

Granite Art Council to host 4th Annual Art Show at Prairie's Edge March 25th

The 4th annual Granite Arts Council Art show and Celebration will be held on Sunday, March 25th from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Prairies Edge Casino Convention Center. The event is free and open to the public and will feature art and exhibits from more than 20 different local artists along with appetizers and live music. For more information, call Tamara Isfeld at 320-894-0813.

Special to the show this year will be an exhibit featuring the artwork of Bert Raney Elementary school students who have been working this past year under the direction of art teacher, Katie Lewandowski.

The event is sponsored by Prairie's Edge Resort and Casino, which will be celebrating its 9th Anniversary by serving free cake and coffee (while supplies last) beginning at 2 p.m. on Sunday.

Several area musicians have been invited to play at the Art Show throughout the afternoon event. Art will be on sale and donations will be accepted to further the mission of the Granite Arts Council.

This activity is made possible in part by a grant from the Southwest Minnesota Arts & Humanities Council (SMAHC) with funds appropriated by the state legislature with money from the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4th, 2009.

Burning restrictions take effect March 26 for much of central and northern Minnesota

Fire danger in most of Minnesota is expected to increase rapidly in the coming week, as the snow continues to melt and winds dry the dead standing grass and brush in open areas. Because of this danger, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will place burning restrictions over much of the state starting March 26, with more areas included later.

Spring fire restrictions limit open burning until summer green-up occurs. Traditionally, most wildfires in Minnesota occur during April and May. More than 95 percent of these fires are caused by human error.

"Because of the high fire incidence during this time period, the DNR proactively initiates burning restrictions," said DNR Fire Prevention Coordinator Larry Himanga.

The restrictions normally last from four to six weeks until sufficient green vegetative growth occurs. Spring fire restrictions have resulted in a dramatic decrease in both the numbers and sizes of accidental fires, Himanga said.

The burning restrictions mean the state will not give out burning permits for burning brush or yard waste.

The following counties will be included in the initial burning restrictions this spring: Aitkin, Anoka, Becker, southern Beltrami (that portion south of Hwy. 1), Benton, Carlton, Cass, Chisago, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Dakota, Douglas, Hennepin, Hubbard, Isanti, Itasca, Kanabec, Kittson, Manhomen, Marshall, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pennington, Pine, Polk (that portion south and east of County Road 6 from the Manhomen County line to MN Hwy 92 east to the Clearwater County line) Pope, Ramsey, Roseau (that portion west of Hwy. 89), Sherburne, Stearns, Todd, Wadena, Washington, and Wright. More counties will be added as spring weather conditions warrant.

Campfires are still allowed. Campers should watch their fire continuously and make sure it is out and cold to the touch before leaving the area.

Fire conditions may change quickly over the next few weeks. For more information and maps, and to check fire conditions, visit www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/fire/firerating_restrictions.html.

Invasive Species in Agricultural and Rural Landscapes

Invasive species are non-native pests which can affect natural eco-systems and cause economic or environmental harm or affect human health. There are many invasive species currently found in Minnesota and some that pose a future threat. Farmers and rural residents in Minnesota are not exempt from invasive species. All residents need to be aware of invasive species and understand how they can affect our rural life style.

A series of three workshops have been scheduled in the rural areas of the state to discuss five invasive species which may cause damage to rural areas. These include: Emerald Ash Borer, an insect affecting Ash trees in windbreaks and rural communities; Thousand Cankers Disease, a disease spread by an insect affecting Black Walnut found in native woodlands, communities and windbreaks; and Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, an insect affecting over 300 plants including apple trees, grapes, corn and soybeans. Two woody invasive plants: Buckthorn, a small tree which is host to the over wintering soybean aphid and Oriental Bittersweet, an invasive vine. Both of these plants are extremely invasive and change the understory environment of windbreaks and woodlands. Workshop topics will include history, life cycle, identification, damage and control. Free handouts will also be available. Learn how to correctly identify and control these pests to promote healthy woodlands and Minnesota landscapes.

