# GEORGIAN BAY FOREVER



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- An Interview with Waubgeshig Rice



As Georgian Bay's science-based charity organization, our propensity for knowledge-sharing leans towards the explicit and data-driven, but not in deficit to other legitimate forms of acquiring and sharing knowledge, such as experiential learning, and visual media creation.

Our fall issue contains several prime examples of how various forms of knowledge-sharing can be used towards a common goal of protecting and restoring nature and the environment.

Education is one of the three pillars of Georgian Bay Forever's mandate. Along with scientific research and action, education, and the drive to expand the discourse regarding Georgian Bay's aquatic ecosystem brings about a need to reflect on how knowledge is shared, and of the many ways in which knowledge can be effectively represented.

Considering the various formats in which people have historically propagated knowledge, from cave paintings to the printing press, to the contemporary platforms of online remote meetings and internet publishing, it's clear that the medium of knowledge-sharing is continually in flux. The methods of knowledge-sharing, however, including explicit, implicit, illustrative, subliminal, and allegorical – to name a few – are generally more complex when regarding the context in which they are used.

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### A Message From Terry Clark, Chair of Georgian Bay Forever



There is so much to learn and appreciate about Georgian Bay – for example, through personal exploration, the efforts of scientific research, academic studies in numerous areas of expertise, the teachings and traditions of the Indigenous and Metis people, and knowledge sharing from organizations dedicated to preserving and protecting the precious environment and ecsystem of the Bay.

GBF counts itself among those dedicated organizations, and is involved in each of those examples of knowledge-sharing and many more in the seemingly never-ending abundance of qualitative knowledge about the Bay. As a science-based research organization grounded upon the principle of educating others, GBF's knowledge capture takes place in the Bay's extensive open waters, down to the bottom at previously unexplored depths, traversing the shoreline and wetlands, and from the sky above the water's surface.

We are able to capture and develop that qualitative knowledge through scientific research using our multiple vessels: the Baykeeper over the open waters, the Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) surveying and mapping the underwater ecosystem, the Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) exploring the far depths of the waters, a tinny and a canoe on the shoreline and in the wetlands, and a multispectral drone systematically mapping valuable baseline data for a more comprehensive evaluation of the coastal area of the Bay.

GBF hopes you enjoy this Fall Newsletter edition reflecting some of the many windows into our efforts; and we also invite you to view the videos and posts on our website that capture and share some additional fascinating information about Georgian Bay gathered for your further understanding of this marvelous resource we all enjoy in so many ways.

Georgian Bay Forever is a community response to the growing need for major research and education to sustain the Georgian Bay aquatic ecosystem and the quality of life its communities and visitors enjoy.

We help monitor Georgian Bay's well-being, throughout the seasons, year after year.

We fund the research needed to protect the environmental health of Georgian Bay and the surrounding bodies of water. Using our research findings, we inform and educate the general public and governments about threats to environmental health; we then propose possible solutions.

Through workshops, seminars, and online communication, we are educating the Georgian Bay community. By teaming up with reputable institutions, we enhance the credibility of our research and strengthen our ability to protect what's at stake.

Georgian Bay Forever is a registered Canadian charity (#89531 1066 RR0001). We work with the Great Lakes Basin Conservancy in the United States, as well as other stakeholder groups all around the Great Lakes.

Georgian Bay Forever is steered by our esteemed Board of Directors, a group of dedicated individuals who are committed to ensuring the functionality and purpose of our organization. They bring their experience and expertise to all aspects of operation, with the common goal of protecting and conserving Georgian Bay.

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This newsletter is just a snapshot of our work. For the most up-to-date information on our projects, longer versions of newsletter articles, and breaking news about Georgian Bay, please become a regular visitor to our Facebook page and website:

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Design and Editing by Laura Thipphawong

Cover Photos Courtesy of the All Too Clear Documentary

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# And this our life, exempt from public haunt, Finds tongues in trees, Books in the running brooks, Sermons in stones, and good in everything. by David Sweetnam

This line from As You Like It written by William Shakespeare in 1599 and first published in 1623 is used as the opening quote in James Cleland Hamilton's 1893 publication The Georgian Bay: an account of its position, inhabitants, mineral interests, fish, timber and other resources. It speaks to the intrinsic teachers in the world around us – the trees, the brooks and the stones. These are the teachers of First Nations people -- the crawlers, the swimmers, the winged ones, the four legged and two footed. These creatures are all skilled in survival and have evolved in a reciprocal relationship in this space. If one looks very carefully, as First Nations have since time immemorial, there is a lot to be learned from them and from the land and water. These tongues, books and stones are anything but mute.

