



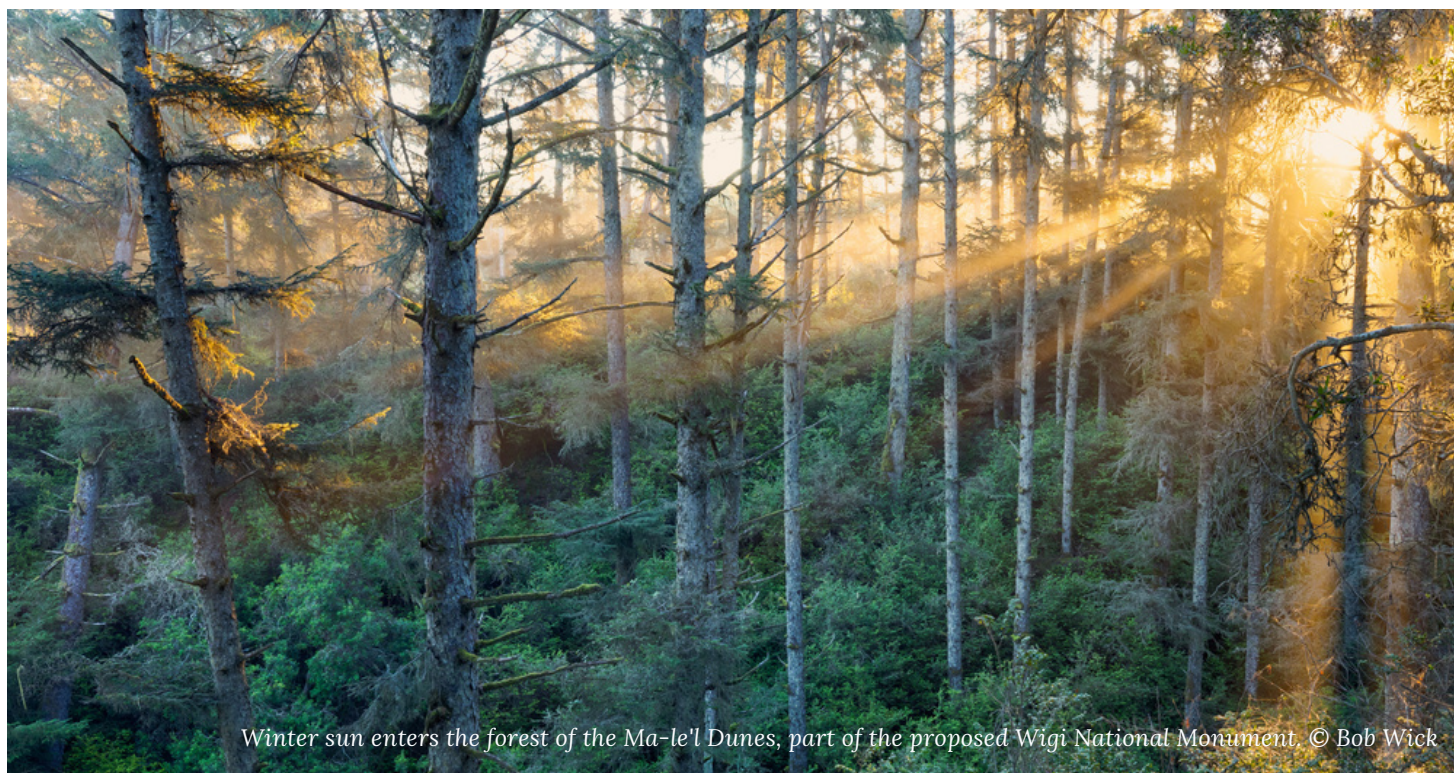
DUNESBERRY

NEWSLETTER OF FRIENDS OF THE DUNES

FALL/WINTER 2022 | VOLUME 41 | ISSUE 2

FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS

By Mike Cipra, Executive Director



This year, Friends of the Dunes turned 40. That's right: we have been working with you for 40 years to conserve and restore native ecosystems and connect people with the remarkable coastal dunes of Humboldt Bay. Turning 40 marks mid-life for people in our society, and mid-life famously leads to some serious self-questioning. So, let's ask the questions!