The three workshops will be held Wednesday, March 28 in Windom at the MN DNR Office, Thursday, March 29 in Waseca at the Southern Research and Outreach Center and Wednesday, April 4 in Willmar at the University of Minnesota Extension Regional Office. Times for all workshops are from 1 to 4 PM.

Registration is \$ 20. Pre-registration is requested. This workshop is sponsored by the University of Minnesota Extension. The public is invited to attend. Woodland Advisor and Master Gardener credits are available upon request.

To register for this workshop, contact Kathy Eckwright, 507-389-6972 or 888-241-3214, eckwr001@umn.edu. To review other workshops visit: www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu.

Warm weather, cold water can be dangerous mix for paddlers

Canoeists and kayakers anxious to hit newly-thawed rivers and lakes across the southern part of the state should consider the potential danger of cold waters, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

With temperatures predicted to be in the 70s for the next several days, many paddlers may be coaxed toward the water. Such weather can prove dangerous, or even deadly, if people don't consider the consequences of cold water shock and hypothermia that can result from tipping into the water.

Even though the air is warm, water temperatures are still in the 40s or lower.

"Falling into cold water can cause immediate cold water shock," according to Tim Smalley, DNR boat and water safety specialist. "That's when cold water causes you to involuntarily gasp for air. If your head is underwater when that happens, drowning can occur in a few seconds."

The DNR recommends these safety tips for canoeists and kayakers:

- Wear an approved life jacket; even good swimmers need to wear one.
- Wear a wetsuit or drysuit when paddling in water colder than 70 degrees.
- Don't paddle alone; boating safety increases with numbers.
- Don't load beyond the labeled capacity of a canoe and keep weight low in the boat.
- Keep an eye on the weather and go to shore if the wind picks up.
- Don't go out in a canoe or any boat after drinking alcohol; the effects of alcohol are more dramatic while balancing in a boat than while standing on dry land.
- Tell someone about where you are going and what time to call 911 if you don't return.
- Take a canoeing safety course, offered by the American Canoe Association as well as the American Red Cross and other public service groups.

- If a canoe tips, stay with it if possible and await rescue, because most canoes will continue to float, even after capsizing and filling with water. Drowning often occurs when the victim tries to swim to shore rather than face the embarrassment of being rescued.

“A little planning and foresight can mean the difference between a fun day on the water and mishaps and tragedy,” Smalley said.

For more information on paddling safety, visit the DNR website at:
http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/paddling_safety.html

Granite Falls Historical Society to host Annual Meeting at Volstead House March 25th

The Granite Falls Historical Society’s Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 25th, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Volstead House Museum, 163 9th Ave., Granite Falls, MN. The event is free and open to the public and will feature keynote speaker, Sarina Otaibi, who will present her Master’s thesis, “Bridging Preservation and Economics in downtown Granite Falls, MN.” For more information, call Mary Gillespie at [320-309-0092](tel:320-309-0092).

The annual Narvestad Award for historic preservation will be awarded to this year’s recipient, who will be announced at the event.

Attendees of the event will be able to tour the Volstead House Museum, a National Historic Landmark (NHL), one of only 25 NHLs in the state of Minnesota.

Refreshments, cake and coffee, will be served. The public is invited to share their ideas and thoughts about the Granite Falls Historical Society’s activities and events.

Volunteers needed to monitor the health of Minnesota lakes and streams

Do you live near a lake or stream in Minnesota, or visit one regularly? If so, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) needs your help! Join more than 1,500 Minnesotans who track the health of their favorite lake or stream through the Citizen Lake or Citizen Stream Monitoring Programs.

These volunteers measure water clarity in their lake or stream weekly throughout the summer months, using simple equipment provided by the MPCA. Water clarity, or transparency, is an important indicator of the health of a lake or stream. The MPCA uses water clarity data to track water quality trends and make decisions on watershed protection and restoration. For some lakes and streams, data collected by volunteers is the only data available, making this work very valuable.

