



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 19, No. 3

March 1996

First Upper Mississippi River Summit called a success; 100 attend meeting

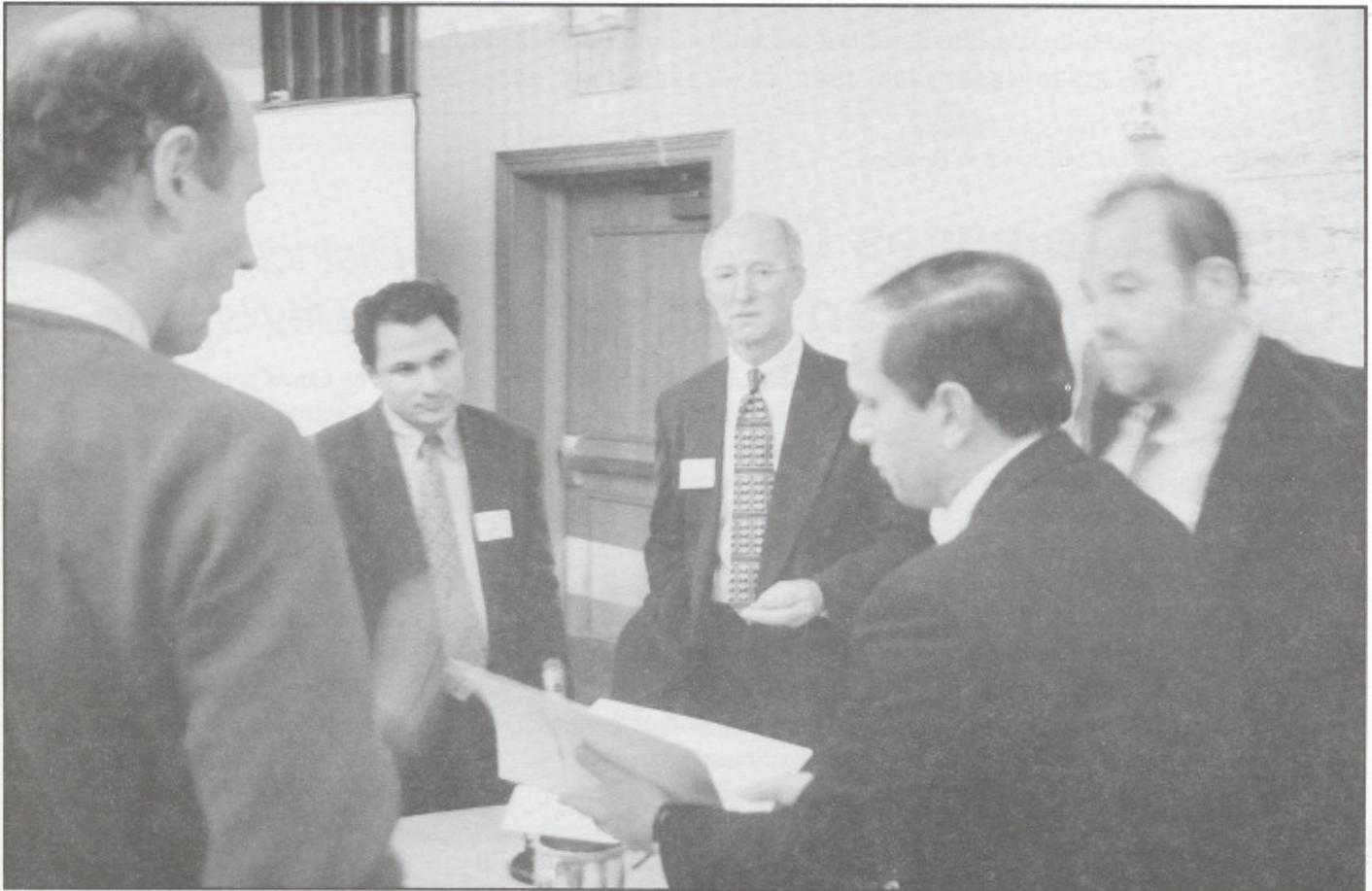
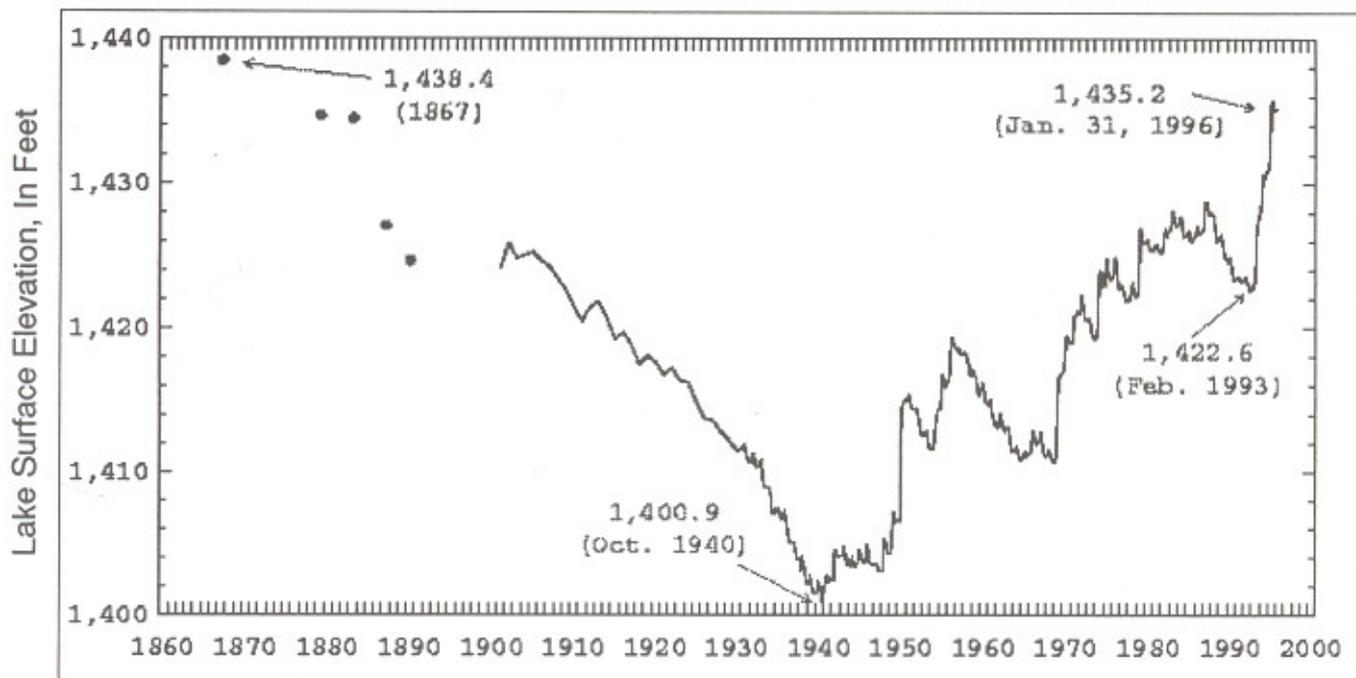


