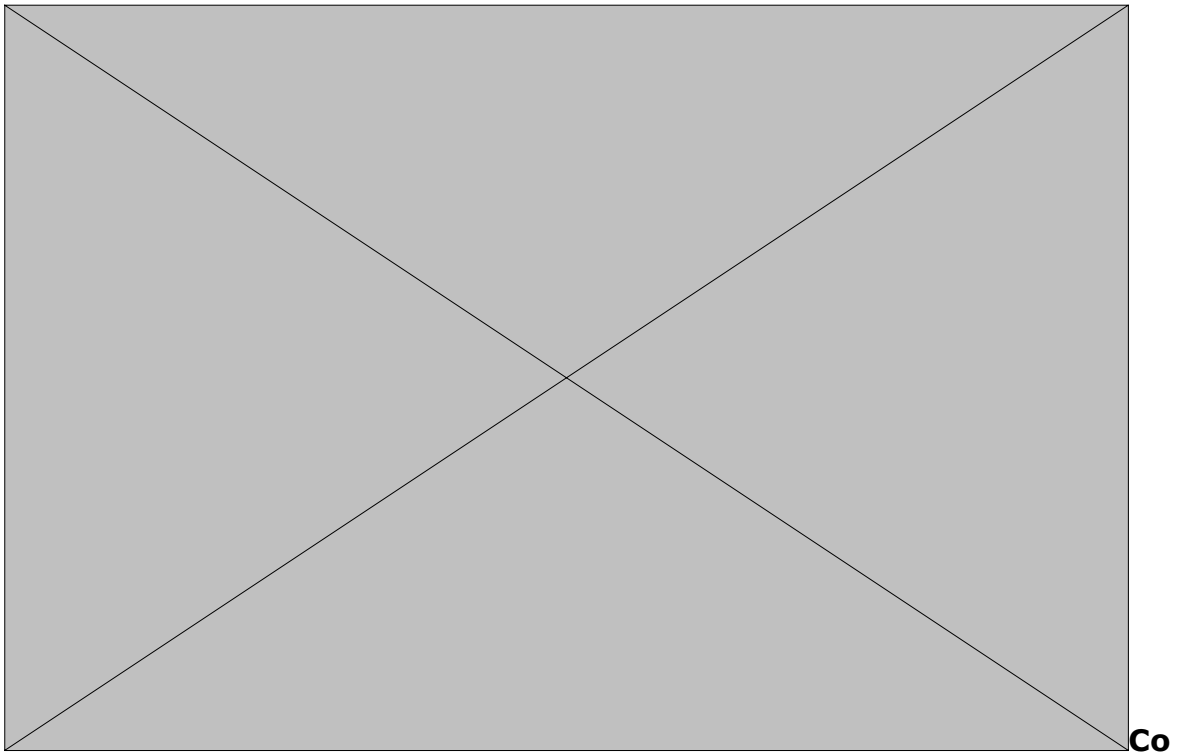
embodies Wilderness Watch and the work we do—a spirited group that remains steadfast in our efforts to defend our National Wilderness Preservation System.



**elcome Geo Wuerthner!** Wilderness Watch is pleased to welcome noted author, ecologist, and conservation activist George Wuerthner to our staff. As our new Advocate-Organizer, George will play a key role in advocating for wilderness protection and advocacy around the country.

George is a well-known writer on conservation issues, having published 38 books and innumerable articles, essays, and opinion pieces. [Read more about George.](#)

George will be hitting the trail this fall and winter to raise awareness about Wilderness and the threats and challenges facing it. If you would like to help organize or schedule a presentation in your community, please [email us](#). George's road show schedule will be posted on our website so you can see when and where he's going to be in your area.



