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FISHERIES**

Ipswich Mills Dam Removal: Section 106 Status Update

January 8, 2026

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Marine Habitat Resource Specialist
NOAA Restoration Center

Presentation Purpose: This meeting is intended as a brief status update on the review/consultation process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) for the proposed removal of the Ipswich Mills Dam.

This is an update presentation and not a public meeting or consulting party meeting.



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Presentation Outline

- NOAA Restoration Center
- What is Section 106 of the NHPA?
- Section 106 Review process and status
- Next steps and contact info



NOAA Restoration Center

We work with partners across the US on habitat restoration projects that help:

- Recover threatened and endangered species
- Support sustainable fisheries
- Restore natural resources damaged by oil spills and other disasters
- Reduce community risk from severe storms



Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

Section 106 requires federal agencies to consider the effects on historic properties of projects they carry out, assist, fund, permit, license, or approve throughout the **country**. (from Advisory Council on Historic Preservation website <https://www.achp.gov/protecting-historic-properties/section-106-process/introduction-section-106>)

If a project requires a federal permit or receives federal support, a Lead Federal Agency (LFA) must conduct a Section 106 review to identify if the project will have impacts on historic properties and, if so, find ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate those impacts.





Section 106 Review Process

36 CFR § 800.3-7

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INITIATE the process

- Determine undertaking
- Coordinate with other reviews
- Identify SHPO/THPO, Indian tribes/NHOs, and other parties
- Plan to involve the public

Undertaking with potential to affect historic properties?

NO

YES



IDENTIFY historic properties

- Determine APE and scope of effort
- Make reasonable and good faith effort to identify
- Determine National Register eligibility
- Consult SHPO/THPO, Indian tribes/NHOs, and other parties
- Involve the public

Historic properties present or affected?

NO

YES



ASSESS adverse effects

- Apply Criteria of Adverse Effects
- Consult SHPO/THPO, Indian tribes/NHOs, and other parties
- Involve the public

Historic properties adversely affected?

NO

YES



RESOLVE adverse effects

- Develop and consider alternatives or modifications to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects
- Notify the ACHP
- Consult SHPO/THPO, Indian tribes/NHOs, and other parties
- Involve the public

AGREEMENT or Council Comment

PROCEED



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Initiate: Identify the undertaking

- The Town of Ipswich has been exploring the potential removal of the dam since ~2006 to improve fish passage, eliminate maintenance costs and reduce risk.
- Since then a series of feasibility studies have been conducted and the town has evaluated various fish passage options including a reconstructed fish ladder, nature-like fishway, partial dam removal, and no action.
- After considerable public outreach and discussion, the Town chose to pursue dam removal.
 - Town Meeting vote (spring 2023)
 - Ballot vote (May 2024), Select Board vote (June 2024)
- The undertaking being reviewed is the proposed **Dam Removal** project



Initiate: Identify the undertaking

- The project as proposed will remove the full vertical extent of the existing dam structure, the existing and remnant fish ladders and most of the horizontal extent of the dam.
- The viewing platform will remain and the impoundment will be restored to a flowing river.
- Project Partners include: IRWA, Town of Ipswich, NOAA, USFWS, EBSCO, MA DER, and MA DMF, Horsley Witten Group (Design Firm)