Photo by Ken Gardner, St. Paul District

Bob Post (center), chief of Engineering and Planning Division, listens as Chris Brescia (second from right), MARC 2000, makes a point during the Upper Mississippi River Summit to the members of the Summit inter-agency planning committee. Members of the interagency committee include (l-r): David Ullrich, USEPA; Scott Faber, American Rivers; Post; Brescia; and John Blankenship, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Committee members not shown included Holly Stoercker, Upper Mississippi Basin Association; Kevin Szcodronski, Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee; and Charles Whitmore, Natural Resources Conservation Service. See story and more photos on pages 4-5.



Source: U.S. Geological Survey
Provisional Data: Subject to Revision

Period-of-Record Lake Elevations for Devils Lake, ND

District releases Devils Lake Contingency Plan Feb. 15

The Devils Lake Contingency Plan was released by the district on February 15.

The plan analyzes possible actions that could be implemented by federal, state, local officials or private citizens in response to higher lake levels.

Devils Lake is a closed basin watershed in east central North Dakota. In the past three years, the lake has risen almost 13 feet to the highest level recorded in this century. Early flood forecasts from the National Weather Service indicate that the water may go up another two- to three-feet this spring. The high water has already damaged dozens of lakefront homes, covered thousands of acres of farmland and inundated local roads.

Preparation of the plan was coordinated by Tom Raster, PE-M.

The plan outlines a number of possible actions and describes each measure in terms of criteria for selection, advantages and disadvantages, cost, and agency responsibilities.

The possible actions listed in the summary range from relocating structures and levee raises to infrastructure protection and constructing outlets to either nearby Stump Lake or the Sheyenne river.

"The Contingency Plan is intended to serve as a tool to help decision-makers at all levels — federal, state, local and private citizen — in the selection of appropriate measures under various lake-rise scenarios," Colonel J.M. Wonsik, district commander, said.

District involvement at Devils Lake

The Corps is involved in both the short-term flooding emergency and the longer-term effort to find a permanent solution to the water problems at Devils Lake, North Dakota. The district's response to flooding at Devils Lake started last year with Readiness Branch helping the town of Minnewaukan protect its sewage treatment lagoons. Minnewaukan, once 7 miles from the edge of the lake, now has water lapping at the town's edge.

In anticipation of higher water levels, Design Branch is working on plans and specifications to raise the permanent levees protecting downtown Devils Lake. Those plans should be ready this spring. The district is also providing technical assistance to local governments and

See Lake page 3

Spring provides relief and hidden dangers

by COL J.M. Wonsik
St. Paul District Commander

This is a season of transition. Longer days and the warming sun make us anxious for the coming spring. At the same time, the transition between winter and spring presents some of the most dangerous conditions for personal accidents.

The period we are entering right now can present unpredictable weather, freezing-thawing cycles that can change ice conditions in a matter of hours; and rapid changes in temperatures that can catch us unprepared for wind chills way below zero.

The dangers of the season are compounded by the increase in outdoor activity. People in the field are getting ready for the new season of operations on the river and at our recreation areas. Construction sites are gearing up for the primary construction season. And the hazards don't go away when we head home. We have already had one employee hospitalized with a broken hip after he slipped while chipping ice on his driveway.

After the long winter, it is easy to rush the season and to ignore the

winter safety rules that guided us during the cold and dark months. And remember to take it easy on any strenuous activities. It is easy to overdo after months of relative inactivity.

This is definitely a time to be alert, to use common sense mixed with extra caution, and keep safety at the forefront of our consciousness. As the sergeant on Hill Street Blues used to say "Be careful out there!"

Another area of concern right now is spring flooding. The first flood forecasts from the National Weather Service indicate a possibility of spring flooding along several rivers in the district. In preparation for the flood season, Readiness Branch will conduct a one-day flood exercise in the 4th floor emergency Operations Center on March 8. For those participating in the exercise, I urge you to approach your training with all seriousness. The people of this region are counting on you to help protect them and their homes if rivers overflow.

A famous football coach once said "Its not practice that makes perfect...its perfect practice that makes perfect."

And so it is with flood training. One of the areas the flood forecast

highlighted was Devils Lake. Based on the early snow survey over central North Dakota, the NWS is saying Devils Lake could go up as much as three feet this spring. A change in lake level of this magnitude would undoubtedly keep a number of St. Paul employees involved there during the spring and summer.

Again, now is the time for those who might have responsibilities at Devils Lake to make sure they are ready.

Speaking of Devils Lake, we released the final Devils Lake Contingency Plan on February 15. The plan summarizes a number of actions that might be taken by federal, state and local agencies and local residents in response to higher lake levels. The plan will serve as a tool to aid decision makers at all levels as they work to protect property around the lake.

This is another example of the St. Paul District meeting the challenge under short suspenses and less than desirable conditions.

Finally, a word about the division restructuring. Remember that this proposal is exactly that — a proposal. It still has to be approved by the Secretary of the Army. We will keep you posted on its status.

Lake continued from page 2

area residents; loaning pumps to counties; and providing detailed geographical information system (GIS) mapping.

