

Camp Resources

Camp Associations

American Camp Association
<http://www.acacamps.org/>

National Camp Association
<http://www.summercamp.org/index.html>

Illinois Park and Recreation Association
<http://www.ilipra.org/AboutUS/index.cfm>

National Recreation and Park Association
<http://www.nrpa.org/>

Training

The Camp Counselor
<http://www.thecampcounselor.com/>

The Camp Counselor™ works with summer camps training their staff, designing programs, guiding administrators, writing curriculum and a whole lot more!

- Staff Training
- Camp Consulting
- Administrative Counseling
- Training Curriculum
- Conference
- Other Professional Events

True To Life Training

<http://www.truetolifetraining.com/>

True to Life Training offers programs and services which are designed to improve communication, management, and interpersonal skills. We pride ourselves in working well with a wide variety of organizations, from restaurants to retail, family owned to fortune 500, schools to summer camps. Regardless of the industry, anyone who works with people can benefit from our tangible tools and unique training methods.

Camp Concepts

<http://www.campconcepts.org/workshop.html#resources>

Camp Concepts has years of experience working in the day camp industry. Its founders, Steve Haines and Steve Bernardini have worked at the George School Day Camp for a combined 35 years! As Director and Assistant Director at the George School Day Camp (<http://www.gsdycamp.org>), Steve & Steve continue to create and infuse new programs and elements into their day camp program including mechanisms for developing staff training. Here are a few of the resources that are available to you for reasonable fees

CIT/JC Training Manual

The training manual consists of workshop titles geared specifically for a camp setting. The manual contains 7 CIT specific workshops and 6 JC workshops. These workshops can be easily facilitated by any senior staff leader.

A Sample of the workshop titles includes:

- Transitioning from camper to CIT
- Dealing with a Job
- Role Modeling
- Positive & Negative Discipline
- The Fallible Leader
- Favoritism
- Marketing Yourself for a Job

The great thing about these workshops is that they can easily be shaped to fit into your individual camp culture. Whether you are just beginning a CIT/JC program or just want to breathe new life into your existing program, this manual can be a tremendous resource for you.

Counselor Resource Book

This is a collection of resource materials to assist any experience level counselor. It contains samples of what a counselor might say when calling home to introduce themselves to a parent or camper to what they might write on a postcard home. It contains information on what it means to be a professional to an opening day checklist of important counselor reminders. Since counselors are on the front lines on a daily basis it is important that camp leadership provides ample resources to help prepare them for a variety of circumstances and situations. Also included are easy to read articles on dealing with children with ADD/ADHD, Tips for Counselors, Understanding what Adolescents Really Want, etc. This is a great collection of materials that can help prepare your counselors to do their job professionally.

Proven Camp Games

As Physical Educators, Steve & Steve have spent their careers teaching games. Bringing in new games to your camp can revolutionize your program! This resource is a collection of over 100 games, complete with instructions on how to play the game and what equipment is needed. Whether you are a day camp, overnight camp, sports camp or specialty camp, this resource book of games can be an incredible resource for your camp.

Special Recreation Associations

Special Recreation Associations Network of Illinois (SRANI)

<http://www.specialrecreation.org>

The Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association

<http://www.nssra.org/>

Western DuPage Special Recreation Association

<http://www.wdsra.com/>

Fox Valley Special Recreation Association

<http://fvsra.o>

Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association

<http://www.nisra.org/>

Special Needs

Resources for Working With Youth With Special Needs

<http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/specialneeds/>

Inclusion Network

<http://www.inclusion.com/inclusion.html>

Kids Together Inc.

<http://www.kidstogether.org/>

Online Camp Resources Sites

My Summer Camps

<http://www.mysummerncamps.com/resources/>

My Camp Resource

<http://www.mycampresources.com/>

Ultimate Camp Resource

<http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/>

Illinois 4H Foundation

<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/4hfoundation/>

Sites for Games, Activities, Arts, Crafts etc.