What have we got to show for 40 years of Friends of the Dunes? Today in Humboldt Bay, we have the best conserved, most intact, and most ecologically restored native coastal dunes on the U.S. West Coast. Stretching from the new Wadulh Unit in northern Lanphere Dunes, through Lanphere and Ma-le'l Dunes, the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center, past Manila to the newly conserved Samoa Dunes and Wetlands, this sweep of more than 1,700 acres of connected coastal habitats is truly remarkable. These dunes, their habitats, and their thriving wildlife are a success story, and the moral of the story is clear: a community can do historically great things when we work together to conserve and restore nature.

The dunes we've protected, with you as our partners in this work, are a refuge and an inspiration, a place to learn and grow. More than 25,000 students have experienced these special places on Friends of the Dunes education programs over the years. That's a lot of kids! And guess what? Many of those kids have now grown up to become our community's political and environmental leaders. We know that those experiences learning in the dunes were formative, because the people they formed tell us. Our education programs are now generational.

Hey, I guess we have done some pretty neat stuff! **What's next?** Right now, things are lining up for increased opportunities for native dune habitat restoration. This summer, researchers conducting the Humboldt Coastal Resilience Project, including Andrea Pickart, published the first peer-reviewed study demonstrating that restored native dunes in our barrier system lead to increased resilience to sea-level rise, both for dune ecosystems and for human communities.

We're sharing this crucial research with funders, and they're listening. Working with partners like the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the State Coastal Conservancy, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, we are planning a landscape-level habitat restoration project that would result in more than 4.5 miles of entirely restored foredunes. This would include the entire Humboldt Coastal Nature Center foredune restored to fully native conditions in just a few years!

At the same time, we're deepening our community education programs to make them accessible to a new,

diverse generation of people—folks who haven't fully been invited to the dunes yet, or even to nature. You can read about these inspiring new community education programs in more detail in this Dunesberry.

We're also continuing to work with a broad coalition, including the Wiyot Tribe, to advance the vision to protect and connect the wild lands of the Humboldt Bay region as part of a new Wigi National Monument. This bold conservation project is part of our shared future as well.

So what does it all mean? Forty years ago, people dreamed that by working together, we could chart a future of greater natural diversity, love of nature among people of all backgrounds, and broad community support for conservation. You may have been one of those first Friends of the Dunes 40 years ago. For certain, you're one of those visionary people now. Thanks for coming on this journey with Friends of the Dunes-- here's to the next 40 years of coastal conservation!

DUNE ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION TEAM

Enjoy the outdoors while helping the Dunes Ecosystem Restoration Team remove non-native plants and make space for native biodiversity in our amazing dunes. We meet:

Every 2nd Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm at Humboldt Coastal Nature Center
Every 3rd Sunday from 10 am to 1 pm at BLM's Ma-le'l Dunes South

Wear work clothes and bring water. A quick training on plant identification and tools for plant removal will be provided. For more information contact Dante@friendsofthedunes.org.



WELCOME TO THE TEAM



Ryland Sherman

Restoration & Stewardship Technician

Ryland became interested in nature and ecology at a very young age through his experiences camping and hiking while growing up in Los Angeles. He moved to Humboldt County in 2012, where he studied at Humboldt State University. In 2019, he graduated with a major in Wildlife Management and Conservation. Ryland chose this major after finding his passion for fieldwork in the Wildlife program at Humboldt State University. During his undergraduate studies, Ryland became interested in dune ecology through participating in field projects at the Lanphere Dunes. He started working for Friends of the Dunes as a Share the Beach Intern during the summers of 2021 and 2022 and was recently hired as the Restoration & Stewardship Technician. In his free time, Ryland and his partner, Emily, enjoy hiking, kayaking, and taking their chocolate Labrador Maggie to the beach.

