
The Florida Forest Steward

A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals



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Cogongrass, photo by Dr. Richard Williams

Invasive exotic plants, such as cogongrass, know NO boundaries. We must work across agency and property boundaries to prevent and control infestations.

The Florida Invasive Species Partnership (FISP): Invasive Species Know NO Boundaries - Do We?

By Kristina Serbesoff-King, The Nature Conservancy and Chris Demers, UF-IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation

This article is a condensed version of the original publication in Wildland Weeds, Winter 2008.

Chances are good that if you work with invasive non-native species issues in Florida, you've been hearing more and more about partnerships, and perhaps something about a really cool private land incentive program finder, and an entity that calls itself FISP - Florida Invasive Species Partnership. Yet another acronym to learn!

The history of FISP begins with the Private Lands Incentive subcommittee of the Florida Invasive Species Working Group, formed in 2001 by direction of Governor Bush to develop a comprehensive plan that would coordinate the responsibilities of the agencies that manage and prevent biological invasions.



The plan that resulted identified the need to evaluate incentive programs and funds that were available to private landowners to assist with the control of invasive species. Kathy O'Reilly-Doyle, with the US Fish and Wildlife Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, was asked to chair this group and she quickly roped in a group of unsuspecting partners from about 12 agencies and organizations.

This partnership became the Florida Invasive Species Partnership (FISP) in early 2008 and developed an action plan to focus efforts on the prevention and control of invasive non-native species. The action plan was developed with the realization that we could not adequately address the invasive species threat to natural lands and wildlife habitats by only working with private landowners or public land managers. The challenges to effective invasive species control on both public and private lands are very similar: lack of resources and funds, limited staff, limited knowledge of problem species and limited knowledge of assistance programs. Working with neighbors can pool resources, time and funds; it also builds strong partnerships that will likely continue into the future.

Action Plan

Goals:

1) Think Locally – Act Neighborly:

Increase effectiveness and decrease costs by working together.

2) Provide tools to develop a unified approach and bridge the gap between landowners' and land management agency efforts.

3) Encourage development, implementation and sharing of new and innovative approaches.

Objectives:

1) Develop a matrix of existing incentive programs that can be used by landowners and managers to locate assistance for invasive species control.

2) Establish the matrix on a single Web site, and provide links to specific information to address and resolve different problems. Provide outreach and training about these resources to public and private technical service providers.

3) Promote partnerships and collaborative efforts to address invasive species on statewide, regional and local levels (e.g., Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs), Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs), Invasive Species Task Forces, Invasive Species Councils, etc.)

4) Provide an information clearinghouse for these efforts.

Target Audiences:

- Public land managers/owners
- Private land managers/owners
- Technical Service Providers (i.e., agencies and organizations that provide funds or technical assistance such as the Florida Division of Forestry (DOF), Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), USDA Farm Bill programs, UF-IFAS extension agents and specialists, etc.)
- Cisma organizations

Actions

FISP members have started working towards our goals and objectives through two main actions:

1) Enabling private landowners through the creation of a searchable database of private land incentive programs (the “matrix”), housed on the new Floridainvasives.org Web site, and

2) Fostering CISMAs to provide a consistent approach to preventing or controlling infestations. This has been accomplished primarily through the creation of the Floridainvasives.org Web site, a monthly conference call/Web meeting for individuals involved or interested in Florida CISMAs, and by speaking at multiple conferences, land manager meetings and CISMA start-up meetings.

Conclusion – “This isn’t rocket science”

One of our founding members, Chuck McKelvy (FWC), always reminded us that this isn’t rocket science, but that there were some necessary ingredients for long-term success:

- Multiple agencies and organizations in partnership;
- Involve private landowners and interests;
- Recognize and respect differences and commonalities in missions;
- Conservation leverage - use each other’s programs and assistance to strengthen and support conservation work.

Join us for the FISP Polycom Videoconference on June 16, 2009, “Think Locally, Act Neighborly to Combat Invasive Species”, where we’ll discuss these opportunities in greater detail. See the announcement in this issue.