Hamilton, made first-person observations through the eyes of Western exploitation of the resources giving them a completely different value than that understood by the original people inhabiting the area. Perspective grossly biases the observations. Therefore, the knowledge gleaned by Hamilton in his travels completely misses much of the available knowledge being destroyed by the industry he is observing.

The original people, the First Nations, in what western science traditions refer to as North America, but for which they have their own traditional names, have learned these intrinsic lessons since the glaciers melted. As late comers to the area, western science knowledge traditions approach learning these new lessons in different ways. These two perspectives offer us an opportunity to gain even deeper insights into our world if we collaborate and share the knowledge derived through both approaches.

"Two-Eyed Seeing refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing and

learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all."

– Institute for Integrative Health and Science, Cape Breton University.

The elders from the unceded Chippewa of Nawash First Nation shared a powerful story of a time when the water levels would rise as the Lake Trout chased the herring into the bay and of seeing Lake Sturgeon eating cranberries from the bushes along the shore. This illuminates an ecosystem unknown to western science. And that ignorance effects the framing of the way non-indigenous governments perceive ecosystem health. Hamilton corroborates this story during the decline with his own depiction of his trip to the Minks: "the watchful fishermen, when they find a pool full of fins, haul a seine in it and secure even the bass and pickerel". It should be even more concerning that over 130 years ago James Cleland Hamilton observed that "In winter the Georgian Bay is locked in ice, from two to three feet in thickness."

We also know that whitefish lay their eggs when light conditions and water temperatures reach specific levels as winter approaches and climate change is disrupting this behaviour; certain aquatic plants are found at specific water depths and some proliferate in clean water while others thrive in lesser quality; tree rings can give us information about climate conditions from centuries earlier; and the geologic record yields eons of observations.

So how do we share knowledge from different values systems?

Sharing requires trust. And trust is not something that can be demanded -- it must be earned. And it is impossible, when it comes to how First Nations have been treated, to achieve without reconciliation actions. The original treaties entered into between First Nations and the Crown have barely begun to be acknowledged by western science let alone honoured. The commitments of those treaties were delivered long ago by the First Nations as promised but the actions of western society have not fulfilled the other side of the deal. Truth and reconciliation is required and the TRC commission set out a roadmap to work towards that end.



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# All Too Clear – Restoring the Great Lakes

### By Zach Melnick, preface by Laura Thipphawong

When I was a child, I had the privilege of spending my summers with my family on the shores of Georgian Bay in Parry Sound. I vividly remember watching the sun rise above the mist on late August mornings, snorkeling with playful smallmouth bass, witnessing huge schools of longnose gar breach the surface, and catching lake trout in the deep waters of the Sound. It was here that I grew to have a deep love of nature and began to discover the stories hiding everywhere just beneath the surface. Fast forward many years, and my career as a documentary filmmaker led me back to eastern Georgian Bay.



Once Upon a Time
Zach Melnick and family on Georgian Bay

This time, with my partner Yvonne, as we were working on a series for TVO called Striking Balance, about Canada's UNESCO Biosphere reserves. We interviewed David Sweetnam, and he introduced us to the quagga mussel catastrophe unfolding in the deep waters of the Bay. I was heartbroken to hear such a devastating change had occurred in a place that I loved so much. Over the next six years, from our home on the other side of Georgian Bay - the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula - we continued to research the mussels, feeling more and more depressed by the worsening situation.

