

Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan

Consultation and Engagement Process - Stage 1

Community Engagement & Results – **Dalnain Bridge and Skye of Curr**

Introduction

The core paths plan process targeted four main interest groups to engage with, these included; communities, land managers, people who recreate in the National Park (visitors and residents including businesses, national organisations and clubs e.g. Ramblers, Scottish Canoe Association, Cairngorm Club etc.) and visitors to the National Park (those who may not specifically come to the Park to recreate but may do so whilst they are here). The following report details how the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) engaged with the Dalnain Bridge & Skye of Curr community, the people who participated in the engagement process and the feedback and results that they provided.

Engaging with the Dalnain Bridge and Skye of Curr Community

The engagement period ran from 1st September to 30th November 2006. Questionnaires for the community were made available on the CNPA website, through contacting the CNPA directly and at a drop-in event. The community drop-in event was run to enable people in Dalnain Bridge and Skye of Curr and the surrounding area to find out more about core paths planning and to advise the CNPA of the routes, paths and areas that are important to them and why.

The drop-in event was held at the Dulnain Bridge Village Hall on Thursday, 28th September from 3:00pm to 8:00pm. CNPA staff Quentin McLaren and Bob Grant were present throughout the period.

Drop-in Event Promotion

The event was advertised in the Strathspey and Badenoch Herald and was also the subject of a press release. Invitations were sent out to all local land owners/tenants and the community council. Posters were displayed around the village a week in advance of the event and fresh posters were put up on the day of the meeting including a large board outside the event.

Drop-in Event Format

Participants were provided with a core paths planning leaflet which included details of the core paths plan process in the Cairngorms National Park and Frequently Asked Questions. The leaflet was made available to participants along with questionnaires and maps to record their views. A questionnaire containing a map was available for each settlement in the Park as well as for the wider areas of the Park. Large maps of the wider area were also available to help people identify routes outwith settlements. There was also an opportunity for people to record their views on the path network in the area in relation to what they thought was good or bad about it or what could be improved, this was recorded in an 'H-Diagram' format.

Drop-in Event Feedback

Approximately 26 people attended the event, a total of 13 questionnaires were completed at the event and a number of people took questionnaires away to complete in their own time. Participants were asked to complete an evaluation sheet of the Dulnain Bridge and Skye of Curr event, the results recorded are as follows:

	% of Participants Responding			
	Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful	Waste of Time
Location	91%	9%	0%	0%
Venue	100%	0%	0%	0%
Timing	90%	10%	0%	0%
Questionnaires	70%	30%	0%	0%
Information Available	70%	30%	0%	0%

Opportunity to speak to staff	100%	0%	0%	0%
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Participants in the Engagement Process

Throughout the 3 month period a total of 19 questionnaires were completed for the Dulnain Bridge and Skye of Curr area. To help the CNPA gauge whether or not the process successfully engaged with a wide enough cross section of the community, the questionnaires asked people to provide information on their gender, age group and where they live. The results are shown below. Some of the questionnaires were incomplete and therefore, cumulatively do not tally with the total of completed questionnaires.

Participants by Gender

Male	58%	Female	47%
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Participants by Age Group

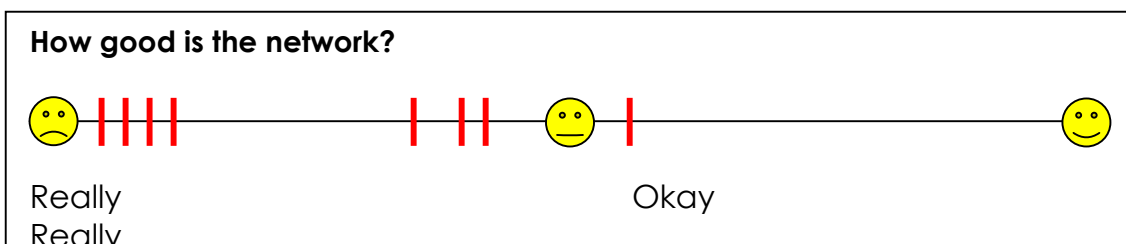
Under 16	5%	16 - 24	0%	25 - 44	16%	45 - 64	47%	65 - 74	26%	Over 75	5%
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Where people came from

% of people from each place who completed questionnaires					
Dulnain Bridge and Skye of Curr	79%	Dulnain Bridge Community Council Area	16%	Elsewhere	5%

Results of the Engagement Process

At the drop-in event people were asked their views about the path network in and around Dulnain Bridge & Skye of Curr. Participants were asked to place a mark on a line to show what they thought of the network.



