



B. Schön: on the way from cultural landscape to wilderness - challenges of national park management in Austria

- 1) The story of Austrian National Parks – from the beginnings to the actual situation
- 2) Management – a balance between nature conservation goals and local acceptance
  - 2.1 Forest management – dealing with foresters, bark beetle and invasive species
  - 2.2 Wildlife management – hunting traditions, predators, ungulates
  - 2.3 Environment education and PR – communication, a sophisticated topic
  - 2.4 Visitor management – balancing touristic interests
  - 2.5 Monitoring and research – last but not least
- 3) Evaluating management effectiveness
- 4) Conclusions

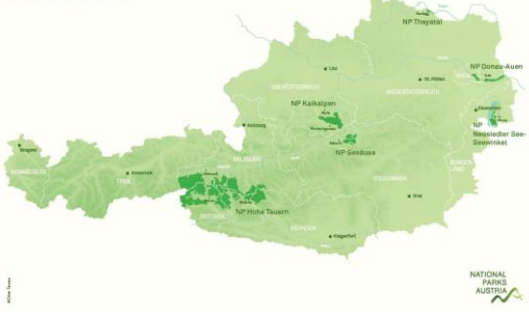
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## (1) The story of Austrian National Parks

Nationalparks in Österreich



### NP HoheTauern

1981 Kärnten 1984 Salzburg  
1992 Tirol

### NP Neusiedlersee – Seewinkel (1993)

### NP Donau Auen (1996)

### NP OÖ Kalkalpen (1997)

### NP Thayatal (1999)

### NP Gesäuse (2002)

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## The planning of a national park – a dynamic process



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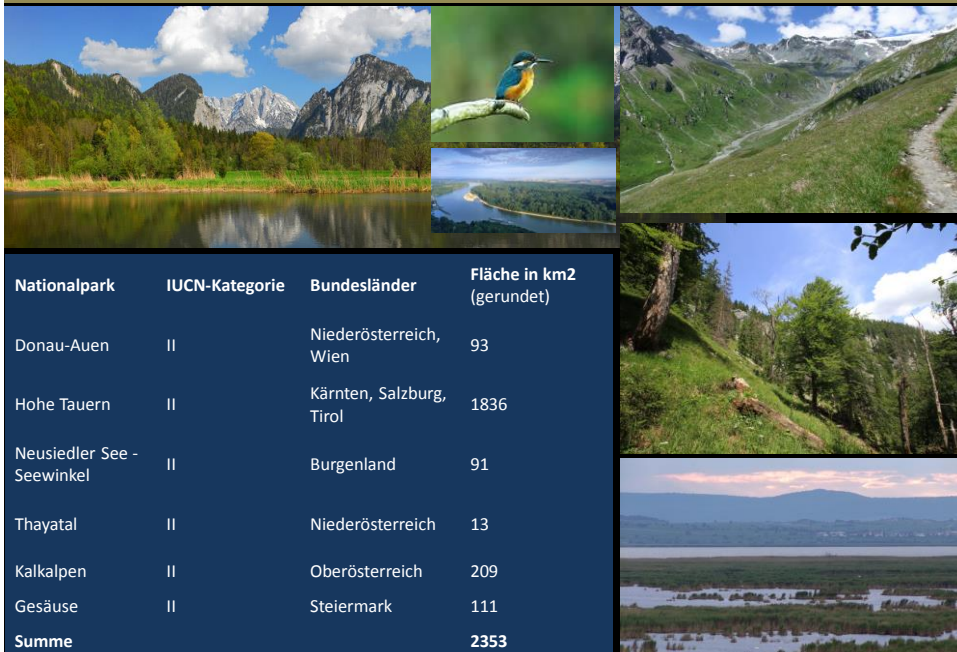


The austrian federal constitution defines nature protection as a responsibility of the provinces. Thus the legal framework of the austrian national parks differs dependent on the province the national park is situated.

If the federal state is concerned with a national important project e.g. the establishment of a national park, there has to be signed a national treaty between the federal state and the province. This treaty regulates the fundamental basics for establishment and management of the national park: territory, goals, administration, tasks, financing, involvement of local stakeholders.