After only a few decades, the number of invasive mussels in the Great Lakes has reached into the quadrillions (that's 15 zeros!), and they are literally sucking the life out of our waters. They're trapping nutrients, the basic building blocks of life, on the lake bottom. Without nutrients, organisms of all kinds – from the tiniest plankton to the largest fish – are vanishing. In Lakes Huron, Michigan, and Ontario, vast offshore areas have become "biological deserts," heralding one of the biggest changes to the Earth's freshwaters in 10,000 years.

While the consequences for nature and people are severe, the loss of life has had an extraordinary side effect: it's made the lakes far clearer than they've ever been before. As documentary filmmakers, we realized the newfound clarity was an opportunity to show people an underwater world that until this point has been hidden beneath the waves and began work on a film we're calling All Too Clear. We're using the latest in cinema ROVs (underwater drones) to explore the effects of quagga mussels on the world's largest freshwater

lake system. From the nearshore to the most extreme depths, we'll bring freshwater species and ecosystems into the spotlight usually reserved for ocean environments.



Our goal with All Too Clear is to help people understand how lakes work in the new world created by the mussels, and it's this educational mission that makes Georgian Bay Forever such a great partner for this project. Mussels have essentially "changed the game" when it comes to food webs, nutrient cycling, lake management, and almost every other aspect of how our lakes function. Through the broadcast of All Too Clear, along with community screenings, and a suite of educational materials, we'll spread the word about the current state of our lakes, so that we can all help make better decisions for their future.

Recently, there have been several exciting developments that may be reason to hope. First, several new management techniques are showing great potential for controlling mussels; even small-scale removals could make a big difference in the sensitive spawning habitats of our most at-risk species. But perhaps even more astonishing is the acute reduction of life in the offshore waters, which has opened up space for a once-in-a-lifetime restoration opportunity. A remarkable group of native fishes, known as ciscos, are well adapted to exactly the kind of low-nutrient environment that mussels have created. Scientists and fisheries managers are making the multi-million dollar bet that if ciscos can be restored, they'll be able to get enough nutrients moving to jumpstart the whole system. But the race is on to get ciscos re-established before a new invader fills the vacuum.

At this crucial turning point, All Too Clear will not only be an eye-catching exploration of our aquatic world, but will also take you on the high-stakes mission to restore balance to the greatest freshwater ecosystem on earth. Join us in early 2024.

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sharing would be incomplete without the discussion of cognative bais. All knowledge is shared and acquired through the lens of the individual's perception, and without significant effort and discipline, people are prone to cling to information that complements their beliefs and dismissing information that does not. With the still prevailing claims of climate change denial, this is a concept that is perhaps all too familiar to environmentalists. However, that does not mean they are immune to their own form of cognitive bias.

The concept of knowledge

Science, by its very nature, is a dynamic field. It evolves as new data emerges and old theories are challenged. However, this is often not how scientific information is regarded in people's day-to-day lives, instead they use scientific data as a way to solidify their viewpoints instead of using critical thinking and open-mindedness to question their preconceived notions, to approach new data with curiosity rather than skepticism.

With scientific data being more accessible and more freely communicated than at any other point in history, it has become essential to not only stay informed but also be mindful of how cognitive bias infers how facts are interpreted. One of the best tools to avoid this form of bias is to think like a scientist in our everyday lives. Not only does understanding our own cognitive bias keep us better informed, but it also enables us to recognize the common pitfalls of cognitive bias in those around us, allowing us to filter out misinformation and possibly even foster communication between people with alternative points of view. Our toolkit offers some ideas of the common form of bias as well as possible solutions to reducing there effects.

# **Cognitive Bias Toolkit**

### Do not compare apples to donuts:

Comparing two pieces of information can often be misleading without properly framing the information in an unbiased way. Often finding the correct things to measure and ways to compare them are fundamental to good scientific practice. Just like scientists, we need to evaluate what is a good piece of data and what is not. In order to evaluate a piece of information, we need to look for evidence of the five factors of quality data: accuracy, completeness, reliability, relevance and timeliness. Meaning in order to evaluate the information that is given to us, we must first ask if the data is accepted to be correct by other experts, is wholesome in the information it includes, is acquired in a consistent method, does the data directly apply to the method of comparison, and does the timeframe of the data is relevant to the point of comparison. Often simply by finding the answers to these factors, you will be able to find biases in the insights that are being presented.