Zeen Vincent

College Corps Fellow

Zeen is a student at Cal Poly Humboldt, completing his degree in Environmental Studies with a concentration in Community Organizing. Zeen is working with Friends of the Dunes through College Corps, a new Fellowship program for college students to gain work experience while serving with community partners. Zeen has worked on campus with Associated Students as the Environmental Sustainability Officer for the 21-22 academic year, as well as working on an Ethnobotanical Mapping Project. He is excited to work as a guide for the Bay to Dunes program and explore all that the dunes have to offer. Outside of FOD, Zeen is a cheerleader with Cal Poly Humboldt, has two cats, and loves to crochet.



Iona Mahoney-Moyer

College Corps Fellow

Iona is a student at College of the Redwoods, completing her degree in Forestry and Natural Resources. She is coming to Friends of the Dunes as a part of College Corps, a new program connecting college students with community partners across the state. Iona has had 5 years of experience working outdoor jobs, mainly through forestry work for CA Demonstration Forests and visitor services for CA State Parks. Iona enjoyed time in the dunes growing up, worked a summer job in Lanphere and North Ma-le'l Dunes during high school, and has since continued to recreate and visit the dunes in her free time. Iona is grateful for this opportunity to work with Friends of the Dunes. She is dedicated to giving back to an area that has given so much to her.





California Dreamin'

By Daisy Ambriz-Peres, Outreach Manager

Look! Up in the sky! Is it a bird? Is it a plane? It's a... I look above, trying not to blind myself with the autumn sun. A giant winged prehistoric-looking creature plunges from 60+ feet in the air into the water head first. Its wings fold back like a bullet seconds before its final dive. A few moments later it pops back up with its throat pouch full of delicious goodies. What a spectacular sight! The California brown pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*) is an icon on our coast. The smallest of its pelican cousins, it has a wingspan of around 6.5 feet and weighs only 4 pounds.

Right now, the bay is full of pelicans diving, floating, and flying in choreographed v-shaped patterns in order to save energy. They are flock animals and fly in large groups. You might see these birds skimming across the bay, taking advantage of a physical phenomenon called *ground effect*. This effect is normally seen when pelicans fly within the length of their wingspan from the water. Air is funneled and compressed between the bird's wings and the water, creating a sort of air cushion that allows them to fly more efficiently and ultimately save energy. You might notice other birds do this, such as sandpipers and cormorants.

Masters of flight and energy efficiency the brown pelican becomes the king of the sky. Like any good migratory coastal bird, it likes to chill in the warm waters of southern California and Mexico for its winter vacation. Oh, what a life! This golden-eyed beauty flies through Humboldt Bay twice a year; stopping by to get full on our bay's fishy bounty. The fall marks their return south. During the spring and summer pelicans fly to Canada, once again passing through Humboldt Bay.

California brown pelican demonstrating the ground effect in flight at the Arcata Marsh. Photo by Mel Fawcett-Routh.

The great majority of the California brown pelicans nest in Mexico, while some nest in islands off our state's coast. They hate to be disturbed by humans so they tend to nest in locations uninhabited by us (places like these are unfortunately dwindling). They lay clutches of three eggs in the spring and summer. In 1970, the California brown pelican was listed as federally endangered after the infamous DDT caused their egg shells to thin. Thanks to conservation activists the chemical was banned, and fortunately, we have seen the return of the pelican on our shores. In 2009 the California brown pelican was officially delisted. Hurray for grassroots activism!

Although DDT is no longer a threat, pelicans still face a number of adversities including habitat degradation & destruction, fishing competition with humans, habitat contamination from human trash, and oil spills. I'd like to think that collectively, we humans are becoming more conscious of our fellow animals, plants, and landscapes; undoing our harmful habits and restoring the good ones. While we continue our push for a more eco-conscious society, we need to make time to stop and smell the roses-- or in this case, admire the pelican's beauty and its spectacular dives.