The district was also charged with preparing a summary of potential actions that might be taken at Devils Lake in response to higher water levels. This summary, called the Devils Lake Contingency Plan, was released on February 15. *See article*

on previous page..

At the same time, the St. Paul District is conducting a federal feasibility study to look at future water management options for the entire basin. This is a long-term study that will probably take up to four years to complete. It was authorized by Congress in 1993 and will address the needs of the Devils Lake basin for water management;

stabilized lake levels (including inlet and outlet); water quality; recreation; and enhancement and conservation of fish and wildlife. The feasibility study will help define the federal interest in any project at Devils Lake.

Tom Raster, PE-M, is the study manager for the study. Dave Raasch, PP-PM, is the project manager for any long-term work at Devils Lake.

100 attend first Upper Mississippi River Summit held in Twin Cities Feb 1-2



Dave Haumersen (second from left), chief of Construction-Operations Division, shares some information with Jonathan Ela, Sierra Club, during the summit's Dredged Material Disposal discussion group. Also shown are Jim Hall (left), Iowa Department of Transportation, and Dick Lambert (right), Minnesota Department of Transportation.

by Ken Gardner
Public Affairs

The need for action was one of the primary themes expressed by participants in the first major summit meeting on Upper Mississippi River issues, held in Bloomington on Feb. 1-2.

More than 100 people from as far away as Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania and Missouri participated in the two-day meeting. Some 50 groups representing environmentalists, farmers, towboat operators and government agencies discussed the future of the Upper Mississippi River.

Colonel James R. Van Epps, commander of North Central Division, headed the Corps delegation which also included Randy Hanchey, director of Engineering and Technical Services at Lower Mississippi Valley Division; Lieutenant Colonel

Michael Duffy, deputy commander at Rock Island District; Colonel J.M. Wonsik, commander at St. Paul District; Chuck Moeslein from Corps Headquarters; plus staff from the three Upper Mississippi districts.

The concept of a Upper Mississippi River Summit developed from an interagency coordination meeting last year at NCD. While

Summit photos by
Ken Gardner
St. Paul District

Jenny Yager (center) and Jan Graham, both from Engineering and Planning Division, register one of the more than 100 participants at the summit.



NCD was the unofficial host for the summit, the actual planning was done by an eight-person planning team representing the four primary interest groups participating in the summit: federal agencies, the states, environmental groups and the economic/industry interest group.

Bob Post, chief of Engineering and Planning Division, represented Van Epps on the planning committee. He was assisted by Dave Loss, PE-M. Jan Graham and Jenny Yager from PE provided administrative support for the summit.

At the end of the summit, participants agreed to hold a second summit within a year.

The action theme was expressed at the very beginning of the meeting by Scott Faber, executive director of American Rivers, an environmental group based in Washington, D.C. and Van Epps.

Throughout the two day conference speakers said that there has been "enough talk." Rod Sando, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) said, "We need to get on with

it. I can pledge that the State of Minnesota is ready. I suggest that every organization and agency should pick a project unique to their needs and get with it."

The two-day summit ended with a nearly universal show of support for a summit vision statement negotiated by participants representing environmental groups, commercial navigation and agriculture, state agencies and federal agencies. Following an afternoon of discussions on Thursday, the vision work group worked until midnight crafting a vision statement they hoped would be acceptable to the wide range of interests represented at the meeting.

While most participants indicated they were willing to show their support by signing the vision statement, Paul Hansen, national director of the Izaak Walton League, said he could not sign for the league.

"I am impressed by what we heard. I am even encouraged by what we have heard over the past two days. I have no objection to the content of the vision statement," he said. However, he explained, "The statement itself protects no habitat, saves no species, reduces no sediment. Too often in the past, we have entered into agreements like this in which the agreement itself has been held forth as evidence of progress when no real progress - nothing on the ground - has followed. If something is accomplished on the ground in the next year, I would be proud to be the first signatory."

The final version of the vision statement calls on participants "to seek long-term compatibility of the economic use and ecological integrity of the Upper Mississippi River" and "to seek commitment to develop a multi-interest strategy for



Colonel James Van Epps, NCD commander, participates in a group discussion with Holly Stoercker (center), Upper Mississippi River Basin Association, and Mamie Parker, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the recent Upper Mississippi River summit.

managing the natural resources of the Upper Mississippi River."