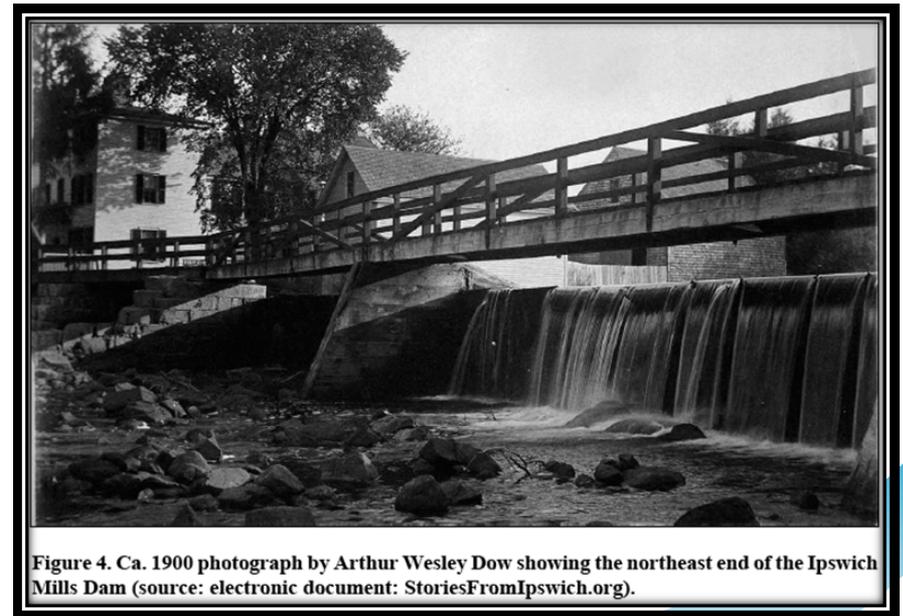
Initiate

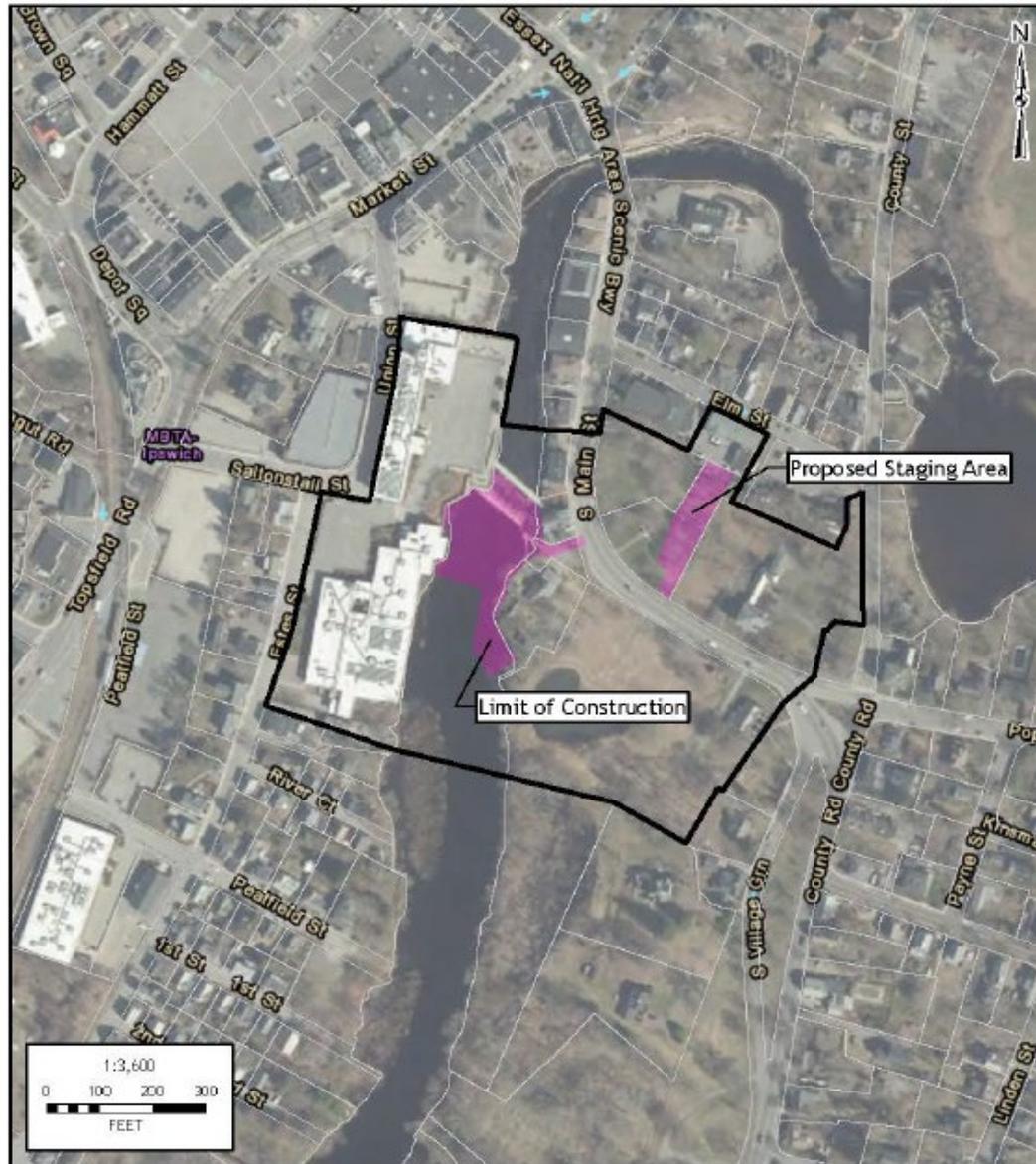
- NOAA has agreed to act as the Lead Federal Agency (LFA) for Section 106 having provided funding and technical assistance throughout various phases of the project. Other federal agencies involved are:
 - USACE – Section 404 permit
 - USFWS – Funding Support
- In addition to the federal agencies above, NOAA identified and contacted the following potential consulting parties:
 - Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC)
 - Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources (BUAR)
 - Town of Ipswich (Dam owner/project proponent)
 - Ipswich Historical Commission
 - Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)
 - Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
 - Narragansett Indian Tribe