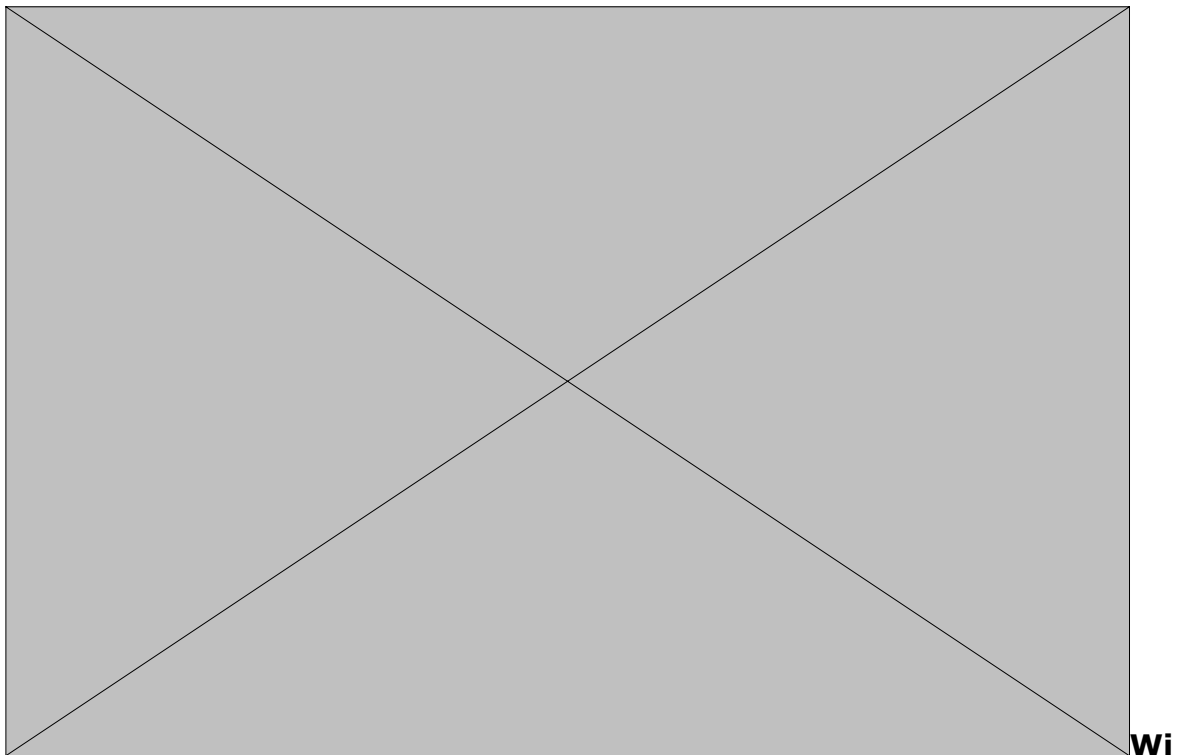
**Congress Overturns Rules Banning Unethical Killing Methods in National Wildlife Refuges:** Last August, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published regulations governing the killing of carnivores in national wildlife refuges in Alaska including nearly 20 million acres of designated Wilderness. These regulations preempted State hunting and trapping regulations meant to reduce carnivore populations with the intent to increase moose and caribou numbers.

Despite very strong public opposition, earlier this year Congress repealed the new rule. In early April, President Trump signed the law, again allowing the following practices in refuges in Alaska:

- Same day airborne hunting of bears, wolves, and wolverines;
  - Use of traps, snares, and nets for killing bears;
- Killing of wolves and coyotes from May 1 to August 9, which is a significant part of the denning season;
  - Killing of bear cubs or mothers with cubs; and
  - Use of bait to kill brown bears.

While this is clearly not the outcome we've been working for, Wilderness Watch will continue to fight to protect wildlife and to ensure that natural processes are allowed to shape our national wildlife refuges and designated Wildernesses of Alaska. **Read an editorial. Take action: urge the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to resist Alaska's aggressive hunting policies.**

Making matters worse, the Department of Interior recently announced it would be reviewing similar rules protecting predators in national preserves administered by the National Park Service in Alaska. Wilderness Watch will keep you informed of opportunities to express your support for wildlife when the comment period on new rules commences.