Bad

Good

People were also asked what they think is good and bad about the network and what could be improved. The results are shown below, the comments are recorded exactly as written by participants.

Comments on the Dulnain Bridge & Skye of Curr Network		
What is bad about the network?	What is good about the network?	How the network could be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic, poor links to near villages and town • Need for more safe links to near villages and town • Exiting onto a main road is dangerous • It isn't really a network at all, needs signing (unobtrusively) and a leaflet published • We have no established <u>made</u> paths, people have to sprackle along overgrown, unsafe routes to take a decent walk off road. So much potential, so little in place. • Paths have been neglected over the years. Skye of Curr road very busy with traffic and unsafe for walking as no pavements. • Play field shut off to <u>all</u> dogs (even guide dogs). (Enclosed play field good / safe for dogs and kids!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No unsightly signs, natural paths, interesting viewpoints. Undisturbed wildlife. • Great potential for excellent path network, taking in quiet woodland, scenic riversides, outstanding viewpoints and interesting landmarks. • Natural setting for paths • Lots of variety • Great wildlife potential • Nice views • Good XC skiing • Good dog walking • Livestock not loose on paths (better for dogs) • Loads of dog waste bins • Goes into pine forest and near rivers and up / 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking to local villages / town (cycling and walking) using existing roads and paths • Path from Dulnain Village to Heather Centre through Curr wood – duckboarding over burns would be helpful. • Segregate quad and trail bikes from existing routes and provide alternatives • (4) Provision of separate paths for pedestrians, separate from horses and cycles. • Re-establish existing paths and create new ones – bearing in mind that there is crofting still in area. • More signage! • Village paths and heritage guide (great for visitors / new residents) • Better surfacing • Better access to local hills, Lochindorb / Nethy Bridge / Carrbridge / Grantown / River Spey. • Safer option for cycling between Dulnain and Nethy nearby villages (for work). Avoid main

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog bins not used • Waste bins not used 	<p>down hills</p>	<p>road.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove overgrown vegetation • Agree wholeheartedly (with No. 4 above)– essential with our weather pattern • Extra stiles on cross fences in Curr wood and river banks. Preferably with dog gate • Curr wood and Gaich wood access roads both maintained by forestry extractor companies • Path links with other communities – Nethy Bridge, Carrbridge, Grantown and Boat of Garten
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The general discussion with participants at the drop-in event, portrayed a very negative view about the existing path network but equally recognised huge potential for good quality paths in the area.

Map Results

People were asked to identify the paths that are important to them on a map in the questionnaire, they were also asked to identify any new routes or areas that they would like to have easier access to and were encouraged to make comments. Participants at the event were given the opportunity to annotate large maps highlighting their popular routes in detail and also adding comments. Where someone made a comment on the maps this has been listed in a table shown in Annex 1, the routes identified can be viewed on a map in Annex 2. Each comment has a number attributed to it to enable cross-referencing with the map in Annex 2 (only where the comment is specific to a geographic area). The routes shown in a solid line are those which people identified as being important to them. The dashed lines are proposed routes that people identified.

Questionnaire Results

A total of 19 questionnaires were received for the Dulnain Bridge and Skye of Curr area. The responses to each of the questions are outlined below.

What outdoor activities do you currently do in and around Dulnain Bridge?

Activity	% of respondents who undertake the activity
Low level walking	89%
Dog walking	47%
Hill walking	47%
Running	16%
Getting about in a wheelchair	5%
Walking with a pushchair	21%
Cycling on-road	47%
Cycling off-road	37%
Horse-riding	26%
Watersports	16%
Winter sports	21%
None	0%
Other*	32%

*Other activities identified were: 'crofting', 'archaeological recording and analysis', 'wildlife watching', 'climbing', and 'like river walks also woods'.

Why do you do these activities?