Identify Historic Properties

- Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL) investigations:
 - Cultural Resources Summary (February 2017) – this included information gathering from State and Local repositories and interviews with local historical experts
 - Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey (May 2024)
 - Historic Architectural Properties Reconnaissance Survey (June 2024)
- NOAA identified the project Area of Potential Effect (APE) in a letter to MHC dated 6/26/25
- MHC concurred with the recommended APE in a letter dated 7/28/25





**Ipswich Mills Dam Removal Project
Ipswich, Massachusetts
Area of Potential Effect**

- Key:**
- Limit of Work
 - Area of Potential Effect
 - Parcel Boundaries



MLL study area	February 2024
Study Written Group	August 2023
Project LOM	August 2023
Map	Various
GIS Data/Mapsets	Various

PAL makes no warranty, either expressed or implied, regarding the fitness or suitability of this map for any other purpose than to depict the results of cultural resource investigations conducted by PAL. THIS MAP IS INTENDED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY.



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Table 1. Historic Architectural Properties within the APE

MHC No.	Property Name	Address
IPS.I	Ipswich Mills Historic District	Multiple
IPS.356	Ipswich Mills Hosiery Manufacturing Company	Union Street
IPS.664	Ipswich Mills Company Workers Housing	22 Nursery Court
IPS.9009	Ipswich Mills Dam	South Main Street
IPS.J	South Green District	Multiple
IPS.29	Mary Hall–Haskell House	36 South Main Street
IPS.936	Ipswich War Memorial	44 South Main Street
IPS.31	Dr. Philomen Dean House	59–63 South Main Street
IPS.26	Samuel Dutch House	69 South Main Street
IPS.41	John Heard–Captain Augustine Heard House	54 South Main Street
IPS.40	John Whipple House	1 South Green
IPS.193	Ipswich Town Hall Annex	15 Elm Street

Eligible,
but not
listed on
the
register



Eligible,
but not
listed on
the
register



While the Ipswich Mills Dam is not listed as a contributing property, PAL recommended it as eligible as a contributing property to the Ipswich Mills Historic District.



Assess Adverse Effects

- Based on PAL's research and input from MHC, NOAA issued a finding of effects for the project in a letter dated 6/26/25 . NOAA finds that the project will cause adverse effects on historic properties, specifically:
 - Direct physical effects on the Ipswich Mills Historic District because it will result in the removal of the Ipswich Mills Dam, which is eligible for listing in the National Register as a contributing resource to the district
 - Diminish the overall integrity Ipswich Mills Historic District by altering the waterpower relationship to the District
 - Diminish the setting of the Dr. Philomen Dean House at 59–63 South Main Street and the Samuel Dutch House at 69 South Main Street, which are adjacent to the east end of the dam and contribute to the South Green Historic District
- An Archaeological Site Avoidance and Protection Plan (ASAPP) was developed that will be implemented to avoid impacts to known sites and areas of archaeological sensitivity
- MHC concurred with NOAA's Finding of Effects and approved the ASAPP in their letter dated 7/28/25





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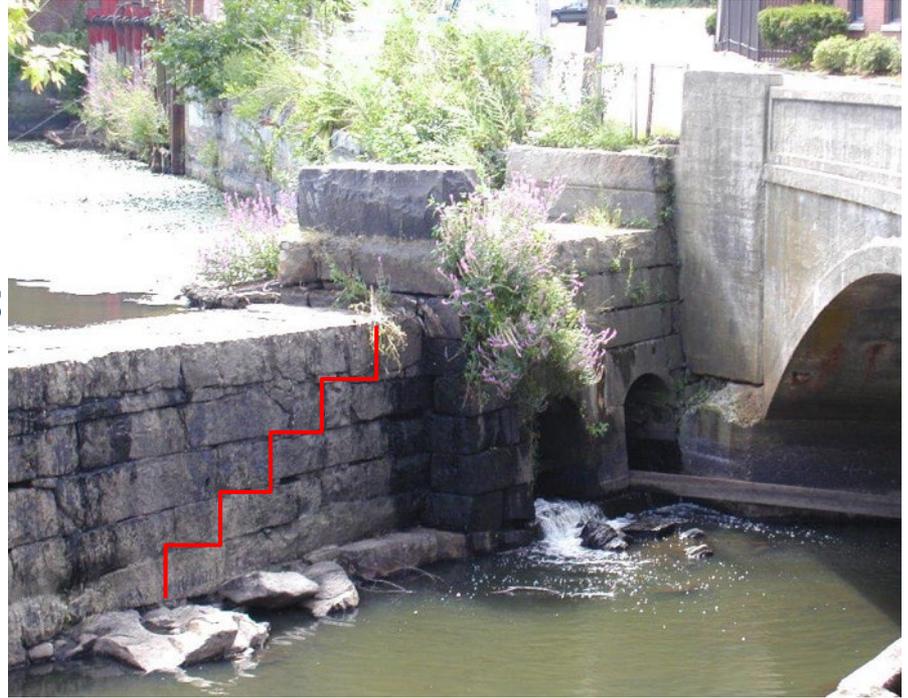
Resolve Adverse Effects