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### **Wilderness Watch Weighs in:**

- **Looking at Visitor Use in the Cascades:** Wilderness Watch has weighed in on a Forest Service proposal to address increasing visitor use in five Wildernesses in Oregon's Central Cascades—the Three Sisters, Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington, Waldo Lake, and Diamond Peak—to better protect conditions within the Wildernesses. The proposal includes potentially a permit system, campfire ban, campfire setback, camping setback/restriction, and education. [Read our comments.](#)
- **No to Prescribed Fire in the Boundary Waters:** Wilderness Watch is concerned about the Forest Service's planned use of human-ignited prescribed fire on 1,314 acres within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota. Prescribed fires are the kind of manipulations that the Wilderness Act militates against. [Read our comments](#)

- **Other Ways to Cross a River:** Wilderness Watch is urging the Forest Service to abandon its plan to re-construct a large bridge in the Teton Wilderness in Wyoming, using helicopters and other motorized equipment. This location is the most remote area in the lower 48 states.

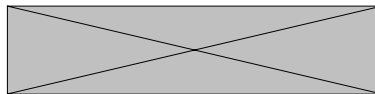
[Read our comments.](#)

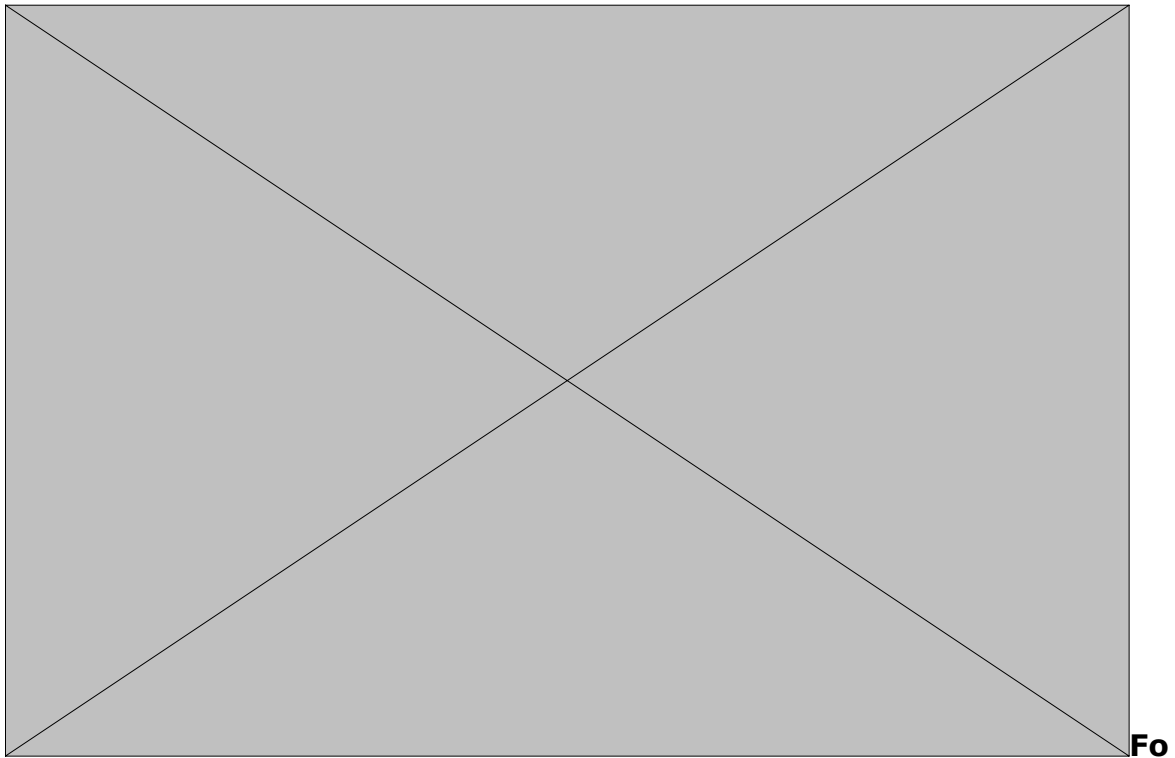
- **National Monument "Review" Threatens Wilderness Too:** President Trump's executive order demanding a review of all national monuments larger than 100,000 acres and established since 1996 portends potentially serious consequences for the National Wilderness Preservation System. For starters, within those 27 monuments are 30 Wildernesses: Dark Canyon, Worthington Mountains, Cache Creek, Snow Mountain, Cedar Roughs, Soda Mountain, Craters of the Moon, Monarch, Golden Trout, Lime Canyon, Jumbo Springs, Paiute, Grand Wash Cliffs, Mount Logan, Mount Trumbull, Sheephole Valley, Trilobite, Clipper Mountain, Bigelow Cholla Gardens, Piute Mountains, Cadiz Dunes, San Geronio, Magic Mountain, Pleasant View Ridge, San Gabriel, Sheep Mountain, North Maricopa Mountains, South Maricopa Mountains, Table Top, and Paria Canyon-Vermillion Cliffs. [Read the rest on our blog.](#) **Read WW's comments: Bears Ears National**