Some volunteers have participated in the MPCA’s water monitoring program for over 30 years. Long-term volunteers report that monitoring has given them a new way of learning about the lake or stream they love, and volunteers enjoy sharing their knowledge with neighbors who also care about clean water.

To become a volunteer or learn more about the program, visit the MPCA’s website at www.pca.state.mn.us/cmp, or call 651-296-6300 (Twin Cities) or 800-657-3864 (Greater Minnesota).

April 2 Third Crop Producer Meeting on ‘Bioenergy from Perennials’

Fuel and energy from plants, commonly called biofuel or bioenergy, has been an ongoing effort in the United States. The April 2nd Third Crop Producer Meeting will be focusing on the bioenergy work being done in south central Minnesota. Join University of Minnesota Extension and Rural Advantage on April 2, 2012, for a workshop on “Bioenergy from Perennials.” This workshop will be held at the Knights of Columbus (920 East 10th Street) in Fairmont, Minnesota. Registration begins at 9:30am. The morning session will be from 10:00am - 12:00pm and the afternoon session will be from 1:00pm - 3:30pm.

The morning session will begin with Linda Meschke giving an update on the Madelia Model, a bioenergy project headed up by Rural Advantage. The second speaker will be Jim Klienschmit with Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy who will be discussing renewable energy policy in Minnesota and the United States. The last topic of the morning session will be the work being done by the Minnesota State

University, Mankato-based International Renewable Energy Technology Institute of Minnesota (IRETI). John Frey, Director of IRETI, will be updating attendees on the testing, research/development, and training being conducted.

The afternoon session will open with bioenergy research projects. Jacob Jungers with University of Minnesota is part of a research group looking at harvesting restored grasslands for biomass and energy. Past sites were located near Crookston, Benson, and Windom, Minnesota. Jungers will be sharing project results and future plans. Dr. Gregg Johnson, University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center (SROC), will follow with a discussion on the numerous bioenergy-related research projects being conducted at Waseca-based SROC. Jim Eckberg, also with University of Minnesota, will be presenting information on the potential ecosystem services that can arise from perennials planted as bioenergy feedstocks. Gary Wyatt with University of Minnesota Extension will wrap up the day. Wyatt will be sharing information on different possibilities landowners can do with expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres; one such possibility is harvesting for bioenergy.

The 2012 Third Crop Producer Meetings are free of charge and no pre-registration is needed. Feel free to attend those topics that your schedule allows or stay for the entire day.

For a full agenda, check out the UMN Extension – Conservation Agronomy Facebook page or find event details at: <http://www.facebook.com/events/166495723449585/>

For weather related cancellations, contact the University of Minnesota Extension Farm Information Line at 1-800-232-9077.

Contact for this event: Jill Sackett, UMN Extension / Rural Advantage, 507-238-5449
sacke032@umn.edu

Job Opportunities:

Hydrologist

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is hiring a Hydrologist 1 in Rochester. This position will provide hydrological expertise to the Monitoring and Assessment Unit of the Pesticide and Fertilizer Management Division through the implementation of protocols and procedures for water quality monitoring studies, the compilation and management of water quality data, and assistance with the general assessment of the impacts of agricultural chemicals on water quality.

Requirements: A Bachelor's Degree in Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Environmental Science, Engineering, Natural Resources or a closely related degree. Experience with surface water monitoring and/or flow gaging. Excellent oral and written communication skills. Good organizational, leadership and problem solving skills. A thorough working knowledge of Microsoft Word, and Excel as well as a basic understanding of the statistical analysis of water quality data. Ability to interpret water quality data from surface water sources as it relates to land use impacts. Must have an understanding of database management and organization techniques with experience in database management.