<http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/>

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/astronomy/>

<http://familyfun.go.com/arts-and-crafts/season/specialfeature/summer-camp-crafts/>

<http://www.teachingheart.net/readerstheater.htm>

Vendors

The Vendor Outlet

<http://www.mysummmercamps.com/outlet/>

Summer Camp's Buyers Guide

<http://www.camppage.com/summer-camp-buyers-guide.htm>

Blogs

My Camp Resources

<http://www.mycampresources.com/>

Kid's Health

http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/

http://pediatrics.about.com/od/firstaid/First_Aid_for_Children.htm

Books

Coaching the Camp Coach

Leadership Development for Small Organizations

Author- Michael Shelton, MS, CAC, CFT

Copyright - American Camping Association

Day Camps From Day One: A Hands- On Guide For Day Camp Administration

Author - Connie Coutellier

Publisher - American Camp Association

This camp management manual covers the specialized proficiencies needed to run a successful day camp, including business and marketing expertise, knowledge of regulatory requirements and safety procedures, and interpersonal and leadership skills. The planning stages of selecting a site,

defining and understanding the needs of targeted campers, and raising support and funds from the community are outlined with emphasis on building a program based on solid youth development principles. Information is provided on the essentials of licensing, staff and program assessment, and budget decisions as well as the relational aspects of staff recruitment and camp community.

Camp Is For The Camper: A Counselor's Guide to Youth Development

Author - Connie Coutellier

Publisher - Coaches Choice Books

Camp is for the Camper is designed to help assist camp counselors in working more effectively with their campers. Covers many important topics for new and returning counselors. Chapters include: A Unique Opportunity (responsibility as a role model, camp as a positive force in youth development, arrival, the first day/night), Today's Campers (social trends, parent interaction, age and developmental characteristics), Working with Individual Campers (reinforcing positive behaviors, courtesies of group living, understanding behavior clues, homesickness, bed-wetting, ADD/ADHD), Working with Groups (setting the tone for group development, cycles of group activity planning, group building, inappropriate group behavior, peer pressure, etc.), and How to Measure Your Success. Produced in cooperation with the American Camp Association.

Summer Program Tips, Strategies and Activities

Author - Rich Scofield

Publisher - School Age Notes

Full of articles, tips and strategies edited from 20 years of School-Age NOTES newsletters, this easy-to-use resource covers the planning steps from January to May and the programming approaches from field trips to themes. An A to Z of how to do summer programs. Includes: marketing, scheduling, staffing, safety, model programs, older kids, checklists, skill outcomes, discipline, PLUS over 500 activity ideas.

Multicultural Games

Author - Lorraine Barbarash

Publisher - Human Kinetics Publishers

This book provides ideas and strategies that will help children at the elementary and middle school level develop an awareness of and appreciation for other cultures while enjoying physical activity. Easy and fun to use, the book features 75 games from 43 countries or cultures on six continents.

Field Trips/Activities

<http://gocitykids.parentsconnect.com/get-a-widget/>

A guide to kids events and family activities in Chicago, Illinois. Find kids entertainment, Chicago parks and playgrounds, childcare, day camps, indoor fun, kid ...

<http://www.fieldtripfactory.com/home.php?sid=&ts=317489c2b9eb512cc1072d7cd13d70ca>

Free field trips in your community!

<http://www.laserquest.com/Youth/QK.aspx>

The Quest for Knowledge - Lasers and Mazes Program

After School Sites

School Age Notes

<http://www.schoolagenotes.com/Default.asp>

Afterschool Professional

<http://www.afterschoolpro.net/>

Afterschool Alliance

<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/>

National Youth Development Information Center

<http://www.nydic.org/nydic/index.html>

Illinois Afterschool Network
<http://www.ianetwork.org/>

Illinois 4 H
<http://www.4-h.uiuc.edu/about/index.html>



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Welcome to the American Camp Association, Illinois

Illinois Parks & Recreation Association's Environmental Committee

Tools for Greening Your Organization (or You) - Presentation

At the recent ACA Illinois annual meeting, held on Thursday, November 20, 2008 members of the Illinois Parks & Recreation Association's Environmental Committee shared resources designed to help chart a course towards environmental sustainability within our organizations and in our personal life.