For more information on FISP or any of the programs or solutions discussed in this article, please contact the current FISP co-chairs, Kristina Serbesoff-King at

kserbesoffking@tnc.org or Erin Myers at Erin_Myers@fws.gov.

FISP has no formal authority and does not exert any control over the work of any individual or institution; it exists to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of partnership approaches to preventing and controlling invasive species through increased communication, coordination and shared resources.

Mulching: A New Forest Management Tool

By Jon Gould, Florida Tree Farmer

For those of us that are non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowners, it’s always a challenge managing your forestland as a sustainable forest. Most of us are limited by our financial resources, time to devote to our forestland, and experience with silvicultural practices such as prescribed burning and herbicide treatments. Many NIPF landowners are also absentee landowners, seniors in their retirement years, or young men and women starting their careers in other fields and raising children.

It’s easy to let vegetative competition in planted pine plantations and natural pine stands get out of hand. Even after intense site preparation, planted pines can be overcome by hardwoods, unwanted pine species, and heavy undergrowth which can greatly limit the growth of or even kill planted pines. These same competitors can also affect the growth of pines in natural stands.

Early Control of Competing Vegetation

The most critical period for planted pines is the first few years after

planting when all vegetation, including grasses and weeds, are vying for the same soil nutrients, moisture, and sunlight. Once the young pines have gained several feet of height and have well established root systems, they are more able to compete with surrounding vegetation. How well the competition is controlled has a lot to do with both the survival rate and growth rate of the planted pines, even several years after planting and in some cases throughout their life time.

Typically, competing vegetation is controlled by the use of herbicides, prescribed burning, and/or mowing. All of these control measures have limitations as well as time and cost issues. If you are not able to get this early competition control done, your stand will likely begin to look more like a jungle of hardwoods and vines than a stand of pines. At this point you will wonder what, if anything, can be done to get the stand back under control.

Mulching Machines Help Regain Control



Mulching machines have been around for the last several years, usually seen along highway right-of ways knocking down and grinding up brush and trees. Typically, the mulching equipment is mounted on large machines like trackhoes or smaller skid

steer machines. Over the last few years the smaller mulching machines have been improved so that they can efficiently clear trees up to several inches in diameter. The more common mulching machines have a horizontal shaft cutter head with cutting teeth attached to a spinning drum. The machines are also capable of mulching vegetation within a few inches of trees you wish to keep without damaging them. They can also reach up several feet to trim tree limbs and remove vines. Small skid steer machines can also be mounted with heavy duty rotary blade mowers attached on the front. These machines generally don't clear and mulch with the precision of those mounted with horizontal shaft cutter heads, and the mulch tends to be larger in size resulting in a less pristine looking site after mulching. Most mulching machines operate on flat steel or rubber tracks, have several speeds forwards and backwards, and have a very tight turning radius. Because of the wide flat tracks, the contact pressure is low so the ground surface is disturbed very little. This is particularly important on wet or thick organic surface soils. The low contact pressure is also less likely to damage the roots of adjacent trees.

The skid steer machines mounted with either horizontal shaft cutter heads or heavy duty rotary blades can clear vegetative competition between the rows of planted pines and also around pines in natural stands. Rubber-tired farm tractors and heavy duty rotary blade mowers are limited by the size of the vegetation, maneuverability of the machines, and ground surface conditions. Skid steer machines can knock down and grind up most vegetation, but this is not always



economically feasible. To minimize the cost per acre, these machines should be operated in a continuous forward motion, as much as possible. Stopping, starting, reversing, turning, multiple passes, and grinding all of the vegetation to small pieces can take a lot of time. Merely knocking down most of the vegetation, mulching the smaller vegetation, and only partially mulching the larger material takes considerably less time. The idea is to reduce the competition so that more conventional measures can be utilized to either control or eliminate the competition.

After the mulching operation, resprouting of the vegetation can be controlled by mowing and prescribed burning (with the limitations previously discussed) or eliminated for a considerable time by selective herbicide applications.

In addition to clearing in pine plantations and natural pine stands, these mulching machines are great for clearing roads and trails through the woods, food plots, and right along property and fence lines. They can also open up access lanes through dense vegetation so that herbicides can be used to selectively control the vegetation.