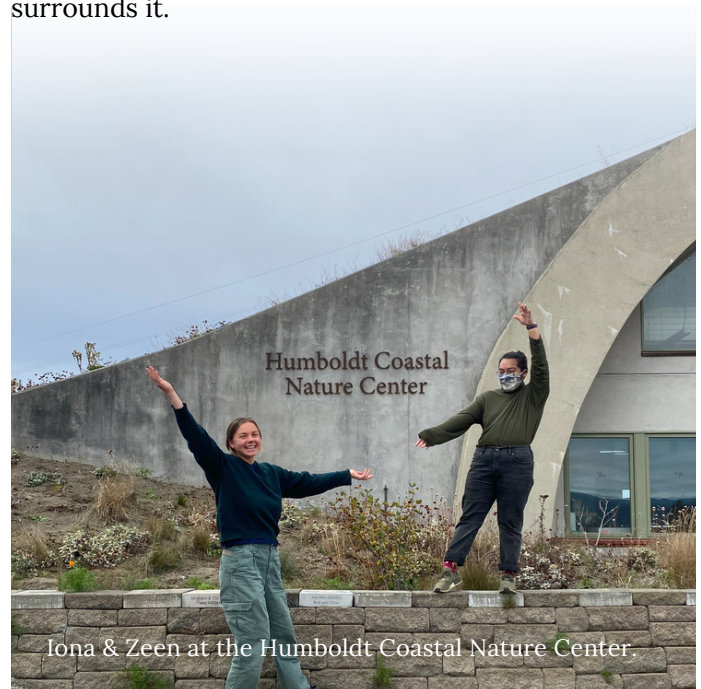
California brown pelican soaring through the open air. Photo by Mel Fawcett-Routh.

Community Service-based Learning Through College Corps Program

By Iona Mahoney-Moyer, College Corps Fellow

This fall, Zeen Vincent and I joined the Friends of the Dunes team through Californians for All College Corps Fellowship Program. The College Corps Fellowship Program is a new statewide program that pairs college students with organizations in their communities. Students serve their community partner over the course of the school year, develop valuable skills, and in turn receive a living stipend and education award. The program has three main goals: engage college students in meaningful service opportunities that build leadership skills and civic responsibility, help students from diverse backgrounds graduate college on time and with less debt, and support the work of community-based organizations focused on key local priorities. Across the state, fellows have been paired with organizations in three priority areas of K-12 education, climate action, and food insecurity. A total of 45 colleges and 3,500 fellows were selected for the program; Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods were both included. Between the two local colleges, 100 students were selected and paired with local organizations. As one of these organizations, Friends of the Dunes is glad to have the new additions to the staff and excited to be a part of this new positive program.

As a fellow paired with Friends of the Dunes, I am grateful to be developing myself through the work I am doing here and I am enjoying getting to know this organization and the supportive community that surrounds it.



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Jess (Jellyfish) Barger

By Suzie Fortner, Programs & Operations Director

Friends of the Dunes has been very lucky to have Jess Barger engaged in our work since 2015. While studying Wildlife Management at what was then Humboldt State University, Jess began removing invasive plants from the dunes with the Dune Ecosystem Restoration Team and guiding groups of school kids around the dunes during Bay to Dunes field trips - earning herself the nature name Jellyfish. After showing some serious initiative and dedication to our mission, it wasn't long before she joined our staff. As a true non-profit unicorn (a magical creature capable of balancing a wide variety of tasks & responsibilities), Jess served in many roles between 2015-2018 including Share the Beach Intern, Education Assistant, Restoration Coordinator, and ultimately Community Programs Manager/Restoration Manager. Her enthusiasm for the work we do and her creativity had long-lasting impacts on our programs. Just this summer, we dug up some of Jess' bee-themed activity outlines as we brought back the Bee-Day Party. I also know that there are many young students and summer campers out there who have some very fond memories of the dunes thanks to Jess Jellyfish.

Jess' commitment to Friends of the Dunes didn't end when she returned to school to earn her Masters in Wildlife Management, working with Jeff Black on the North Coast Otter Project. She remained a member, supporter, and volunteer.



Jess Barger as a Share the Beach Docent, 2015.

"I've always loved the beach, but I found a new level of love for the beauty and biodiversity of our dune system. My involvement with Friends of the Dunes has allowed me to express that love by giving back and removing invasive species, but also through teaching people of all ages and backgrounds. The dunes will always be my happy place, and I'll always be happy to support Friends of the Dunes."

-Jess Barger



Over 600 students & 200 adults creating an aerial art image. Design by Jess Barger, Photo by J Patrick Cudahy & Mark Harris.