The panel described efforts undertaken by the committee during the past several years to develop the Model Environmental Policy, Environmental Toolkit and Environmental Report Card and reviewed each of these documents and how they can be adapted for use by any organization. They also described efforts to promote these resources within their organizations and efforts to document the environmental successes that can result.

The following three links should provide valuable information about all the topics they covered:

The Environmental Report Card:

<http://www.il-ipra.org/forms/enviroreportcard.pdf>

The Environmental Toolkit:

<http://www.il-ipra.org/forms/envirotoolkit.pdf>

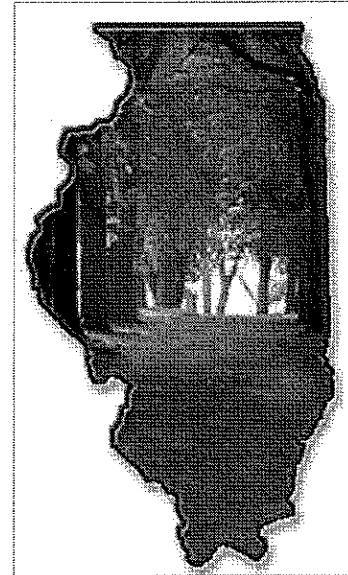
The Model Environmental Policy:

<http://www.il-ipra.org/forms/modelenviropolicy.pdf>

The panel included :

David Brooks is employed by the Schaumburg Park District as Manager of Conservation Services, overseeing the operations of the Spring Valley Nature Center & Heritage Farm, a position he has held since 1991. Professionally, he has been an active member of the Illinois Parks & Recreation Association (IPRA) since 1987, participating on the Museum Roundtable and Environmental Committee, as well as serving as the chair of the Environmental Committee for two years. As part of the IPRA Environmental Committee, he co-authored the Environmental Toolkit as well as the Environmental Report Card, resources designed to help agencies improve the environmental sustainability of their operations.

Cheryl Toohey was employed by the Skokie Park District's Emily Oaks Nature Center as School Age Program Coordinator for



nearly ten years until the birth of her daughter. She is past chairperson of IPRA's Environmental Committee and has been involved in the committee's work for over five years. Cheryl's degree is in Environmental Science and Biology from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

Jan Herbert is employed by the Rockford Park District as Special Projects Coordinator. She manages the environmental policy of the district and concentrates on issues from a maintenance/operational basis in combination with the district's goal of leadership in environmental responsibility. Jan spent over 20 years in the marketing/advertising field previous to district employment.

Please contact any of the panel members for more info!!

David Brooks - dabrooks@parkfun.com

Cheryl Toohey - ctruns@att.net

Jan Herbert - janherbert@rockfordparkdistrict.org

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A Convenient Truth

How Our Past Can Save the Future

by Zayanne Thompson

What an opportunity! Camps began in the late 1800s as a way to connect kids with nature. The first camps introduced boys to hiking, fishing, and adventure in the wilderness. Over the years "camp" has changed. Camps today include a wide variety of experiences like sports, education, and recreational skill development in both day and resident settings. They may offer fun and creative programs, but "camp" has strayed far from its roots. The outdoor environment that once inspired the camp movement slipped from our sight as we focused on developing new programs. Through our neglect and the neglect of many others, that natural environment has now deteriorated to a point we can no longer afford to ignore. It is our responsibility and yes, our incredible opportunity, to change that.

As an industry, we have remarkable reach and potential impact. The American Camp Association (ACA) estimates that over ten million children attend camp annually, and there are approximately 12,000 camps nationwide. That is a lot of influence. In 2006, ACA found that 75 percent of camps offered new programs. In proposing that we go back to our roots, I am not suggesting that we discontinue Magic, Weight Loss, Rocketry, and other innovative programs to focus just on the environment. We need to do both. Camps stay relevant by keeping up with national trends and interests. And bringing nature back to the heart of camp does not prevent us from offering specialized programming. The truth is that a substantial effort to refocus on the environment will strengthen all of our programs. The timing has never been better for camps to develop a culture of environmental stewardship, not only to respect our past, but also to protect our future.