What about Cost?

The cost per acre for mulching with small machines varies considerably, depending on the equipment, operator, vegetation, topography, ground surface conditions,

how close the mulching is done to the pines and other leave trees, and the amount of grinding to obtain the end result required by the landowner. Generally, the mulching contractor charges by the hour for the time the machine is actually operating. He may also charge a lump sum or mileage fee for mobilizing and demobilizing his equipment, especially if he has to travel a long distance or he considers your job small. The hourly rate can also vary a lot, depending on the equipment, vegetation to be mulched, site conditions, size of the job, and the workload of the contractor at the time. For the smaller machines, hourly rates are usually in the range of \$75 to \$150. Hourly rates for larger equipment may be more on the order of \$250. Sometimes, a contractor will offer a reduced hourly rate if you can line up some other jobs for him with neighbors, relatives, and friends in your area.

Cautions and Suggestions

Make sure the contractor only charges for the time his machine is actually working, not while loading and unloading, performing maintenance, breakdowns on site, stopped while the operator is talking on his cell phone, etc. Also, question the contractor about the condition of his cutting teeth

or rotary blades and if they are suitable for the vegetation to be mulched, and make sure there is no old fencing or wire where the treatment will take place. This could cause damage to equipment and result in lost time. After the contractor has started mulching, before you leave him on his own I suggest you carefully observe his mulching operation to determine if he is getting the desired results you want in the time you are willing for him to spend. It may be helpful to have him mulch a test plot of one acre or a few hundred feet between rows of planted pines. This way you can get a better idea of what your cost per acre is going to be before the contractor has used up your budget by over mulching. Just a few changes in his operation could greatly reduce your cost per acre and still give you an acceptable end result. Some contractors have more experience clearing and mulching sites where an open park-like effect is desired with all mulch ground to small pieces and all undesirable brush and trees removed. In some cases, like right around a house, along a fence line or trail, or around the edge of a pond or lake, this may be the appearance you desire and are willing to pay for. However, for the purpose of bringing vegetative competition under control in forestland, this degree of mulching is not required.

The cost differential between the two operations can be considerable, so decide what you want and make sure your contractor understands.

While the mulching contractor is on site you may want to consider having him do some other work. These small skid steer machines have several other attachments, including push blades, grapples, frontend loaders, and stump grinders that can be quickly interchanged. Finally, after completing the mulching operation and getting the vegetative competition where you can control it, make sure to follow up over the next few months and periodically thereafter with continued control procedures like herbicide treatments, prescribed burning, and farm tractor and rotary blade mowing.

Video footage of a mulcher, along with information about several habitat management techniques, can be accessed on-line at:

http://www.myfwc.com/CONSERVATION/ConservationYou_LAP_habitat.htm

Congratulations Certified Forest Stewards!



Mark Asleson (FWC), George Smith, and Kurt Stoughton (DOF), Putnam County



Mike Mathis (DOF), John Warren and Ken Oser (Consultant), Walton County



Brian Cobble (DOF) and Joseph Hingson, Suwannee County

Forest Stewardship Workshop/Hike:

Tree/Plant Identification for Forestland Owners



May 19, 2009; 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Eastern Time; Morningside Nature Center, 3540 East University Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32641 (directions on back).

This program will give landowners an opportunity to learn to identify some of the tree, shrub and herbaceous species on their forest properties. We'll focus mostly on sandhill and flatwoods species, identifying live specimens in the field. We will also learn about how some of these plants are used by wildlife and/or the role they play within the larger plant community and habitat. This will be a walking event so please wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Ticks will be plentiful so long pants and sleeves are strongly suggested. A water cooler is on site – bring a water bottle if you wish to take water to the field. Tick repellent will be available but if you prefer a particular brand bring it.