This year, Jess volunteered her time and expertise to act as our "Aerial Art Captain" during the Kids Ocean Day event, coordinating the impressive task of laying out our aerial art design and seating about 800 people (a majority of them being energetic elementary school students) in the design before our scheduled flyover. This fall, Jess played the role of the Beachgrass Monster during the Spooky Dunes Tour. After spending years coordinating volunteer-restoration efforts and removing European Beachgrass from many acres of coastal dunes, Jess was the perfect fit for this prickly role!

We are so grateful for Jess' continued engagement in our work, and as a lifelong Friend of the Dunes, we look forward to her continued involvement and support.



Cultivating Coastal Connections

by Suzie Fortner, Programs & Operations Director

If you are reading this newsletter, it's extremely likely that you have had positive experiences in (and therefore developed a personal connection with) Humboldt's coastal dune environments. That's why you donate, volunteer, restore, and act as stewards of these unique and diverse ecosystems. Thank you!

Here at Friends of the Dunes, we operate under the simple premise that you must first love something before you will protect it. A lot of the work we do involves introducing people to Humboldt's amazing coastal dune environments and sharing our passion for these special places because we know that once people experience the dunes for themselves, they will love them as much as we do. We also understand that not everyone in our community has equal access to nature. Many local residents, some living within 5 miles of the coast, have never been to the dunes! Barriers to accessing the coast are vast and varied, but some include transportation, language barriers (e.g. of public programs, visitor centers, and area maps), familiarity with where to go, and comfort levels exploring outdoor areas. In an effort to make the coastal dunes (and nature in general) more accessible to our wider Humboldt community, we are constantly working to identify these barriers and adapting our programs to mitigate them as best we can.



Michelle Kunst showing a young child sand critters at an *Explorando Juntos* event. Photo by Selene Castillo.



Photo by Michelle Kunst

Thanks to an Explore the Coast Grant from the California State Coastal Conservancy, we have been able to dedicate staff time and resources towards improving the accessibility of our programs. Our *Explorando Juntos* program provides monthly Spanish-bilingual nature programs for local families. We've found that it takes more than just offering programs and outreach materials in Spanish - engaging Latine and Spanish-speaking families also requires building relationships and trust. Daisy Ambriz-Peres has spent the past year working closely with our partners at Paso a Paso to do just that, and it has paid off through the meaningful connections she has made with families who otherwise would not be spending time exploring coastal environments.

Another component of this grant is our Family Nature Connections events, which are designed to provide free, enjoyable, and thematic nature exploration opportunities for families with young children. This year we organized the Spring Equinox Celebration, a Bee-Day Party, and the Spooky Dunes Tour, with a combined 224 participants attending! During these events, we provide hands-on activities, crafts, and healthy snacks with the ultimate goal of providing space and structure for families to enjoy nature together. Activities such as self-guided scavenger hunts provide just enough direction that parents can confidently find their way down the trail while learning about nature with their kids. Ultimately, these events are bringing in community members who aren't attending Friends of the Dunes' other regular programs and many who have never before been to the Nature Center.

Last but not least, this funding has enabled us to launch a series of programs we are calling Nature Newbies. While we LOVE all our nature-nerd supporters (I include myself in that category), we wanted to offer programs that are specifically geared towards nature-curious individuals who might be hesitant to attend our normal guided walks or restoration workdays. For some people in our community, even words like *hiking* and *birding* might be intimidating. Through the Introduction to Hiking Series, we hope to demystify nature exploration and nature observation while helping participants understand that hiking is really just walking in nature. But where do you go? What do you bring? What kind of trees are those and how do you know? These are all questions that are being answered in the 3-part Introduction to Hiking Series. We are also offering an Art & Nature Series, perfect for people who want to slow down and deepen their connection with nature through artistic expression. These workshops on Nature Journaling, Watercolor in Nature, and Nature Sketching have been so well-received that we will be planning to continue offering Art & Nature programs in 2023. All of these programs are introductory-level with no previous experience necessary, and our friendly instructors (having once been nature newbies themselves) are creating a welcoming and non-judgmental environment for participants to connect with nature and each other.