For more information and to apply,

<https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/b5f5d7e3cbe2946489a80cb5db33734d/View>

Watershed Coordinator Heron Lake Watershed District

The Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) has a full-time, temporary opening for a West Fork Des Moines River (WFDMR) Watershed Coordinator in the HLWD office, located in Heron Lake, Minnesota. The main responsibilities for this position will be assisting with a Level III Feedlot Inventory in Nobles, Jackson, Murray, and Cottonwood Counties. The position would also pursue funding for education and implementation efforts for the WFDMR watershed TMDL Implementation Plan in southwest Minnesota.

Specific tasks include conducting a Level III Feedlot Inventory, designing educational materials, organizing and hosting meetings, grant and technical writing, and collaborating with local governments,

environmental groups, and the general public. The applicant must have strong technical writing skills, a public speaking background, and the ability to work with little supervision. Minimum requirements for this position include a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent from a four-year college or technical school in Agriculture, Natural Resources, Soils, or Soil and Water Resource Management or similar field; or a minimum of three years previous experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of education or experience.

Starting salary of \$19.06 per hour is dependent upon qualifications. This is a temporary, full-time position working 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday, from April 2012 through December 2014. Use of personal vehicle required. Mileage will be reimbursed at the federal rate.

A full job description can be obtained from Jan Voit at the HLWD office, PO Box 345, Heron Lake, MN 56137, telephone 507-793-2462 or found on HLWD's website: hlwdonline.org. Interested parties must submit an application form, letter of interest, resume, and references. Applications must be delivered to the HLWD office or postmarked by 4:30 pm on Wednesday, March 28, 2012.

For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/heronlakeposition.pdf>

Rice SWCD Technician

The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District is hiring a District Technician position. This position is under the general supervision of the District Manager and performs a variety of technical and educational work to fulfill the soil erosion and sediment control needs of landowners in Rice County. The primary responsibility will be to promote and provide technical assistance for wetland restorations and grass based conservation programs, assess the erosion control needs on private lands and survey and design conservation practices for implementation.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Promote the enrollment of conservation easements into programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program.
- Provide technical assistance for wetland restorations and grass-based conservation.
- Assist landowners with the enrollment of conservation easements.
- Identify conservation practices needed on agricultural lands and assist landowners in the survey and design of a variety of practices through the use of state and federal programs.
- Coordinate the use and delivery of the no-till drill.
- Coordinate the delivery of the Cooperative Weed Management Area grant.
- Enter all state funded grant projects into the E-Link database.
- Submit reports to the SWCD manager on the progress of all assigned programs.
- Other duties as assigned by the District Manager.

Application Procedure:

Applicants must submit a completed Rice SWCD application, resume, and cover letter for employment. Applications may be printed from our website at www.riceswcd.org or can be picked up at 1810 30th St. NW, Faribault, MN 55021 or by calling 507-332-5408. Applications will be evaluated based on the information supplied in the resume, cover letter, and SWCD application to determine if they meet the minimum job qualifications. A maximum of 5 applicants will be selected by the Rice SWCD personnel committee for interviews, but may be less depending on the number of qualified applicants. The final candidate selected will not be hired until the Rice SWCD board takes action at the next available board meeting. The candidate selected will be subject to a federal background check upon hiring.

Events:

March 21st – April 25th (Wednesday) is **Hungry for Change: Food, Ethics and Sustainability** – a six week discussion course sponsored by the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry (170 Good Counsel Drive) to be held on Wednesdays starting at 6:00 p.m. Space in this course is limited and is

expected to fill. Please register to participate and receive your book before class begins. Participants in this course will: Explore the interconnected nature of food systems and our relationship to them; Examine the impact our food choices have on our health, the health of others and the health of the planet; Consider the ethical and political implications of our current food system and our personal food choices. Cost is \$30-\$50 (More if you can, less if you can't) This fee includes the cost of the course book which has thought-provoking readings, discussion questions, and goal setting and for each session. For more information and to register contact Lisa Coons at 507-389-4272 or lcoons@ssndmankato.org