Agenda:

9:00 am ET	Sign-in, meet and greet at Morningside Nature Center Office
9:15	Welcome and Introduction: Plant ID Primer , <i>Chris Demers and Dr. Alan Long, UF-IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC)</i>
10:00	Tree / Plant ID Hike in the Field , <i>Geoff Parks and Stefanie Nagid, Gainesville Nature Operations; Dr. Alan Long, SFRC</i>
12:00 pm	Lunch (Thanks Sponsors!)
1:00	Tree / Plant ID Hike in the Field , <i>Geoff Parks, Stefanie Nagid, Dr. Alan Long</i>
3:00	Wrap up, Evaluations

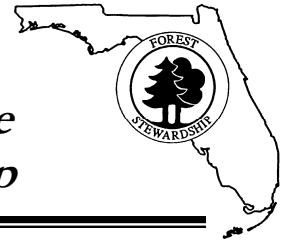
Register: This program is free but pre-registration is required. **Contact Anandi Banerjee at (352) 846-2374 or anandibanerjee@ufl.edu to register.** Lunch will be provided but BYO coffee if you need it. **Attendance will be limited so please register soon!** Please share this announcement with others who may be interested.



Funding for Florida's Forest Stewardship Program is provided by the USDA Forest Service through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Forestry and a grant from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

Polycom Videoconference:

Think Locally, Act Neighborly to Combat Invasive Species – The Florida Invasive Species Partnership



June 16, 2009; 1:00 – 4:00 PM ET (12:00 – 3:00 PM CT); at 8 Florida locations (listed on the back).

Invasive species know NO boundaries. The Florida Invasive Species Partnership (FISP) is a collaboration of federal, state and local agencies along with nongovernment organizations in Florida, formed to link efforts at preventing and controlling infestations of invasive exotic species across agency and property boundaries. FISP has created a Web site, at <http://www.floridainvasives.org/>, to help connect Florida's landowners and land managers with available technical and/or financial assistance programs to prevent or control invasive exotic species problems. Join us to learn how to access and use these valuable resources.

Tentative Agenda (all times Eastern):

1:00 pm	Sign in at facility
1:15	Program introduction , Chris Demers, UF-IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC)
1:30	What is FISP? , Greg Jubinski, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
2:00	Think Locally - how is this going to help me or my clients? , Chris Demers and Anandi Banerjee, SFRC
2:45	Break
3:00	Act Neighborly – cooperative efforts in your region , Erin Myers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
3:45	Conclusion, Evaluation, Adjourn

Register: Please call the contact listed for the location you wish to attend **by June 4** to ensure getting materials; a list of the participating locations and contacts is on the back. A small fee may be collected at the door to cover refreshments. Please share this announcement with others that may be interested.

Florida Invasive Species Partnership:

US Fish and Wildlife Service Partner's Program
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
The Nature Conservancy
Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council
US Army Corps of Engineers
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Florida Division of Forestry
University of Florida, IFAS
Florida Department of Transportation
Southwest Florida Water Management District
Palm Beach County

Funding for Florida's Forest Stewardship Program is provided by the USDA Forest Service through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Forestry and a grant from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative

Participating Locations:

<p>Gainesville, University of Florida Campus McCarty Hall D, G001 Call or email Anandi Banerjee (352) 846-2374, anandibanerjee@ufl.edu to register. Park in the Bookstore Welcome Center Parking Garage. See http://campusmap.ufl.edu/ for location.</p>	<p>Marianna, UF-IFAS Jackson County Extension Office 2741 Pennsylvania Avenue Marianna, FL 32448 Call (850) 482-9620 to register.</p>
<p>Green Cove Springs, UF-IFAS Clay County Extension Office 2463 State Road 16 West Green Cove Springs, FL 32043-0278 Call the Extension Office at (904) 284-6355 to register.</p>	<p>Milton, UF-IFAS West Florida REC 5988 Highway 90, Building 4900 Milton, FL 32583 Call or email Robin Vickers at (850) 983-5216 x ext. 113, rvickers@ufl.edu to register.</p>
<p>Homestead, UF-IFAS Miami-Dade County Extension Office 18710 SW 288 St Homestead, FL 33030 Call Patty Viera at (305) 248-3311, ext. 225 to register.</p>	<p>Plant City, UF-IFAS Gulf Coast REC 1200 North Park Rd Plant City, FL 33563 Call or email Melissa Friedman (352) 846-2375, cdemers@ufl.edu to register.</p>
<p>Madison, UF-IFAS Madison County Extension Office 184 College Loop Madison, FL 32340-1426 Call the Madison County CES office at (850) 973-4138 to register.</p>	<p>Quincy, UF-IFAS North Florida REC 155 Research Road Quincy, FL 32351-5677 Call Charlene Cupp-Kinch at (850) 875-7101 to register.</p>

See <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/map/index.html> for maps to Extension facilities.