### Hypothesis Myopia:

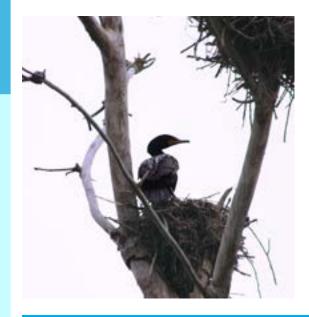
This is a personal bias that is formed when a scientist seeks research that supports their hypothesis but does not adequately seek information counter to their hypothesis, leaving them unaware of possible alternative explanations. In our everyday lives, resources like Google allow us to find supportive information about exactly what it is we are asking, regardless of credibility or greater context. Just like scientists, we are left unaware of alternative information. A way to reduce this bias is by broadening our search terms; rather than seeking direct information, begin by seeking to understand the context around the topic.

### Assemetric Attention:

One of the most common forms of cognitive bias is confirmation bias; we are often much less critical of information that is complementary to our worldview than information that goes against it. In a scientific study, this bias can occur when unexpected results are more closely evaluated than results that are not, which can create false justifications for contrary evidence. Simply being aware of your own preconceptions will allow you to avoid this cognitive trap and allow you to be more fairly critical of new information.

### Just so storytelling:

It seems to be a part of human nature to recognize a pattern and create reasoning around it to explain it. It happens more often than you might think in scientific practice as well, where one promising piece of evidence may frame how the scientist sees the evidence as a whole. The gambler hot hand fallacy provides another great example where we confuse correlation with causation. In order to overcome this form of narrative creation, you must first be transparent about your uncertainty; even if you believe you know what is most likely the cause, treating that theory as a fact leads directly to just-so storytelling.



### Consider the Cormorant

One of the best examples of how cognitive bias can shape how people see our local ecosystems is the cormorant. For many Ontarians, the Cormorant represents a significant threat to the environment; they have witnessed the massive population growth of the species over the past few decades and visually see these birds hunting fish daily. It's easy to see why the Coromant is thought to be an invasive force blamed for the decreasing sport fish population. The scientific data points to something very different, the cormorant population isn't so much growing as it is rebounding from near extinction in the 1900s, and the diet of the Coromant seems to consist of invasive fish round goby and alewives species that compete with native sport fish. This, however, is difficult for many Ontarians to accept as they continue to vilify the animal instead of looking at other causes for the decreasing fish population.



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Tunderstand that you're from Lthe Wasauksing First Nation on Georgian Bay. Can you describe your connection to the natural area and your experience growing up there?

I have a lifelong connection to Georgian Bay. I was raised in Wasauksing, so, my earliest memories are of being raised on the water in what's called Parry Sound. I can remember always appreciating and respecting the water around us, and learning, from an Anishinaabe perspective, how long we've been connected to the region and how we revere it as not just a location or as a natural life-giving resource, but as something that identifies who we are as the Anishinaabeg of the Great Lakes. Even before what you could consider the era of reconciliation, our community was turning back to culture, ceremony, and ancestral knowledge. A big part of that was learning about the water and the ancient stories around Georgian Bay.

It's something that I'm proud of, to be from the region and to advocate for it as much as I can.

Advocating for nature and sharing knowledge is paramount for environmental conservation. We focus on scientific research, but we also try to factor in different kinds of knowledge, like emotional, spiritual, and especially experiential knowledge. Can you speak to the importance of communicating experience through generations and how you think that kind of knowledge can be used?

I think it's very important. Of course, there's the customary and ancestral knowledge that's been passed down from generation to generation amongst Anishinaabeg prior to settlers arriving here, stories that inform us on a day-to-day basis how to be good people and good stewards of the land. That knowledge those experiences were brutalized as a result of colonialism,

of people being displaced, and their culture and knowledge being outlawed and then shamed. Wasauksing is an island, but our ancestors lived on the mainland since time immemorial. When Canada was confederated and the Department of Indian Affairs was established, my ancestors were pushed from the mainland they originally inhabited, where Parry Sound is now. Forestry became the primary industry, so these ancestors could only look back towards their homeland and see it being defaced and exploited for capitalistic colonial gains.

