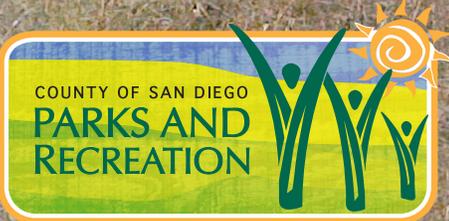
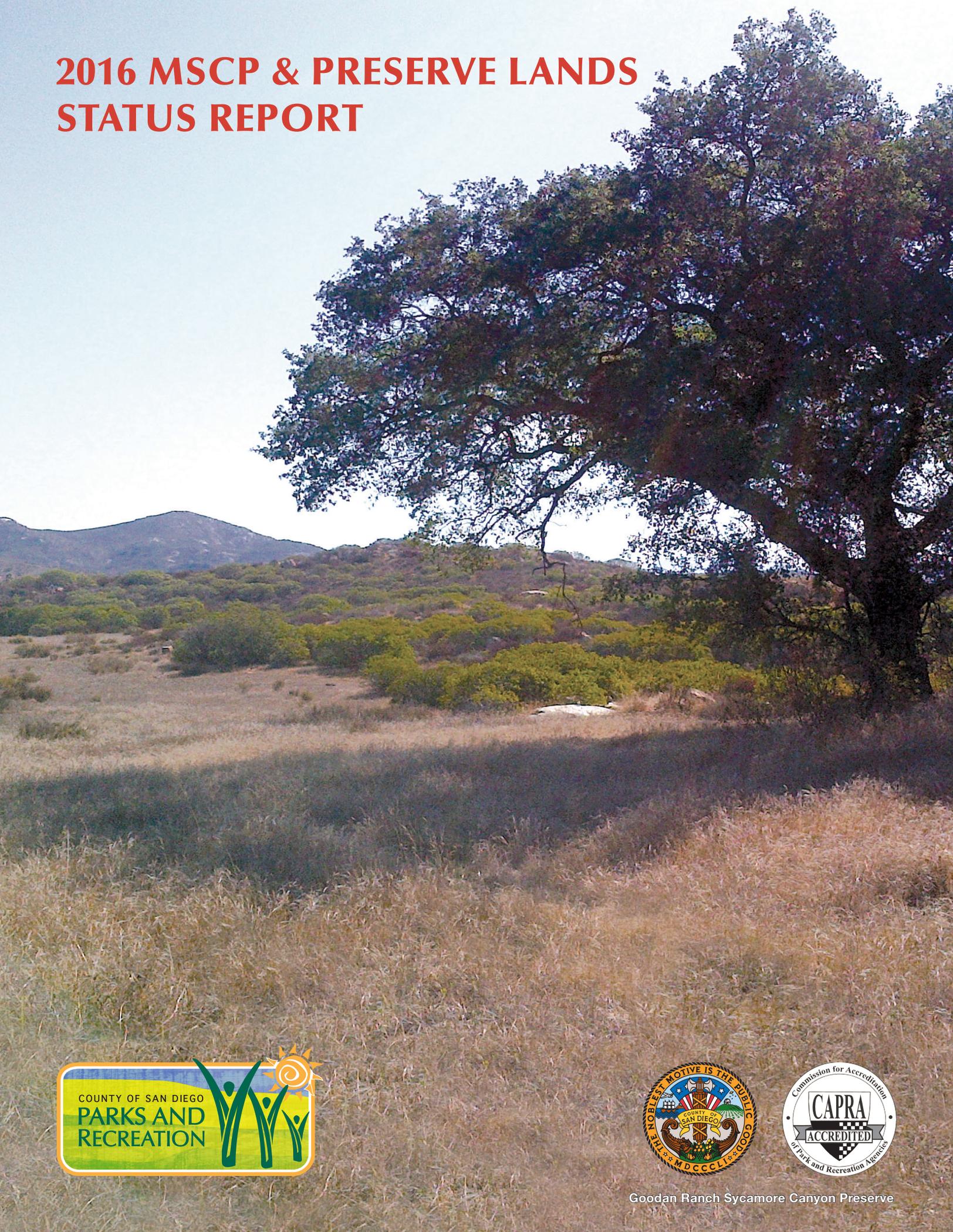


# 2016 MSCP & PRESERVE LANDS STATUS REPORT





## Acquisition Highlight

In 2015, the County acquired 140 acres in the unincorporated area west of Route 67 and south of Scripps Poway Parkway for inclusion in the Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch Preserve. This increased the size of the preserve to 2,572 acres. The property is within the Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA) of the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) South County Subarea Plan and features high-quality chaparral and coastal sage scrub vegetation. This acquisition provides habitat for the federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher and preserves a vital wildlife corridor for deer, mountain lions and other sensitive species. It may also provide a suitable location for the future connection of the Trans County Trail.