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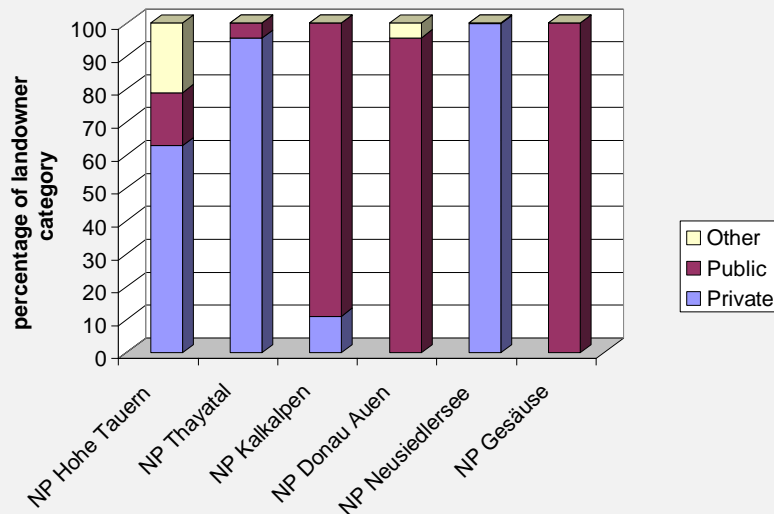


Nationalpark	IUCN-Kategorie	Bundesländer	Fläche in km2 (gerundet)
Donau-Auen	II	Niederösterreich, Wien	93
Hohe Tauern	II	Kärnten, Salzburg, Tirol	1836
Neusiedler See - Seewinkel	II	Burgenland	91
Thayatal	II	Niederösterreich	13
Kalkalpen	II	Oberösterreich	209
Gesäuse	II	Steiermark	111
<b>Summe</b>			<b>2353</b>

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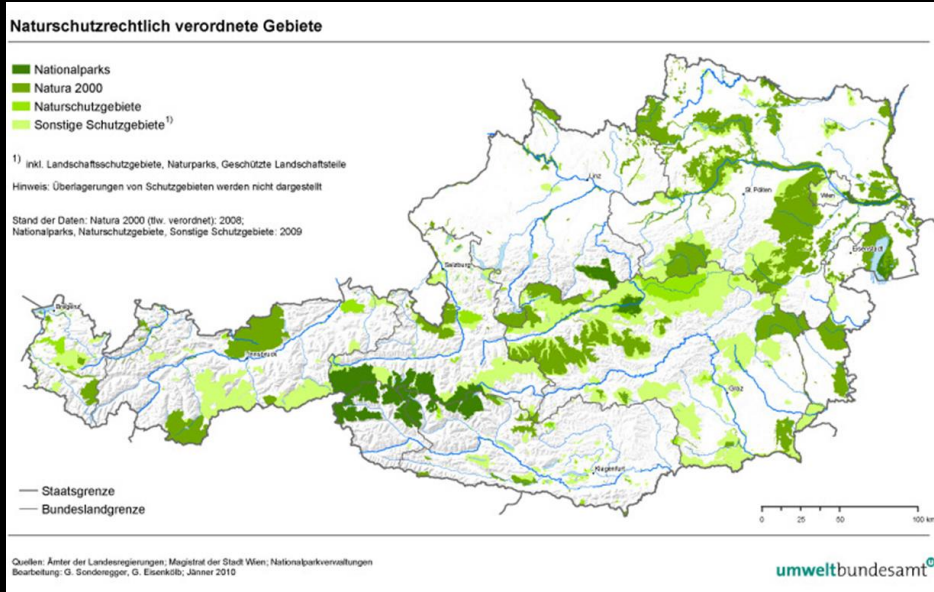
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**Category II** protected areas are large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities.

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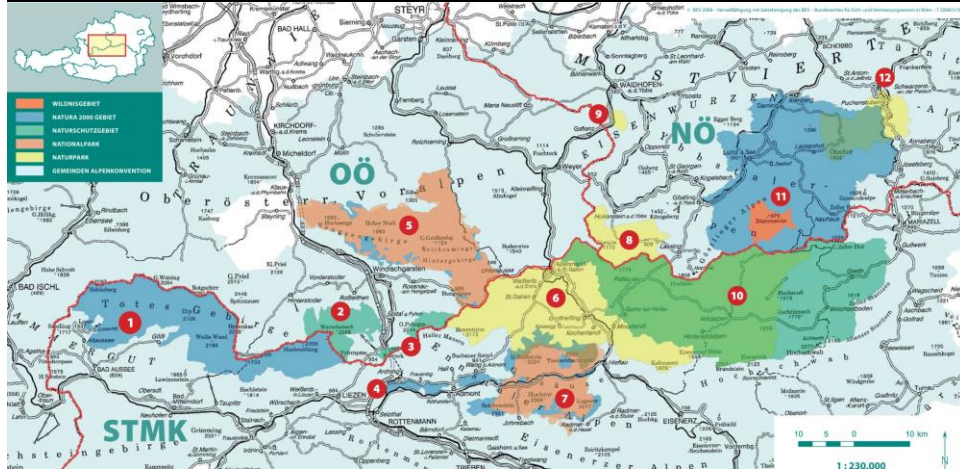
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## Austria's national parks in the year 2035 – the vision