Reason	% of respondents who identified the reason
To keep fit/healthy	79%
Enjoying the Countryside	95%
Travel to work/school	11%
Getting about	42%
Other*	16%

*Other reasons identified were: 'keep dog healthy', 'ex climber/ski instr inc rescue team' and 'going to meet friends'.

What activities would you like to see better opportunities for in and around the area?

Activity	% of respondents who identified the activity
Low level walking	68%
Dog walking	42%
Hill walking	16%
Running	11%
Getting about in a wheelchair	26%
Walking with a pushchair	32%
Cycling on-road	42%
Cycling off-road	47%
Horse-riding	21%
Watersports	5%
Winter sports	11%
None	0%
Other*	11%

*Other activities identified were: 'some of walk could be kept better' and 'links to public transport & bus stops'

Would better opportunities for these activities encourage you to;

Reason	% of respondents who identified each activity
Walk to work/school	16%
Cycle to work/school	32%
Try new activities	42%
Get fit	37%
Get outdoors more	53%
Other	0%

Summary

During the public engagement process it was found that there is no current network in Dulnain Bridge and there is high demand locally to

get one put in place. There was also demand for better links with other communities, particularly cycle routes.

The most popular paths identified were in Skye of Curr Wood (identified by 42% of respondents) and Curr Wood (identified by 36% of respondents). The old road between Broomhill and the Heather Centre, the river walk to Balnaan and the riverside walk to the Spey were also popular.

All activities were reasonable popular in the area, low-level walking was by far the most popular activity followed by dog-walking, hill-walking and cycling on-road. Most people doing activities did so to enjoy the countryside. There was a high demand for better opportunities for low level walking and for off-road cycling and a comparatively high demand for better opportunities for pushchairs.

Reflections

The drop-in was relatively well attended with positive feedback regarding the event and the core paths planning process itself. A number of people have returned questionnaires since. The relatively high turn out may be attributed to the communities overall concern about the current path network.

Next Steps

The issues raised and the information gathered throughout the process will be used to inform the development of selection criteria for core paths. The selection criteria will then be used to select core paths for the Cairngorms National Park. The selection criteria and maps of the selected paths will be drawn up into an Interim Draft Core Paths Plan which will be completed by the end of March 2007. This Plan will then be made available for the public to make comment.