Hansen was followed at the microphone by Jonathan Ela, Sierra Club representative from Madison, Wisconsin. He said that, on behalf of the Sierra Club, he could and would sign the document. He commented that he philosophically agreed with Hansen and the IWLA but chose to follow different tactics. "This is a positive, forward-looking document in terms of what can be accomplished through the mechanisms that have been discussed today."

He also took the opportunity to clarify the role of groups like the Sierra Club. "We can cajole, we can threaten, we can applaud, we can praise. But we can't bring money to the table. The real stakeholders in getting things done will continue to be those federal and state agencies that are mandated by law to undertake activities on the river."

During the two-day summit, a variety of issues on the Mississippi River were discussed including dredging, water level management, what the future of the river should

look like, and watershed management.

The watershed management discussion attracted the largest number of participants. Constance Hunt, from the World Wildlife Fund, told the group that "floods start in the upper watersheds" and are often caused by hydrologic alteration. "A majority of the disaster funds paid after the '93 flood were paid to upland watershed areas, not for damage from over-bank flooding," she said.

"You will never restore the ecological health of the Mississippi River by focusing only on the channel and floodplain." She also called for landowners to be more involved in decisions concerning their lands, especially regarding prioritization and implementation of projects.

In his summit wrap-up, Van Epps said, "We now have a vision. A vision is intended to be a lofty expression of goals. But a vision is also intended to stretch us. I know that some of our vision is going to stretch us as we try to work together for the best interest of the Upper Mississippi River."

News

Crist named DDPM



Photo by Peter Verstegen, St. Paul District

Chuck Crist

Chuck Crist will be the next Deputy District Engineer for Project Management (DDPM) and chief of Programs and Project Management Division following Lou Kowalski's retirement in April. His selection was announced recently by Colonel J.M. Wonsik, district commander.

Crist is currently chief of the Management and Evaluation Branch in Engineering and Planning Division, a position he has held since Planning was merged with Engineering about two years ago. He has also served as chief of Project Management Branch, assistant chief of Planning Division and chief of the Small Projects and Floodplain Management Branch.

Crist is a graduate of Colorado State University where he earned a bachelor's and a master's degree. He is a professional engineer registered in Wisconsin.

Division restructuring plan released; still needs approval

Washington, D.C. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has begun a process to restructure Corps division and will submit a plan to the Secretary of the Army in March. The restructuring is in response to provisions of the 1996 Energy and Water Development Act, Public Law 104-46, which directs the Corps of Engineers to reduce the number of its divisions. The law directs the Corps to develop a plan to "reduce the number of division offices within the United States Army Corps of Engineers to no less than 6 and no more than 8, with each division responsible for at least 4 district offices, but does not close or change the function of any district office."

Corps officials said that the proposed plan, which must be reviewed and approved by the

Secretary of the Army, takes into account geographic considerations and the relative relation of district missions within a watershed. Minimizing work disruptions and people relocations and maintaining customer service are also of prime importance.

The proposed plan has been distributed to the Corps division commanders for comment. After comments are received and considered, the final plan will be forwarded to the Secretary of the Army for his review and approval. Once the Secretary of the Army approves the plan, each division commander affected will coordinate his plan with customers, elected officials and others. The law requires implementation of the plan to begin no later than August 15, 1996 and be completed by October 1, 1997.

Division plan realigns 3 river districts

The division restructuring plan released in early February would reduce the number civil works divisions in the continental U.S. from 10 to 8.

North Central Division would be closed under this proposal while New England Division would become a district under North Atlantic Division. A third division — Pacific Ocean Division in Hawaii — would also be closed. Chicago District and Honolulu District would remain open.

The proposed division restructuring plan also calls for St.

Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis districts to be transferred to a new combined Upper Mississippi and Missouri Valley Division located at Omaha. The three districts on the Great Lakes — Chicago, Detroit and Buffalo — would be transferred to Ohio River Division in Cincinnati, Ohio. In addition, Little Rock District would be transferred from Southwest Division to the Lower Mississippi Valley Division.