- This is the current stage.
 - NOAA will be meeting with consulting parties to seek measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate the identified adverse effects.
 - A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between NOAA, MHC and the Town of Ipswich will be developed that outlines measures that will need to be implemented to address these impacts. NOAA and MHC will need to agree that the MOA contains appropriate mitigation.
 - Stipulations in the MOA will be designed to address the specific adverse effects on historic properties that would result from the project
 - NOAA will be looking to the Ipswich Historical Commission and other local historical knowledge to help develop minimization and mitigation strategies that best suit the setting and the impacted historical resource
 - **Note:** Since the project itself involves the removal of the Ipswich Mills Dam, it will be impossible to fully avoid adverse effects so some minimization and mitigation measures will be necessary.

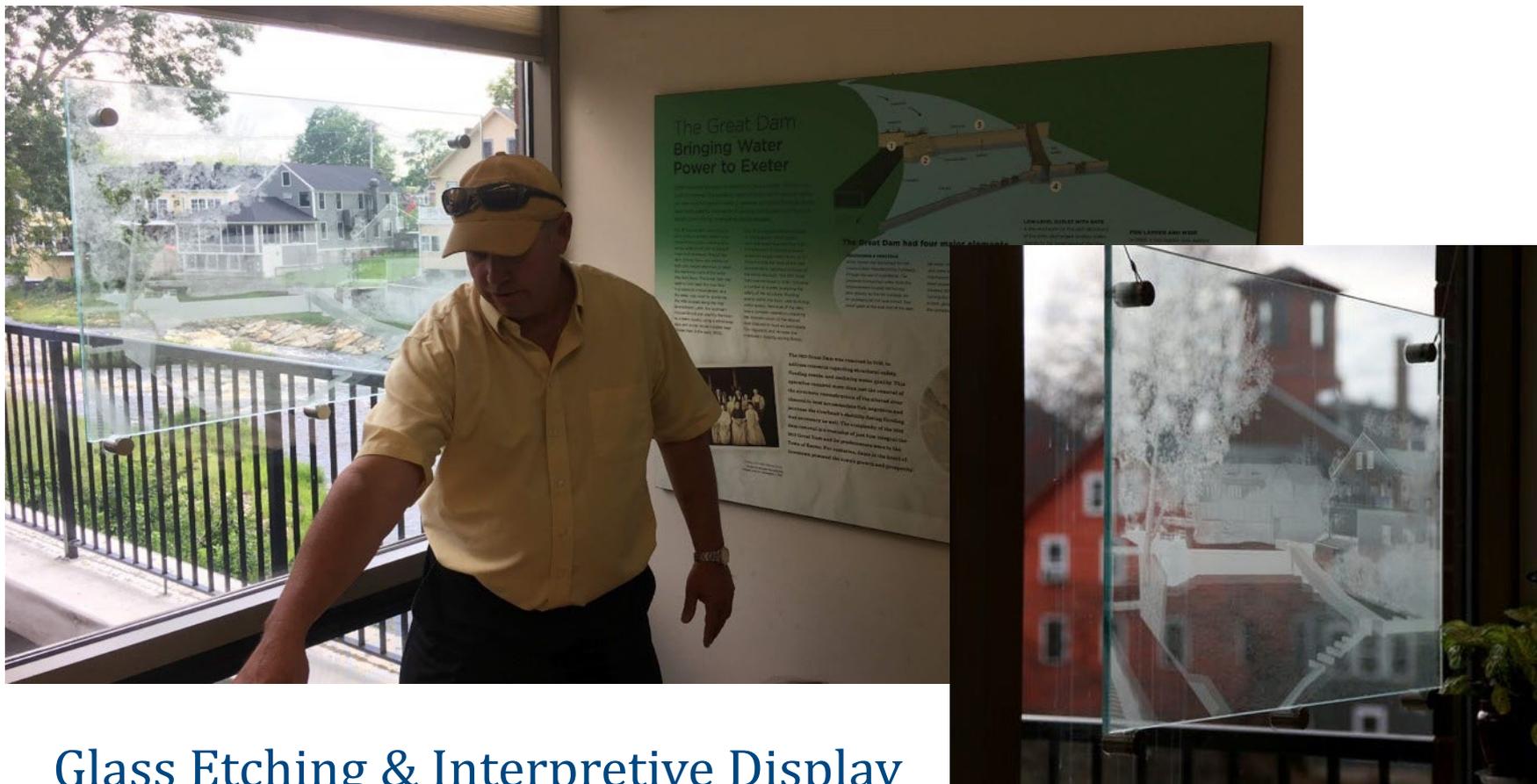


MINIMIZATION & MITIGATION

- Minimization Measures
 - Retaining sections of dam
- Typical Mitigation Examples
 - Historical Documentation
 - Archaeological Monitoring
 - Artifact Retrieval and Display
 - Interpretive Signage
 - Permanent Brass Plaque

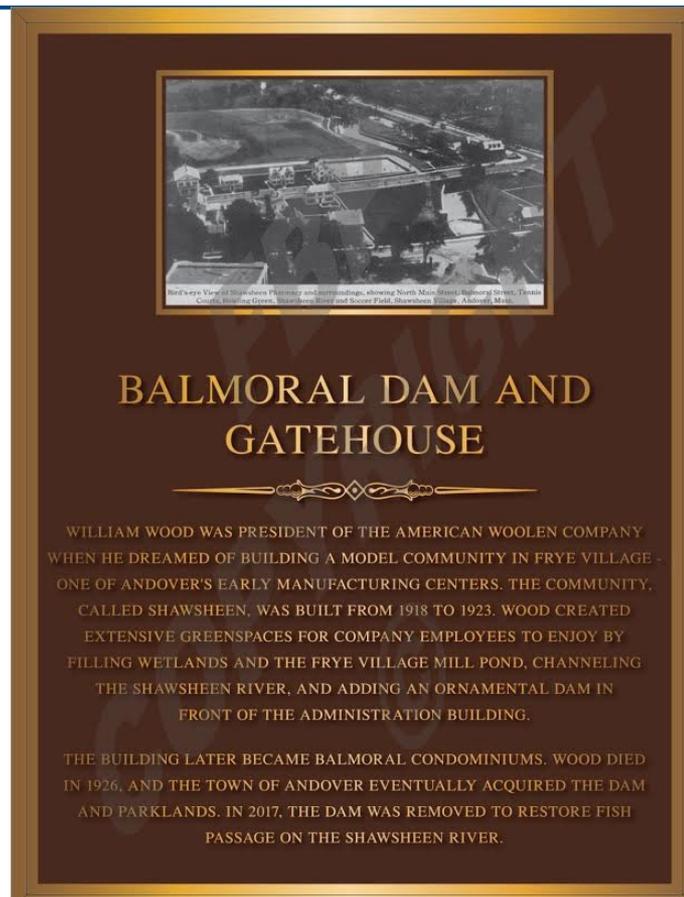


MITIGATION EXAMPLES



Glass Etching & Interpretive Display
Exeter Great Dam, Exeter, NH

MITIGATION EXAMPLES



Brass Plaque

Balmoral Dam, Andover, MA



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MITIGATION EXAMPLES



Iron Rollers Restoration and Display
Holmes Dam, Plymouth, MA

Next Steps - Timeline

- Consulting parties will begin meeting in late winter (~February 2026)
- Target to finalize MOA in the first half of 2026.
- MOA will include stipulations and timelines for completing agreed upon mitigation.
- Signed agreement between NOAA, MHC and Town



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Questions and Mitigation Ideas

- Please feel free to reach out to Brian Kelder (NOAA) with any questions about this presentation or the Section 106 process for this project.
- If you have mitigation ideas, please share them with one of the consulting parties as soon as possible:
 - Preferred method: Share your ideas with the Ipswich Historical Commission so an IHC representative can bring a consolidated list of ideas from the Town.
 - Alternative: Submit your ideas to Brian Kelder **in writing** via email. Please do so by February 8, 2026 to ensure that they are in time to be considered.

Lead Federal Agency Contact:

Brian Kelder

NOAA Restoration Center

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978-675-5993

Thank You



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