March 27th (Tuesday) is the **Green Fire showing** at 7:00 p.m. at Belgrade Avenue United Methodist Church (325 Sherman Street) in North Mankato. This is a biographical film about seminal environmentalist Aldo Leopold. The program is sponsored by the Many Rivers Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts and the Mankato Paddling and Outings Club. For more information, contact Peggy at peggyk@hickorytech.net

March 29th (Thursday) is a **Conference on Precision Conservation**, the science and philosophy of putting conservation practices at the places on the landscape where they will do the most good in preventing erosion and improving water quality. NRCS Chief Dave White is keynote speaker. Sponsored by the Freshwater Society and a number of partners. To learn more and register: www.freshwater.org.

March 29th (Thursday) is the **Chippewa River Watershed Project Annual Meeting** starting at 5 p.m. at the Starbuck Community Center. The meal begins at 6 p.m. and program to follow. There is also an opportunity for displays. The watershed effort works best when we all work together, so it's great to share and show the accomplishments and opportunities from across the basin. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/chippewaannualmeeting.pdf>

March 29th (Thursday) is the **Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Society's annual meeting** in conjunction with the Freshwater Society's day-long conference: "Precision Conservation: Technology Redefining Local Water Quality Practices." Precision conservation effectively and efficiently targets scarce resources to the spots on the landscape where they will do the most good. Learn about the latest technology -- much of it based on LiDAR scanning -- that pinpoints "sweet spots" where runoff, erosion and pollution are disproportionately severe and the potential for improvement is disproportionately great. Speakers include NRCS Chief Dave White; Dr. David Mulla, University Soil Scientist and a pioneer in employing modern LiDAR-based technology in the service of conservation; Dr. Gerald Van Amburg, president of the Buffalo-Red River Watershed Board; and several other Minnesota expert conservationists sharing rural and urban examples. The event will be at Silverwood Park in St. Anthony, MN. Visit the Freshwater Society web site (<http://freshwater.org/>) for a current agenda and registration information. The Chapter annual meeting will follow the conference .

April 10th (Tuesday) is the **Le Sueur River Watershed "Map Party"** from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Main Street Plaza and Community Center in Pemberton. The public is invited to this free event designed to share maps and information about the waterways and historic landscape of the Le Sueur River watershed. The event is free and participants will be welcome to come and go as they please. Refreshments and hot beef sandwiches will be served. For more information call 1-877-269-2873. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/lesueurmapparty.pdf>

April 12th (Thursday) is the **Second Annual Ice Out/Loon In Fundraising Event** sponsored by the Minnesota Freshwater Society from 5:30 to 8:30 at the Lafayette Club in Minnetonka Beach. The event will include Exciting silent auction items Including...Twins Suite behind home plate for 14 guests with food and drink; kayaking around Split Rock Lighthouse; silver loon pendant on a silver chain; a sightseeing cruise on Lake Minnetonka; a week at a resort near Steamboat Springs and much more! Emcee is Paul Huttner, MPR Meteorologist and there will also be a raffle, hilarious loon calling contest, great music, food and beverages. For more information click [here](http://freshwater.org/), or contact Diane Lynch at 952-314-8134 or dlynch@freshwater.org

April 28th (Saturday) is the **Ney Nature Center Spring Fling – Benefit Dinner & Silent Auction** starting at 5:30 at the Montgomery American Legion Post 79 (102 Elm Avenue SW0 in Montgomery. Featured

guest speaker is Don Shelby, an environmental journalist, nature lover, one of the most decorated and honored local television journalists in the country, and recently WCCO-TV News Anchor. For more information call or email Becky at the Ney Nature Center – 507-248-3474 or info@neycenter.org

[May 21st \(Monday\) is the Minnesota River Board Meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Place and location to be announced. For information: 507-389-5491 or \[karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\]\(mailto:karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\)](#)