## Restoration Highlights

The Department of Parks and Recreation restored more than 30 acres of land in Tijuana River Valley Regional Park through the closure of redundant, unauthorized trails. These areas have since been seeded and planted with riparian and upland coastal sage scrub. A variety of barricades have been posted with habitat enhancement area signage, which can be removed upon vegetation re-growth. Additionally, approximately 2.5 acres of upland habitat has been planted on Spooner's Mesa, overlooking TRVRP.

## Restoration Planned

As part of the formal development of 1.4 miles of Sweetwater Loop Trail – Phase III, approximately 0.45 acres of riparian habitat will be restored and enhanced. This project will use passive and active restoration. Disturbed habitat will be enhanced and unauthorized trails will be closed to support vegetation re-growth.

## Partnerships – Research

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) funded the following research:

### Mountain Lion Study (UC Davis)



The goal of this study was to detect and track mountain lion activity in Boulder Oaks by tracking previously collared lions on County Preserves and other preserved lands. In 2015, lions were observed on the County's Mt. Olympus, Wilderness Gardens, Hellhole Canyon and Boulder Oaks Preserves. Data is provided to SANDAG's San Diego Management and Monitoring Program (SDMMP) to help analyze the functional connectivity of the MSCP Subarea Plan preserve system for mountain lions.

### Southern Mule Deer Pellet Study (USGS)

This study entailed collecting scat/pellets from the southern mule deer in several county-owned properties. The goal was to research DNA fingerprinting and to determine levels of movement and gene flow of southern mule deer near the Scripps Poway Parkway and Poway Road crossings of State Route 67.



### Coastal Cactus Wren Study (USGS and The Nature Conservancy)



This study focuses on evaluating the quality of previously mapped cactus patches, mapping cactus patches on previously inaccessible lands, conducting presence/absence surveys in the Otay and Sweetwater areas, and conducting nest-

monitoring activities in a subset of occupied territories pending available funds. The study will provide information on the state of cactus wrens and cactus habitats in southern San Diego County, and can be used to inform decisions on current and future needs for maintaining viable populations of coastal cactus wrens in California.



## Environmental Stewardship

The Department of Parks and Recreation maintains approximately 38,000 acres of County-owned open space.

Ongoing stewardship and adaptive management activities performed in 2015 include standard management practices such as access control and park ranger patrols. Trail rehabilitation, monitoring and maintenance of restoration and mitigation sites included a vernal pool site, erosion control and re-vegetation using native plant species, fuel management activities, stream corridor improvement, vector control and 35 acres of habitat restoration in Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch Preserve, Tijuana River Valley and Sweetwater Regional Parks.

Special projects were conducted to eradicate non-native and invasive species such as tamarisk, tree tobacco, castor bean, eucalyptus, gold-spotted oak borer and bullfrogs.



Additionally, the Department of Parks and Recreation provides 30 to 50 right-of-entry permits per year, many for scientific studies in our preserves. In 2015, studies focused on species such as the American badger, mountain lion, mule deer, damselfly, coastal California gnatcatcher, coastal cactus wren, Stephens' kangaroo rat, arroyo toad, Quino checkerspot butterfly, Harbison's dun skipper and other species.

## TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program Grants

The Department of Parks and Recreation has been awarded several San Diego Association of Governments Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) grants to help fund stewardship activities. Multiple restoration projects are underway, countywide, at various stages of completion. In 2015 the County was awarded two new SANDAG TransNet EMP grants.

### 2015

#### Otay River Valley Cactus Wren Habitat Restoration

- Goals are to restore and enhance 3 acres of degraded habitat areas through invasive species control/treatment, shrub thinning, planting native vegetation, and focused cactus wren monitoring. This will increase the amount of suitable habitat and improve connectivity for coastal cactus wren.
- This three-year project, to be implemented beginning in 2016, will complement the County's 2008 Salt Creek Coastal Cactus Wren Habitat Enhancement/Restoration Project.

#### Furby-North Property Access Control

- Addition of signs, fences and gates to prevent unauthorized access and off-road vehicle use will protect sensitive vegetation communities and threatened species such as California gnatcatcher and coastal cactus wren. This will also allow for future active restoration of unauthorized trails.
- Once the access control measures are installed, DPR will coordinate with SANDAG's enforcement program to increase patrols and enforce County regulations.

### 2012

#### Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch Preserve Invasive Removal and Habitat Restoration Project

- In late August 2015, DPR completed a 2-year treatment and removal of invasive plants and restoration of coastal sage scrub/scrub oak chaparral habitat.