When we consider Georgian Bay as an important ecosystem and a treasured destination, we really have to acknowledge the history and how the people who enjoy it now enjoy it as a result of the sacrifice and suffering. That is important knowledge in addition to the ecological knowledge or the conservatory knowledge.

And of course, I speak for myself only - I would generally say most people don't want anybody to feel guilty. People get guilt-tripped into acknowledging history. They should just understand it as an essential part of the Canadian story. Knowledge is how we move forward together in a good way, by appreciating each other mutually and wanting to do what's best for the land that we inhabit.

That kind of knowledge can often be told best through narrative fiction, by



expressing ideas and promoting understanding in a deeper way than didactic or expository writing. Something I like about your writing is that experience was illustrated through showing rather than telling. What are some of the life experiences or ideas that you hope to communicate through your novels?

The relationship with the land and how to form community while respecting all its living beings. For me it's drawing inspiration from my upbringing; contextualizing and humanizing that hands-on sort of land-based upbringing that I was very fortunate to have. Some people have the idea that you may not have a connection with this as a reader because you're not Indigenous or you're not in this novel, but I want to show the humanity of that way of life.

That's something I don't think we have been able to see as Canadians from an arts, entertainment, and journalist perspective for several decades, up until the last ten or 15 years. There's been a sort of surfacelevel exploration of rez life from a mainstream lens, and a lot of that has obviously been false and has perpetuated stereotypes. I've had some great opportunities at CBC to do stories about Indigenous people and communities, but I always found I was confined by those journalistic limits of space and time. Fiction has really open that up for me. Everything I write about comes from something real. As you say, it doesn't have to be expository, it can be just going through the motions of hunting or getting ready for a ceremony using a very specific cadence or vernacular.

That sense of the cultural traditions was prevalent in Moon of the Crusted Snow, as well as a strong sense of dialog between people and nature, which set the foundation for the rest of the story in terms of survival. Can you talk about

Leaves, and expand on the idea of connectedness with nature, and if that is a through-line in that book as

Oh, it is 100%, I think that's probably the essence of the plot of the

Moon of the Turning Leaves books? takes place about ten years after the end of Moon of the Crusted Snow. A lot of the natural resources are starting to dwindle because the characters have been stationary for so long. Combined with their history of being an oppressed people, the world-ending blackout has really traumatized them, so they become apprehensive to seek out the world around them, but they have to move on at some point, so they make this decision to go south, to see what's left of the world, but also to reconnect with their homeland on Georgian Bay, having been displaced to far northern Ontario.

t's not just about reconnecting with their ancestry, but trying to understand their place on the land as Indigenous people. They are generating hope for renewal, and what

the sequel, Moon of the Turning sustained them up until this point is their land-based knowledge - that's why they've been able to survive.

> It sounds like a positive and hopeful message. Ideally, how you want your work to affect people? What kind of knowledge or understanding would you hope that people take away from reading your

> First, I just want people to be entertained. If I've done my job effectively in conveying the things that are important to me, then that should resonate with the reader, but first I have to write a decent enough story that's going to entertain them. It's a matter of making that initial connection and then hopefully peeling back the curtain on some bigger issues.

> If that connection can be made between any reader and the story itself, then I consider that a success. And for all the themes that we've already talked about, I just want to convey respect for the land, the value of historical knowledge, and of living as good people on a day-to-day basis to create good communities.



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### **Explicit and Tacit Knowledge:**

Factoring Experiential and Conceptual

Frameworks into Scientific Knowledge-Sharing
By Laura Thipphawong

Georgian Bay Forever is a science-based organization, focused on distilling relevant data from research and investigation, and disseminating that information to the public. When imparting knowledge and wisdom as a scientifically and therefore largely quantitatively-minded administration, the expectation of delivering empirical evidence and post-fact data is often foregrounded, as these types of measurable data are assumed to be the most valuable and reliable representations of information. Public and private industry, big business, lawmakers, and education systems place a high premium on statistics and quantitative knowledge, otherwise known as explicit knowledge, though statistics and broad-strokes categorizations often require the inclusion of many caveats and nuances in order to be fully understood. Therefore, factoring in and making allowances for tacit knowledge - knowledge gained through experience, emotion, and contextual observation – is necessary in a holistic scientific model of research.