Why It Is Important to Have Kids in Nature

Richard Louv sparked a growing concern about the disconnect between children and the natural world in his book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. He points out that as parents we are afraid to let our kids explore like we did when we were young. He describes parental fear of traffic, strangers, crime, and even nature itself as the reasons that we separate our kids from the many benefits of spending time with nature. The result is growing childhood obesity, disease, ADD, and depression. Louv makes compelling connections between this negative trend and the absence of meaningful and consistent outdoor experiences. Hey! Camps are in the perfect position to do something about this disconnect! Camps can be a catalyst for change!

Taking Responsibility

If the camp industry embraces stewardship and takes responsibility for the outdoor environment that sparked our industry in the first place, we will end up with stronger and more meaningful programs that have a life-changing impact on our campers. It does not take much. Recently, I helped chaperone a field trip to an aquarium for my son's second-grade class. The teachers planned to have the kids walk along the beach to get there. The kids looked at kelp, wrote in the sand, and chased the little waves. Some of the teachers asked questions to prompt further exploration. By the time the kids reached the aquarium, they had a hands-on, real-life experience to connect with the tanks and displays. But one simple action gave the experience a much deeper meaning; I started to pick up trash.

I always pick up trash when I walk on the beach; I didn't even think about it. Soon a couple of the kids started bringing me garbage, then a few more. Our walk turned into a beach clean-up. The kids started talking about how awful it was that people put trash in the ocean and on the beach. They apologized to the tiny sea stars for the balloons and ribbon tangled in the washed-up kelp.

They talked about how beautiful the beach was and how we should take better care of it. John Muir once said, "When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world." Spontaneously picking up garbage moved the entire experience beyond education to environmental stewardship. Those kids realized that they are literally connected to the ocean and all the animals they learned about that day. I never said a thing.

Where Do We Start?

Looking beyond ourselves and tying experience to a bigger picture—to our place in the world—will make every camp experience more powerful. Most camps take place outdoors, and all camps use resources. Being responsible about how we treat those resources and how we interact with nature will change the culture of our camps and empower our campers. It is easy to find areas to improve. No matter where you start, every change will make a difference. The urgent need is to start somewhere

Camp: The Foundation

Brain research supports the argument that camps and outdoor experiences are a perfect setting to facilitate lifelong learning. We pay attention when information is useful, has emotional value, and when we feel safe. Camps provide a high-interest setting that is emotionally charged for campers. This, coupled with the outdoor environment, provides hands-on learning opportunities that are far more powerful than what media or a book can provide. In other words, we have an audience that is primed for a meaningful experience.

We also have an audience because camp removes some of the anxiety that parents feel about having their kids play outdoors. My generation grew up climbing trees, playing in mud, swimming, and building forts. We explored far from home. For children today, a camp experience may be their only meaningful outdoor opportunity. My eighty-year-old son, Keaton, loves to go camping and "explore" outside. His experience is different, because he never gets to explore without constant parental supervision, but at least he has meaningful outdoor opportunities. Most children today have no or limited access to the carefree explorations in nature that past generations have enjoyed. Kids at camp, exploring the outdoors in a cabin group, can closely mimic the experience we used to have with nature when we were young.

Our opportunity is clear. Since camp may represent a significant part of each participant's experience with nature, and the opportunity to be outdoors in a camp environment is a prime setting for lifelong impact, we should do everything we can to maximize each camper's outdoor experience. We also have an obligation to make sure that the experience is responsible and sustainable when it comes to our relationship with the natural world. When we teach campers to fish, we should make sure they are aware of their connection to the fish population. We should teach them to be humane and respectful, to understand the impacts of fishing on the fish population, and the reasons that we only keep certain fish and not others. The resulting relationship between camper and fish will ensure the ability to continue fishing (because it is sustainable). And even more importantly, the awareness and respect that is cultivated for the experience of fishing will carry over into other relationships with the environment.

Staff: The Example

No one is born with an instinct to scream at flying insects and kill tiny crawling living things for no reason. Small children are fascinated by butterflies, worms, and spiders until someone shrieks and suddenly the amazing little animal with multi-colored hairs inching across a huge leaf is knocked off and stepped on to keep from ruining the flowerbed. In the minds of children, living things can be interesting or frightening, depending upon the views and reactions from the adults they admire.