**Monument/General National Monument Review**

- **Promote Natural Recovery of Grizzlies in the North Cascades:** The National Park Service is looking at translocating grizzlies into the rugged North Cascades in Washington. Wilderness Watch supports restoring healthy grizzly bear populations in a way that protects and enhances the area's wilderness character and also minimizes impacts to bears. We are urging the Park Service to consider natural recovery options. [Read our comment](#)

- **No Permanent Firebreaks in the Ventana Wilderness:** Wilderness Watch is urging the Forest Service to end permanent, artificial fire lines inside the Ventana Wilderness in southern California to instead focus fire prevention measures near homes, where it is most effective. [Read our comments.](#)





**Forest Service Decision Protects the Kalmiopsis Wilderness from Mining:** Earlier this year the Forest Service (FS) decided to withdraw mineral rights for the next 20 years on about 101,000 acres on public land near the Kalmiopsis Wilderness in Oregon. This withdrawal will help protect the Kalmiopsis from a proposed open-pit nickel mine just outside the Wilderness.

**[Read more in a news article.](#)**

**Completing Projects the Wilderness Way:** Kudos to agencies and individuals getting work done in Wilderness using traditional skills and wilderness-compatible modes of travel. Here are a few recent stories highlighting some good wilderness work:

- [“Howling Wind. Icy Hills. Tough Trek to Gauge California Snow”](#)
- [“Real Horsepower”](#)
- [Volunteers remove nearly 150 tires from Linville Gorge Wilderness](#)

**We are Candles**

by Frank Keim

*(Editor's note: A long-time Alaska wilderness advocate and explorer shared this poem with us.)*

*We are candles*

*and the wind is rising,*

I've heard it said...

But when I say it here

I mean something greater...

and something smaller...

I mean human hubris in our world

and how we pretend to be gods,

willfully and without contemplation,

or deep deliberation,

trying to make our chimeras real,

not understanding our limits

and the prodigious power of Nature

that in the wink of an eye

could wipe our species off the Earth,

as it did almost once before.

We stand in awe and fear

without parachutes

on the rocky rim of a gaping abyss,

teetering this way and that over what to do,

and the wind is rising

as we waver in our good and evil intentions,

at times deciding on a wiser course,

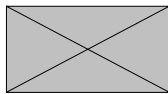


against great odds,  
trying to hold in check our numbers  
and our voracious appetite for Earth's  
natural treasure...  
or, sadly,  
just tying on our blindfolds and hurtling  
pell-mell into the fiery void  
of perilous politics and the reckless behavior  
of gluttonous children in a candy shop,  
eating too much and sickening,  
but still eating more until we kill ourselves  
and the planetary biome of our birth.  
So, amen for humans, it seems...  
since, for the Cosmos,  
we are only a trifling inconvenience  
that could not endure anyway  
because of our new brain and its petty desire  
for control and comfort and  
the narcissistic satisfaction of ego,  
and oblivious overindulgence for a few  
in the face of scarcity for the many.  
And yes, again, the wind is rising,  
and the flame of our candle is flickering...  
how much time do we have left?

what do we do?  
where do we go  
to find release from this?  
In truth,  
there is **nowhere** else to go...  
if we are to survive,  
we must learn to challenge  
and question,  
and do this again and again,  
or rise and rebel,  
even knowing the end may be the same for us,  
but defy and resist anyway  
because that is who we are and  
because we know it is right,  
and it is just, after all.  
*We are candles*  
*and the wind is rising....*

Photos: Lake Clark Wilderness by National Park Service; Izembek Wilderness by Kristine Sowl, US Fish & Wildlife Service; Basin and Range National Monument by Bob Wick, Bureau of Land Management; Kalmiopsis Wilderness by Leon Werdinger Photography.

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