Questions about this or other Forest Stewardship Program activities can be directed to Chris Demers at (352) 846-2375 or by email at cdemers@ufl.edu. For more Forest Stewardship information and events see the Florida Forestry Information Web site at:

http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/Extension/florida_forestry_information/index.html



Timber Price Update

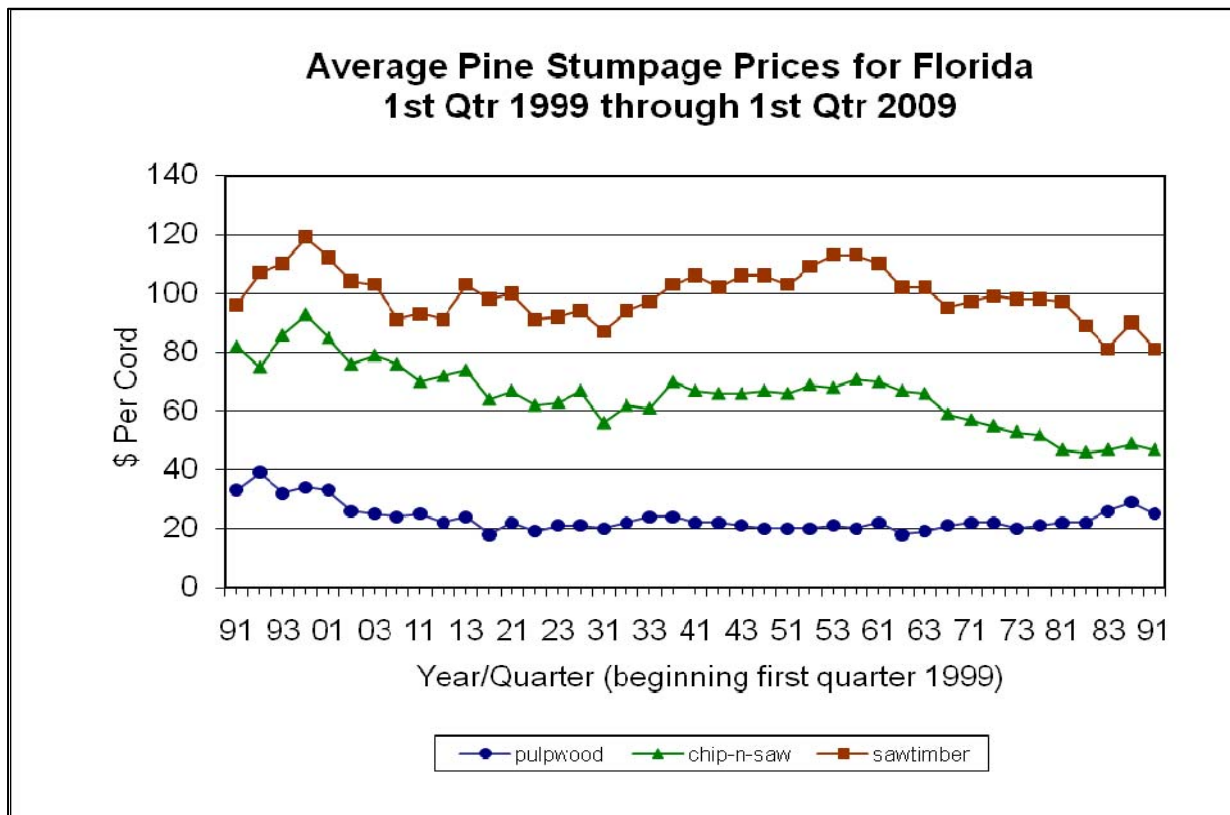
The timber pricing information below is useful for observing trends over time, but does not necessarily reflect current conditions at a particular location. Landowners considering a timber sale are advised to solicit the services of a consulting forester to obtain current local market conditions. Note that price ranges per ton for each product are also included.