### 2010

#### Lakeside Linkage Preserve Cactus Wren Restoration Project

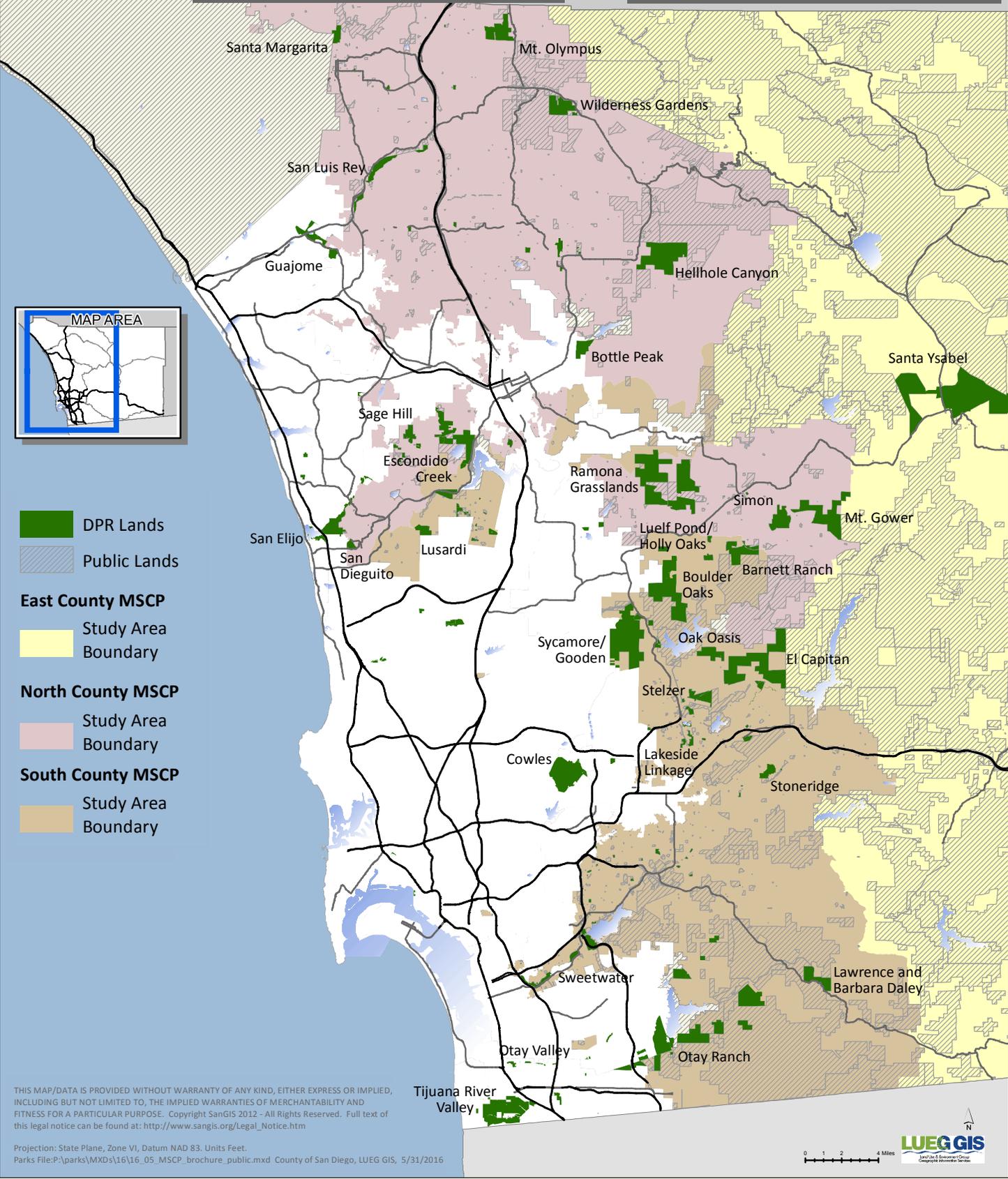
- December 2015 marked the halfway point for the fifth and final year of a management and monitoring grant to restore cactus wren habitat. During 2015, cactus wrens and California gnatcatchers were observed near or within restoration sites.

#### Lusardi Creek Preserve Fire Recovery and the Removal of Invasive Species

- DPR received a 3-year grant for post-fire removal of invasive, non-native plants and restoration of coastal sage scrub. The final monitoring report was submitted to SANDAG in August 2015. DPR reported on the resprouting of cacti cuttings burned in the 2014 Bernardo Fire but also the reemergence of some non-native plants due to the fire.

**Department of Parks and Recreation  
Preserve Lands**  
 1998 Baseline: 28,000 acres  
 As of December 2015: 47,300 acres

**Acquisition Funding**  
 County Contribution: \$ 76.4 million  
 Partners Contribution: \$ 87.4 million  
 Total Acquisition Cost: \$ 163.8 million



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