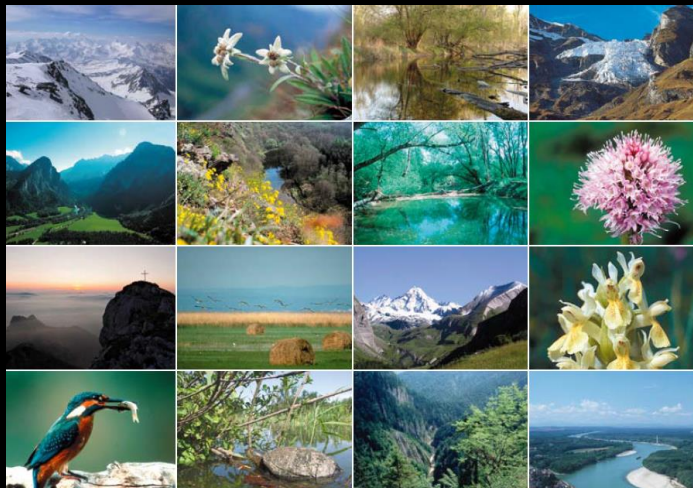


In Austria representative areas of national interest representing a key position for the preservation of the natural diversity of species and ecosystems are protected for ever as international recognized national parks with nature protection as the main goal. All essential landscape types of Austria are represented.

Policy and society highly recognize the net of national parks. Protected nature within the national parks is part of the Austrian identity.

Similar to other middle European national parks in the Austrian national parks exist many areas without any human intervention.

The national parks are innovative centers for the preservation or restoration of natural processes and intact ecosystem services.



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## Guidelines on specific topics:

**Guidelines for the management of ungulates in the Austrian national parks**

**Paper concerning management of bark beetle**

**National parks and renewable energy**

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**National Parks and regional development**

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**All national parks promote a sustainable regional development, with the national parks playing an important role according to their development of visitor facilities, their task to offer environmental education programs and opportunities for recreation and their research activities.**

**Strategy of Austrian National Parks**

## **2) Management – a balance between nature conservation goals and local acceptance**

„Unfortunately, as the story of Yellowstone demonstrates, protection alone is an inappropriate model for managing our national parks. Western civilization has radically altered these places, which were never complete ecosystems, and they remain as tiny islands surrounded by technological society.....And once an ecosystem has been truncated and thrown out of balance, it no longer has the capacity to cure itself.....A policy of protection, therefore, will neither arrest further change nor ensure that all that happens is "natural".  
"Playing God in Yellowstone". Alston Chase, 1987