In her article, "Learning to Love the Natural World Enough to Protect It," Louise Chawla outlines findings from research about why people develop a commitment to protect the environment. She found that the reason people acted to protect nature was "personal and simple: because of the childhood place where they played... and because a beloved family member directed them to look closely at the plants and animals around them." Camps can provide wonderful opportunities to develop that commitment. I remember vividly the places I explored as a child, just as campers fondly remember the old tree fort and the frogs on the walls of the outdoor shower. And there is no mistaking the admiration that campers have for their counselors. The attitudes and actions of our staff speak far louder than what we actually say. If you want to make a positive impact, educate and hire staff that care about the environment.

Develop a camp culture of respect for nature and responsibility for our actions that includes environmental stewardship. If we talk about how important it is to conserve resources, and use Styrofoam® plates and cups for the BBQ, our integrity is compromised. (Note: You may find there are areas that you don't know how to address. Involve the staff and campers in looking for solutions. These are real-life opportunities to consider the options and challenges in changing our systems and habits to be more environmentally responsible. Sometimes solutions are easy, and sometimes we have to think outside the box!) Involve staff in decisions and challenge them to develop sound practices that consider environmental impact and to develop programs that include interactions with nature and modeling environmental responsibility.

Program: The Meaning

Think about the camp programs you have been involved with. How much time do campers spend interacting with nature? Do camp staff demonstrate respect for living things? Do campers learn about the resources they use and how to minimize their impact? Does the program incorporate environmental responsibility into common practices? I was excited to see that in the new camp accreditation process for ACA, the first three standards of the Program Design section address environmental impact, the utilization of outdoor opportunities, and environmental practices. But I have to say that as a volunteer ACA standards visitor, I am usually disappointed by what camps do, and more importantly what they don't do, to address the intent of these standards.

There are several reasons why we should include environmental stewardship in our programs and practices. First, we represent a huge industry that is very consumer intensive. According to ACA, there are 1.2 million people employed as camp staff. All of those people use and purchase sports equipment, pool supplies, crafts materials, cleaning products, food, building materials, and many other goods and services. As consumers, our industry spends a lot of money to run programs. By carefully considering our options and looking for environmentally and socially responsible choices, we can vote with every program dollar we spend and be a driving force for responsible change. Additionally, when we choose "green" practices and products, we make an immediate difference. If all of your program brochures and flyers were printed on post-consumer recycled paper, how much energy and how many trees would you save? And if you print that information on your flyers, you are making that connection for all of your families.

What else can you do? Buy soy wax instead of petroleum wax for candle making. Purchase FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified wood for making birdhouses, and explain to the kids what that means! If we demonstrate that we are making responsible choices and serve as a positive example of stewardship for our campers and families, our influence will grow exponentially!

Going back to a focus on the outdoors will bring deeper meaning to our programs. But the real "connection" comes when camp programs provide outdoor opportunities and direct experiences in nature that kids may not have anywhere else. At camp, kids play outside, hike trails, get dirty, explore with friends, and discover living things! The University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana (UIC-U) has conducted studies that demonstrate the positive benefits of being outdoors. Their research shows that kids with ADHD can concentrate and follow directions better after playing in natural settings. They have also suggested that exposure to green spaces can reduce aggression and crime, help people cope with stress, build opportunities for informal interaction between people, increase self-discipline, raise achievement in school, and actually lower levels of fear. All this from seeing green! If everyone in our society was able to reconnect with nature, the benefits could be astounding. It is no wonder that UIC-U advocates for people to "all work together toward building, protecting, and maintaining natural settings."

Keeping It Going

Even though mere exposure to nature is beneficial for people, consistent meaningful interaction with nature can literally improve the quality of someone's life. If kids develop a relationship with nature at camp, this can carry into their everyday life. We need to find ways for kids to play and explore in their environment for them, to see living things in their natural setting, to create the curiosity to see more, and to take responsibility for our impact and minimize the resources we use. This is not only contagious, it is also positive and empowering. I would bet that most of the kids who picked up trash on the beach that day would never think about "littering" on the beach or anywhere else. Even better, I'll bet they remind their parents and friends not to litter. They understand the effect of garbage in nature, and they have the ability to do something about it. Our

campers can learn from our camps, our staff, and our programs the same way. They will take this new level of knowledge and caring home. And, if we set a good example, if we care enough about our past to go back to nature with our programs, if we look at our practices and choose to be sustainable, if we serve as a catalyst for respect of the environment, then we are taking the first step towards our opportunity to save the future.