Mushroom Queen of the Beach Pine Palace (volunteer Clare Dooley) inspects lichens with a young participant during the Spooky Dunes Tour. Photo by Allison Poklemba.

We are excited to be cultivating new coastal connections for members of our community who otherwise may face barriers to exploring Humboldt's coastal dune environments, and we are grateful for the funding from the California State Coastal Conservancy that allows us to do so.

COASTAL NATURALIST TRAINING

March 22 to May 13, 2023

Explore the beautiful and diverse coastal ecosystems of the Humboldt Bay region with a group of fellow nature enthusiasts during this 8-week California Naturalist Course. No previous experience in natural sciences or outdoor exploration is necessary and scholarship funding is available. This course combines a junior college-level introductory science course curriculum with classroom and field experiences, guest lecturers, and project-based learning to immerse students in the natural history of the Humboldt Bay region and coastal dune ecosystem. Upon completion of course requirements, participants will earn a California Naturalist Certificate through the UC California Naturalist Program and are eligible for four UC Davis Continuing and Professional Education academic credits.

For more information and registration, visit friendsofthedunes.org/naturalist-training Schedule:

Wednesday evening classroom sessions from 6 to 8 p.m.

Weekend field sessions from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (mostly Sundays)

Course Fees:

\$450 General Registration, \$400 Members & Students

Scholarships are available!



THANK YOU, NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

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Susan Birch
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Friends of the Dunes is dedicated to conserving the natural diversity of coastal environments in Humboldt County, California, through community supported education and stewardship programs.

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Clearing the Barr

by Mike Cipra, Executive Director

Friends of the Dunes submitted an application to the Humboldt County Planning Department way back in 2014 for a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) amendment, in order to enhance trail access at the 3.6-acre former Barr property located on Lupin Avenue in Manila. In October 2022, we were finally issued a permit to conduct these improvements! Trail improvements have been designed to minimize impacts to sensitive habitat while allowing for continued neighborhood access by hikers, equestrians, and dog walkers. The newly designated trails on the former Barr parcel connect to the established network of trails on the rest of the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center property, allowing for miles of exploration in the dunes.

The former Barr parcel trailhead will see modest improvements, including a new fence on Lupin Avenue designed to allow pedestrian and equestrian access while blocking access to motorized vehicles. A small sign will be installed, set back from the road, to orient visitors to the trails and to their dune exploration. There is no parking allowed on Lupin Avenue, out of respect for our neighbors.

Our amended Coastal Development permit also allows for the continued implementation of an approved and now fully updated Restoration and Management Plan for community-supported native dune habitat restoration



The Barr parcel includes habitat for Humboldt Bay wallflowers. Photo by Suzie Fortner.

activities on all Humboldt Coastal Nature Center properties, including the former Barr parcel.

Thanks to you, our neighbors and supporters, who worked with Friends of the Dunes to refine this project, and especially those of you who advocated to express strong community support for Friends of the Dunes' continued work toward greater dune habitat conservation, ecosystem restoration, and public access.



YOU'RE INVITED

Holiday Party

Saturday, December 10 from 4:30 to 6:30 pm

Septentrio Winery

Join us for a beautiful night out in town as we honor you, our volunteers and members at **Septentrio Winery in Arcata**. This year we will be meeting at Septentrio's heated outdoor area. The space offers comfortable seating and fire pits for you to enjoy on a chilly December evening. Grab a glass of wine with us and get to know other wonderful nature-lovers in the organization.

Dress warmly and have a designated driver ready! We cannot wait to end the year with you all.



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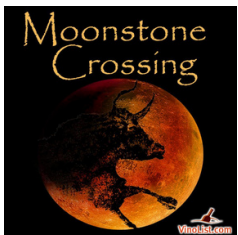
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Save the Dates!

- **Holiday Party at Septentrio Winery**
Saturday, December 10 (more information on page 10)
- **New Year's Hike**
Saturday, January 7
- **Spring Equinox Celebration**
Saturday, March 18



Visit friendsofthedunes.org/calendar for a complete list of upcoming programs.

Join our email list for updates about guided walks, restoration days, and school programs.

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