In an earlier related action, Trans-Atlantic Division in Winchester, Virginia, and Huntsville Division were redesignated centers.



Photos by William Hutchinson, St. Paul District

Order of the Engineer

Twenty-nine engineers were inducted into the Order of the Engineer on February 22 as part of the district's observance of National Engineers' Week. Bob Post (upper photo at left), chief of Engineering and Planning Division, conducted the ceremony.



Lancaster sworn in as Assistant Secretary

Washington, D.C. — H. Martin Lancaster was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA/CW) on January 31. Prior to his appointment, Lancaster was special advisor to the president and director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency on the Chemical Weapons Convention.

As ASA/CW, Lancaster is responsible for the Department of the Army Civil Works program for conservation and development of the national water resources, including flood control, navigation, shore protection, and related purposes; for policy and program direction of Arlington National Cemetery and the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery; for Corps of Engineers civil works program support for other federal agencies; and for program direction of the Corps' foreign activities except those exclusively in support of United States military forces abroad.

At the direction of the Secretary of the Army, Lancaster

also will carry out functions assigned to the secretary by the secretary of defense relating to the Panama Canal Commission and will oversee the Panama Canal Treaty Implementation Plan.

Dr. John H. Zirschky has been the Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Works since February 1994. Zirschky will serve as Lancaster's principal deputy.

The new ASA/CW served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1987 until 1995.

Lancaster graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1965 and received a law degree from the University of North Carolina Law School in 1967. He then went on active duty as a Judge Advocate in the U. S. Navy.

While in Congress, he served on the Armed Services Committee, the Small Business Committee, and the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee.

Bits and Pieces

New ED-M chief named

Chuck Spitzack has been selected as the next chief of Management and Evaluation Branch. Chuck replaces Chuck Crist, who will assume the duties of the Deputy District Engineer for Project Management in April.

McDonald honored

Bill McDonald, retired lockmaster at Lock and Dam No. 7, was recently honored for his 25 years of service to the LaCrescent, Minnesota, Fire Department. He was presented a Congressional Fire Services Institute Award by Senator Rod Grams.

Kowalski luncheon set

A retirement luncheon for Lou Kowalski will be held on Monday, April 15, at Blackie's Restaurant on Tanner's Lake, 271 Geneva Avenue North, Oakdale. A buffet luncheon will be served for \$10.

RSVP to Angie Peterson, 290-5755, by April 8.

Hello

(January and February)

Construction-Operations Division

Thomas E. Birkle, administrative clerk
Dean W. Birnstengel, lock and dam operator
Kenneth W. Mertes, lock and dam equipment repairman

Engineering and Planning Division

Dean F. Franke, civil engineering technician

Human Resources

Vanessa D. Lewis, personnel assistant
Marshall M. Miller, office automation clerk
Debra J. Murphy, personnel clerk

Information Management Office

Lance M. Caven, computer clerk
Steven G. Grannes, computer programmer analyst
Holly M. Zillmer, computer clerk

Logistics Management Office

Glenn K. Hazley, Supply Clerk

Resource Management Office

Wanda D. Brown, voucher examiner
Randy Brunet, finance & accounting officer

Good-bye

(January-February)

Construction-Operations Division

Douglas J. Baird, civil engineer
Clint C. Fishel, park ranger
Wilfred H. Gau, sandblaster
Clark E. Moser, lock and dam operator
William D. (Dave) Parsons, supervisory civil engineer (retired)
Philip J. Schweitzer, mechanical engineer (retired)

Engineering and Planning Division

Samantha L. Bluhm, social science technician
Roger G. Farick, student trainee (biologist)

Information Management Office

Canissha L. Jackson, office automation clerk

Logistics Management Office

Kenya K. Flowers, office automation clerk

Resource Management Office

Eric S. Blahna, accounting clerk
James D. Gilbert, accounting & finance officer (retired)



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Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-81. It is published monthly by offset for the St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Editorial views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers, nor of the Department of the Army.

Crosscurrents

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