Be the Change

For many camps and programs it would be hard to advocate for responsible environmental practices without first making some changes. Does your camp ever use disposable cups, plates, and utensils? Do you actively recycle cans, glass, plastic, and paper? Are there guidelines to focus on healthy foods with minimal packaging? Most likely there are many opportunities for your camp to become more "green," but a good place to start is with yourself. You will be surprised at how quickly and easily your new practices will become habits. Let the stewardship begin!

UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not. — Dr. Seuss (The Lorax)

Start Today

Right now, think of something you can personally do at work and make a commitment to do it. Your change in behavior is critical to influencing responsible stewardship in your camp and programs.

Some quick ideas for personal change:

1. Turn off your computer when you leave at night.
2. Carry a water bottle to refill instead of buying bottled water.
3. Print double-sided copies in the office whenever possible.
4. Re-use the back of used copy paper for in-house copies.
5. Switch all your lights to compact fluorescent bulbs.
6. If you bring lunch, never buy over-packaged food. Keep it fresh!
7. Carry cloth bags for shopping; don't use thin plastic shopping bags.
8. Buy organic, shade grown, Fair Trade Certified coffee.
9. Bike, skate, or walk instead of driving when possible.
10. Share your discoveries in nature. Talk about your feelings.

Some quick ideas for your camp/program:

1. Build in program time to explore the natural area you use for program; develop a culture to leave natural areas better than you found them.
2. Plan scavenger hunts and games to help kids interact with nature; model respect for all living things.
3. Purchase quality supplies that will last to minimize waste.
4. Reuse containers and supplies as much as possible.
5. Make crafts that help wildlife; i.e., birdhouses, wildlife feeders, seed balls, etc.
6. Work with your waste hauler to have clearly labeled recycling containers next to every trash container at your site.
7. Get rid of disposable plates and cups and buy unbleached napkins.
8. Purchase post-consumer recycled paper products and notepads.
9. Have participants bring water bottles to refill instead of having juice and soda.
10. Start a vermiculture composting bin for veggie lunch scraps. (The kids love it!).

Dead Stuff: Treasure or Trash?

People bring me dead stuff. My camp office is full of skulls, random bones, nests, pieces of driftwood, scat (a "naturalist" word for animal poop), interesting rocks, sea shells, feathers, molts, and dead animals (we bury the big ones, but the little ones don't smell that bad) . . . all gifts from campers and staff. This may seem strange, but every gift is a treasure. Every rock and bone represents a discovery of nature, an appreciation for some aspect of the environment that happened here at camp. Each is a symbol of developing environmental awareness.

I have never asked anyone to bring me anything, but people are hungry to reconnect with nature. I say reconnect because we are born connected, until society tears us apart. It is in our nature to be fascinated by feathers and bones, to feel at peace watching a flock of birds turn in unison or

hearing the steady crashing of the ocean against the shore. People bring me their treasures because they know I will appreciate each one. They know I am absolutely in love with this planet, and I make no apologies for it! I will not judge them. I am always happy to share their discovery.

So the question for camps is: how do we help campers turn their discoveries into a lifelong relationship with nature? And what can camps do to help them cultivate this relationship? Well . . . we can start by building a foundation for a solid experience, setting a positive example of stewardship, and providing meaningful programs with real opportunities to develop a lifelong relationship with nature.

References

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Zayanne Thompson is the program department head at YMCA Camp Surf, part of the camping branch of the YMCA of San Diego County; an American Camp Association standards visitor; and is on the state board of the Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (AEOE) in California. As a credentialed teacher with a degree in environmental biology and advanced degree in education, she has worked with children in the outdoors through museums, the National Park Service, and for the last seventeen years, in residential environmental education and summer camp programs.

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