Stumpage price ranges reported across Florida in the **1st Quarter 2009** Timber Mart-South (TMS) report were:

- Pine pulpwood: \$20 - \$32/cord (\$7 - \$12/ton), ↓ (from average 4th Quarter 2008 prices)
- Pine C-N-S: \$40 - \$55/cord (\$15 - \$20/ton), ↓
- Pine sawtimber: \$61 - \$104/cord (\$23 - \$39/ton), ↓
- Pine plylogs: \$59 - \$93/cord (\$22 - \$35/ton), ↓
- Pine power poles: \$121 - \$173/cord (\$45 - \$65/ton), ↓
- Hardwood pulpwood: \$10 - \$24/cord (\$4 - \$8/ton), ↓

Trend Report

Begin depressing violin music... Southeastern timber markets continue to be weak. Average stumpage prices for all major timber products in Florida, and the Southeast region, were down from 4th quarter 2008. Pine sawtimber and chip-n-saw prices are now down more than 25 percent from prices 5 years ago. Decreased manufacturing activity and increased unemployment have suppressed building construction, and the pulp and paper industry is flush with curtailments and shut-downs. Last quarter's light of hope, energy prices, have increased somewhat as of this report. Hopefully the recent wet weather will improve prices, at least locally.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event, Location, Contacts
May 8	<i>FL/GA Game Management Field Update: Bobwhite Quail management</i> , Sunnyhill Plantation, Miccosukee, FL. Contact Dr. Bill Giuliano at (352) 846-0575, docg@ufl.edu , http://www.wec.ufl.edu/wildlifeupdates/
May 19	<i>Forest Stewardship Workshop: Plant ID Field Day</i> . 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Eastern Time; Morningside Nature Center, Gainesville, FL . This program is free but pre-registration is required. Contact Anandi Banerjee at (352) 846-2374 or anandibanerjee@ufl.edu to register. Lunch will be provided but BYO coffee if you need it. See announcement in this newsletter.
May 19-21	<i>Natural Areas Training Academy: Plant Communities of Florida</i> , Disney Wilderness Preserve, Kissimmee and Crystal River Preserve State Park. Cost is \$380.00. See link above for details or Call Linda at (352) 392-3210, demetrop@ufl.edu .
June 3	<i>Invasive Plant Management Workshop</i> , 9:00 am - 3:00 pm at English Creek Preserve in Hillsborough County. Contact Carrie Kotal, (863)519-8677 ext. 128, kotalc@doacs.state.fl.us
June 16	<i>Polycom Videoconference: Think Locally, Act Neighborly to Combat Invasive Exotic Species - Florida Invasive Species Partnership</i> , 1-5 PM ET at locations across FL. See announcement in this newsletter. Contact Chris at cdemers@ufl.edu , (352) 846-2375 for more information.
July 29-31	<i>Farm to Fuel Summit</i> , Rosen Shingle Creek, Orlando FL. For more information visit http://www.floridafarmtofuel.com/summit_2009.htm .
August 1-2	<i>Florida Small Farms & Alternative Enterprises Conference</i> , Osceola Heritage Park, Kissimmee FL. See link for details: http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu/floridasmallfarmsconference/index.htm
August 21	<i>FL/GA Game Management Field Update: Dove and Waterfowl Management</i> , Pinckney Hill Plantation, Ashville, FL. Contact Dr. Bill Giuliano at (352) 846-0575, docg@ufl.edu , http://www.wec.ufl.edu/wildlifeupdates/

For more information and events about Florida's Forest Stewardship Program and forest management visit:
www.sfrc.ufl.edu/Extension/florida_forestry_information/index.html

The Florida Forest Steward is a University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Florida Division of Forestry and Florida Tree Farm joint project:

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