Cairngorms National Park Authority

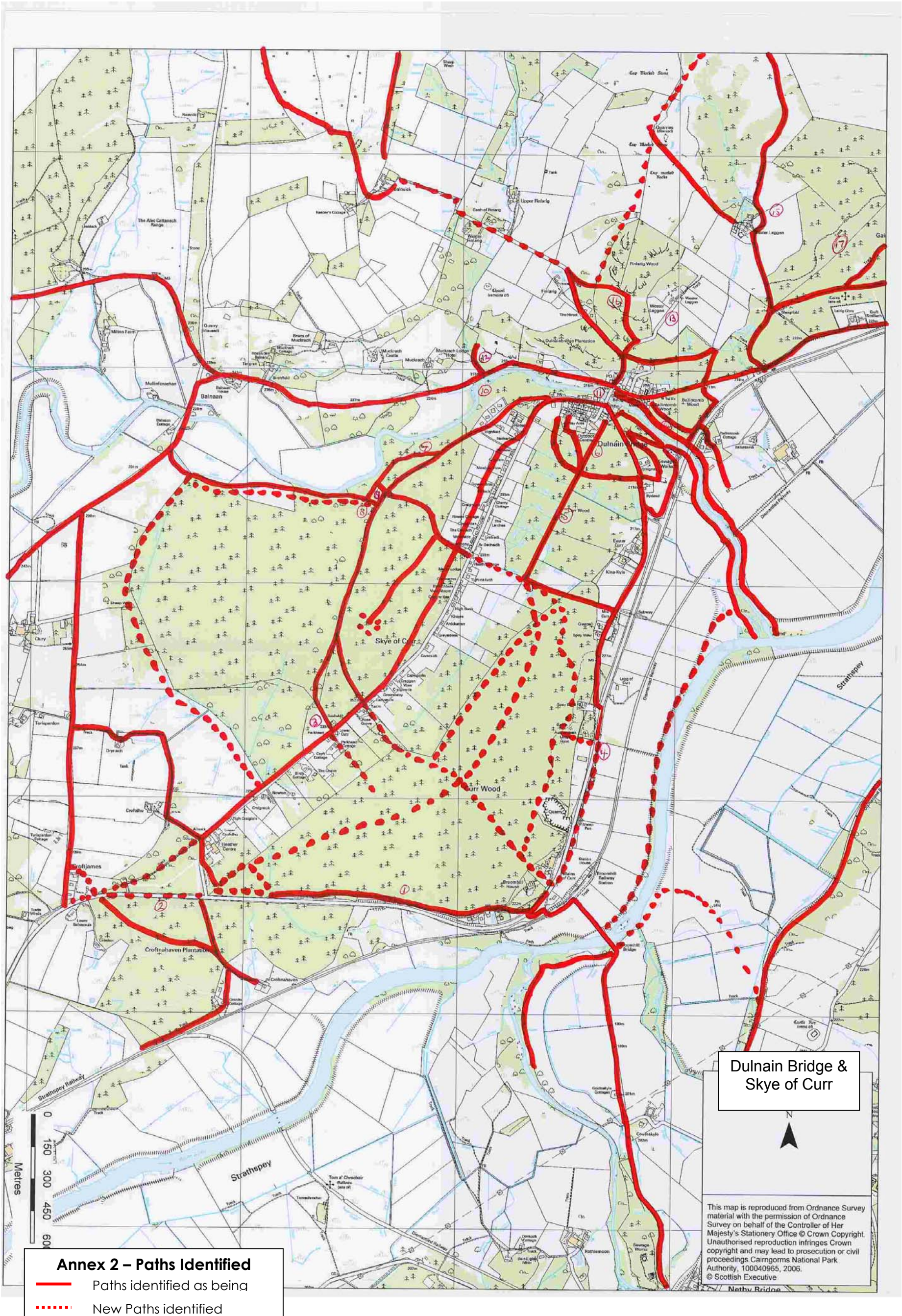
1 March 2007

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Annex 1 - Comments received on maps at the events and in the questionnaires

Where the comment relates to a geographic area on the map the number of the comment has been written on to the map in Annex 2.	
No.	Comment (as written by respondent)
1	between Broomhill Station and the Heather Centre
2	A route to avoid going on to the A95 for horses and dogs
3	a difficult and indistinct section to link onto road with very scary dog
4	need for a walking and cycling link from Curr wood to Broomhill
5	drains difficult
6	lovely walk spoiled by motor bikes
7	trees too low for riders on horseback
8	poached area by cattle – very muddy
9	link from river to main path very soft and slippy
10	need for seats benches
11	small rapids below road bridge is great potential spot for kayakers
12	fences difficult to cross and trees
13	query over landowners attitude to access at Wester Laggan
14	path along river from Dulnain to main road overgrown and neglected – good potential if managed
15	private sign
16	forest extraction track would make good path, mountain bike horse route
17	In addition, 2 areas were identified where respondents would like to go but found access difficult. These are Curr woods and the woods north of the A95 and west of the Easter Laggan
18	Link walk to Grantown-on-Spey other than River walk, Skye of Curr Road – dangerous walk – footpath essential, link to Nethy bridge – similar – dangerous to walk – footpath essential
19	Footpath necessary along Skye road
20	This section necessary
21	This section is okay old road *link necessary over main road to Broomhill Station
22	This route would follow the old road; would need some re-instatement work, but cycling on the A95 is highly dangerous!

23	Walking/cycling between Gaick & Craggan is not safe. Path is required avoiding A95.
24	No obvious public access into Curr Wood from Skye of Curr Road
25	Circular walk
26	Riverside walk south side – safe walk
27	Ancient established walk
28	Safe walking route from Broomhill to Heather centre
29	Access to Dulnain Bridge from Curr Wood (couple of footpaths)
30	Access Broomhill to Curr Wood
31	Rationalisation of existing paths in Curr Wood
32	Access to Heather centre – i.e. Dulnain Village – Curr Wood – Heather Centre + Broomhill
33	Proper cycle signage to Carr-Bridge
34	Create cycle link to Grantown on old road



Annex 2 – Paths Identified
 — Paths identified as being
 New Paths identified

Dulnain Bridge &
Skye of Curr

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