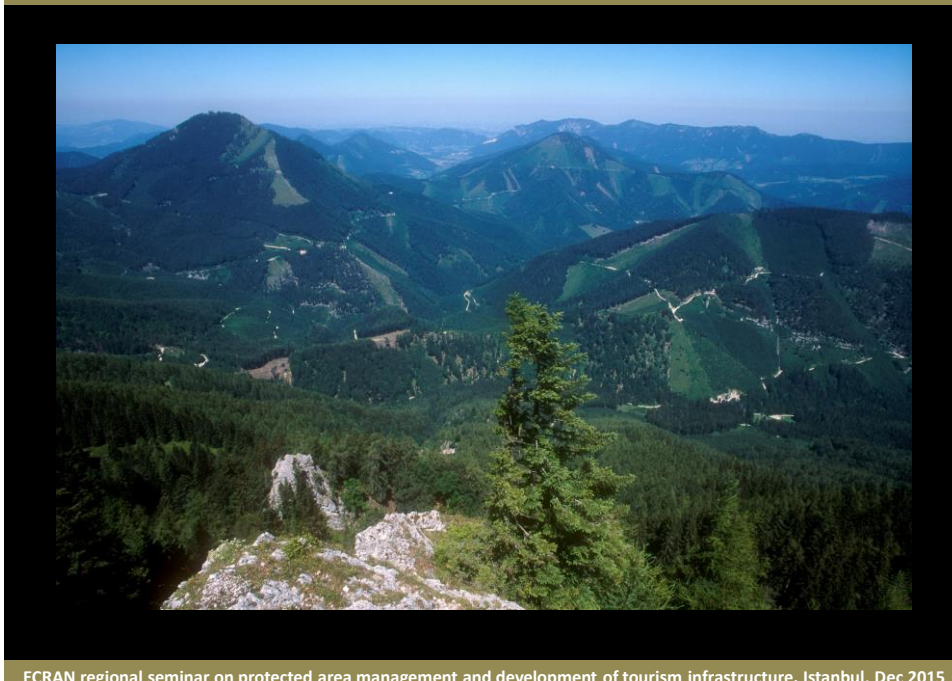


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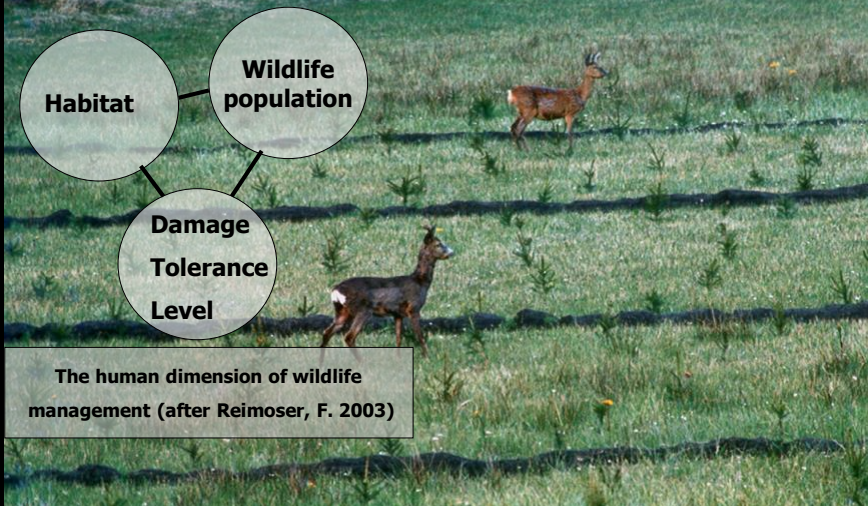
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### Ungulates – the problem with overabundance



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BUNDESMINISTERIUM  
FÜR UMWELT, JUGEND UND FAMILIE

## Leitfaden für Nationalpark - Managementpläne

Band 4/1998  
Schriftenreihe des BMUJF



## Managementplan Nationalpark Donau-Auen 2009 – 2018



für den NÖ Teil des Nationalpark Donau-Auen  
NÖ Nationalparkgesetz § 10 Abs. 2



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## 2.1 Forest management – dealing with foresters and bark beetle. Or invasive species



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## The conflict with bark beetles

Storm, snow and avalanches are main driving forces of forest dynamic. Afterwards bark beetles are the beneficiaries of these natural disturbances – thus playing a key ecological role in forest ecosystems



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## 2.2 Wildlife management – hunting traditions, predators, ungulates. And maybe an owl



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**Some authors define Wildlife Management in a narrow sense as an ecological discipline. Since the nature of issues and problems is not only ecological such a definition falls short.**

**See this definition:**

**„The application of ecological knowledge to populations of vertebrate animals and their plant and animal associates in a manner that strikes a balance between the needs of those populations and the needs of people“ (Robinson and Bolen 1984)**

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## 2.3 Environment education and PR

**AU-BLICK**  
DIE ZEITUNG DES NATIONALPARK DONAU-AUEN

**Last but not least...**  
Oktober - Dezember 2015

**Indian Summer im Gesäuse**  
Termin: 02.-04. Oktober 2015  
Zeit: Fr. 15:00 bis So. 17:00 Uhr  
Kurzort: Hotel Mitternachts, Landl  
Anmeldung erforderlich!

**GAMSBRUNN**  
Wilde Verfolgungsjagden durch steilen Fels  
Termin: Fr. 06. / 13. / 20. November 2015  
Zeit: 08:00 bis 12:00 Uhr  
Treffpunkt: Gf. Gamsbrunn, Jahnabach  
Anmeldung erforderlich!

**WILDNISPÄDAGOGIK**  
NATIONALPARK KALKALPEN

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## 2.4 Visitor management – balancing tourism interests



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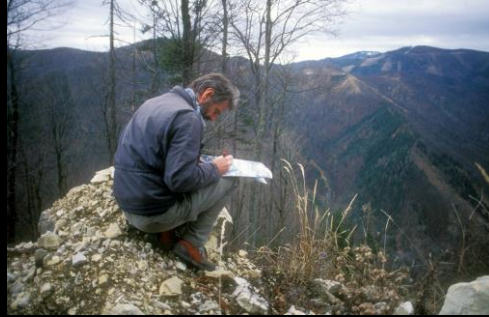
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## 2.5 Monitoring and research – last but not least



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## 3) Evaluating management effectiveness



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### Report on the management effectiveness of Austrian national parks

19.12.2014

Project leader: Karl Friedrich Sinner (EUOPARC Deutschland e.V.)