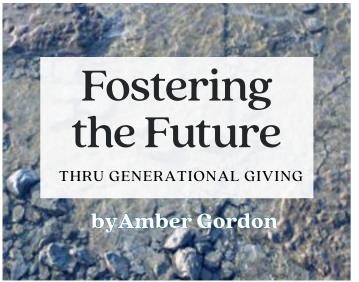
### Accounting for tacit knowledge

The sorites paradox, otherwise known as the argument of the beard, is a logical fallacy which posits that there is no difference between two things if the point of difference is not exact: for example, if you can't quantify how many hairs are required to make a beard, then there is no difference between a bearded and a non-bearded person. The obtuseness of sorites paradox discounts the reality because it cannot be proven and measured; likewise, the singular focus on explicit knowledge in science and research is fallacious.

When sourcing, reporting, and analyzing information, tacit knowledge is not merely an option for inclusion in scientific research, but rather it acts as the foundation for contextualizing explicit information. Tacit information is notoriously difficult to formally express through documentation, as much of it involves emotion, intuition, and abstract conceptual thought that many find challenging to articulate. Furthermore, tacit information like traditional knowledge, storytelling, and

anecdotal evidence, when presented in isolation is easily dismissed, especially in the social media and online information age when knowledge and opinion are presented to the individual through algorithms designed to support conformation bias. The importance, however, of integrating many forms and sources of knowledge – including experiential and intuitive knowledge – into a cohesive whole, is necessary for filling knowledge gaps and avoiding a myopic approach to both teaching and learning.

The concentration and prioritization of empirical evidence above all else negates the value of insight and imagination, and diminishes the possibilities for preparedness and for finding affective solutions to complex problems. Hard science and quantifiable results do not preclude foresight and conceptual thinking; science is stronger when the non-codifiable human factor is taken into account.



### Love the water

Georgian Bay - What does it mean to you? It can be so different from what it means to another, but one thing that each and every person who loves the Bay can agree on is that it is worth protecting.

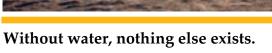
Think back to the very first moment you saw that pristine and vast body of water. What did it say to you? How did it make you feel? When we ask that question to people we meet, we get many responses - peace, tranquility, heaven, never-ending, enduring, home.

For many, it has provided solace and memories that span

a lifetime and a special piece of "heaven on earth" for numerous generations. To others who are just discovering its unspoiled beauty, the journey to many memories is just beginning, but they already say it has captured their heart.

But have you ever looked around you – at the water, the shoreline, the fish that you or your grandkids caught for dinner - and contemplated that one day these precious things may not be there to enjoy? That your great-great-great grandchildren may not have the chance to experience what you have come to love so much?





Georgian Bay as we know it and love it, depends on the health and vitality of its water, from the depths of the lakebed to its rugged shores.

We, on your behalf, protect the water from those very depths all the way to the coastline and beyond, maintaining the foundation of all life in Georgian Bay. Because the health and prosperity of Georgian Bay and its coastal regions is more important now than ever, in the face of climate change impacts.

This is what we strive to do – ensure that the water of Georgian Bay is here - healthy and thriving forever - for all to enjoy. This will be our legacy – will it be yours?

A legacy gift is a gift that reflects your deepest desires and longings to "leave your mark," to make a lasting contribution and impact soci-

ety and the world long after you are gone.

There are many reasons to give. And various ways to do so: annually, monthly or through a legacy gift. Some reasons to consider giving - it makes you feel happy, it is good for your health and wellbeing, it connects you with other likeminded individuals, it is contagious, and future generations will be grateful to you and yours.

Did you know that you can have a direct impact on the Bay and share your love with future generations by joining the Georgian Bay Forever Fund.

If your interested in learning more and chatting about your passions. connect with Amber today: 905-880-4945 ext 3.

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