[July 16th \(Monday\) is the Minnesota River Board Meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the St. Peter Community Center, Room 219 \(600 South 5th Street\). For information: 507-389-5491 or \[karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\]\(mailto:karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\)](#)

[September 17th \(Monday\) is the Minnesota River Board Meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the Health & Human Services Building Multipurpose Room \(2200 23rd Street NE\) in Willmar. For information: 507-389-5491 or \[karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\]\(mailto:karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\)](#)

[November 19th \(Monday\) is the Minnesota River Board Meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Place and location to be announced. For information: 507-389-5491 or \[karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\]\(mailto:karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\)](#)

[Check out additional upcoming events and workshops on the Minnesota River Calendar at: <http://mrdbc.mnsu.edu/calendar>](#)

[Environmental/Conservation Articles:](#)

[Why Monsanto Thought Weeds Would Never Defeat Roundup](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Since it seems to be Pest Resistance Week here at The Salt, with stories on weeds and insects, we might as well just pull out all the stops.

[Some Ojibwe tribal members object to wolf hunting, trapping](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Some Ojibwe in Minnesota are worried about the fate of the state's wolf population as state lawmakers consider a hunting and trapping season for the animals.

[Committee approves raising license fees](#) (Marshall Independent). Most, if not all, sportsmen's groups in Minnesota are behind the Department of Natural Resources' proposed license fee increases next year.

[Upper St. Anthony lock touted as Asian carp blocker](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Two members of Minnesota's congressional delegation visited the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam in Minneapolis Monday to call attention to the spread of Asian carp.

[Limiting invasive species in Minnesota waters: One issue lawmakers agree on](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). From electric barriers to a proposed research center at the University of Minnesota, aquatic-invader legislation is gaining traction at the state Capitol.

[Local leaders put Rep. Beard on defensive](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A quick-witted, sharp-tongued Republican committee chairman from Shakopee found himself on the defensive late last week as civic leaders in his own county expressed serious concern about two bills that aim to rein in local government in the name of property rights.

[Cheap jewelry still contains chemicals toxic to children, environmental group finds](#) (MinnPost). It's been several years since troubling reports of hazardous substances in children's jewelry began grabbing the headlines.

[BWCA land swap bill held over](#) (TC Daily Planet). The proposed condemnation of state-owned lands in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and exchanging the land for federal land outside the area sparked divergent ideas on how to boost revenues from school trust lands in Minnesota.

[County board extends moratorium](#) (Faribault County Register). The Faribault County Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution Tuesday to extend a pipeline moratorium in the county for another year.

[Demand grows for communal garden plots for immigrants](#) (MinnPost). Gardens bridge cultural and language differences and foster a sense of community in a new country, proponents say.

[Warm weather, drought conditions heighten wildfire risk](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The unseasonably warm weather has many Minnesotans scurrying to dig their summer wardrobe out of storage.

[Ferocious turkeys and other wildlife in Twin Cities](#) (TC Daily Planet). A flock of wild turkeys walks down Johnson Street daily in Northeast Minneapolis and hang out in trees at a neighborhood church.

[Carpé Carp](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). On March 1st, a commercial fisherman caught something special in the Mississippi River in Southeastern Minnesota. Unfortunately, special doesn't always mean good.

[Cherry blossoms, ice boxes, BMWs, and climate change](#) (MinnPost). Unseasonably warm weather has caused the famous cherry trees of Washington DC's Tidal Basin to blossom earlier than expected.

Elderberries are inedible in their natural state, tiny bombs of juice that exploded between your teeth and, even the roof of your mouth puckers. Cooked with sugar and pectin, however, elderberries produce a dark purple, glutinous mass that can be poured over an oatmeal crust, named "Elderberry Crunch," and foisted upon unsuspecting first graders as dessert. – Kent Meyers

Please register at the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance's bulletin board at <http://mail.mnsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/mrwa/> to receive regular updates on what is happening in the Minnesota River Basin.

[Thanks,](#)

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[Scott](#)

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