Work is based on a set of indicators, concerning four main topics

A : management of habitat and species, biodiversity

B : PR activities and environment education

C : research

D : organisation und activity

For each single indicator was derived a target

The national parks got a questionnaire and made a self assessment based on the set of indicators. Thus the actual situation is set against the target.

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### Main results:

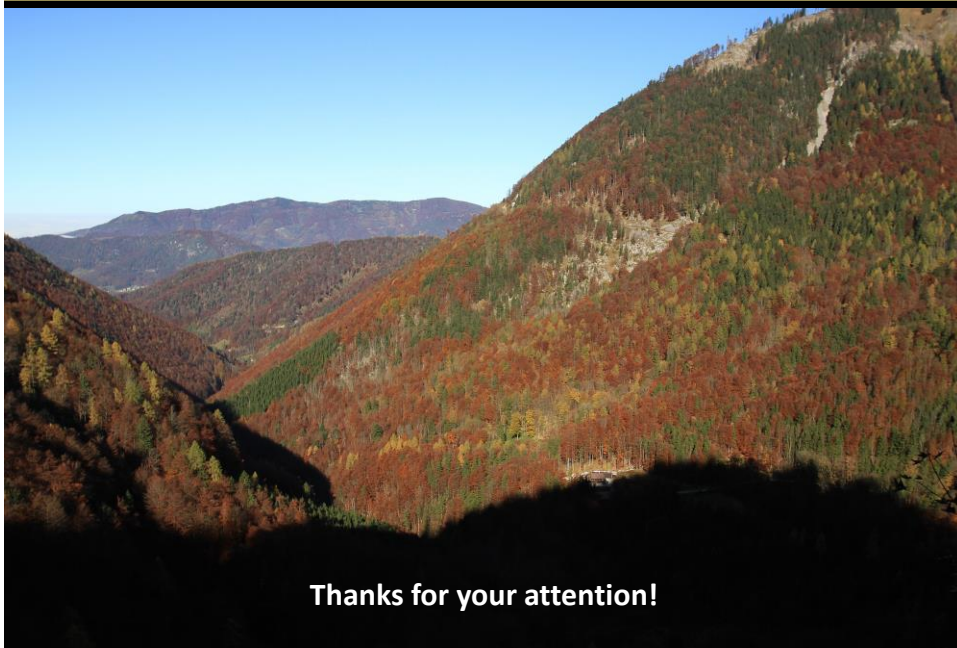
- ❖ The financial basis of many national parks is too small
- ❖ The national parks have contracts with private landowners. These contracts regulate the restrictions for specific types of land use and define the compensations for these restrictions. Most of these contracts have a validity of 10 years. This could be a risk for the future development of the national park
- ❖ National parks according to IUCN category II should succeed with having wilderness at least at 75% of the area. Maximum of transition time to reach this goal should be 30 years. Actually most of the Austrian national parks don't fulfill this criterion. They have different zonation concepts
- ❖ Possible conflicts between species and habitat protection according to N2000 and the main goal of protection natural processes should be addressed for the single national park. A comprehensive monitoring system for concerned species is necessary.
- ❖ A source of risks for all Austrian national parks are tourism activities not compatible with national park goals, aiming mainly at event tourism or outdoor sports instead of a national park specific experience of nature
- ❖ Missing skeleton agreements, e.g. concerning landscape planning or water management are sometimes a source of risks from outside the national park

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## 4) Conclusions

- ❖ Cultural landscapes are the starting point for national parks not only in Austria but in most of European countries. The balance between management techniques for restoration and natural processes is important.
- ❖ Management plans with clear evaluable goals are an essential tool for an effective protected area management
- ❖ National parks can be a chance for the development of a sustainable tourism – in cooperation with local and regional stakeholders of tourism business, travel agencies and private partners. But there has to be an agreement on harmonization of goals and a clear focus of the protected area on carrying capacity of nature and of visitors interested in nature
- ❖ There has to be a strong focus of the national park on the attitude of local people towards the protected area. The national park as a partner of local small scaled business (ecologically grown food, typical regional handicraft, ...) can be important for regional development, a broad scaled communication strategy should aim at a quite good status of information of local people about specifics of the national park, ongoing activities and management. And last but not least the involvement of local people in protected area management is the basis for the acceptance of the national park.

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**Thanks for your attention!**

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