Appendix B

Report from the

Meeting on State-wide Issues Regarding Bighorn/Domestic Sheep Interaction March 31, 2000, at The Nature Conservancy Learning Center, Lander, WY

Participants

Truman Julian, sheep rancher Bill Taliaferro, sheep rancher Jim Magagna, Wy Stock Growers Assoc Ken Hamilton, Wy Farm Bureau Federation David Luzmoor, Wy Chapter, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS) Paula Karres, National FNAWS Tom McDonnell, American Sheep Industry Cat Urbigkit, sheep rancher/reporter Mary Thoman, sheep rancher Dave Roberts, BLM State Office Bill Wichers, Wy Game & Fish, Cheyenne Tom Thorne, Wy Game & Fish, Chevenne Dan Stroud, Wy Game & Fish, Pinedale Barb Franklin, Shoshone NF Jim Collins, Wy Chapter, FNAWS Doug McWhirter, Wy Game & Fish, Pinedale Terrv Kreeger, Wy Game & Fish, Sybille Unit Melanie Woolever, USFS, Denver Regional Office Mesia Nyman, Bridger-Teton NF/Greys River RD Shawn Bayless, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Reservation Brad Russell, Shoshone NF Bonnie Cannon, Rep. Cubin's State Office Betty Fear, Sublette Co. Bd. of Commissioners Pati Smith, Sen. Thomas' State Office John Erramouspe, Wy livestock producer Fred Roberes, producer Greg Clark, Bridger-Teton NF/Big Piney RD Lee McKinney, Wyo Livestock Reporter

Facilitator: Bob Budd, The Nature Conservancy-Red Canyon Ranch Recorder: Carol Kruse, Wyoming Office of Federal Land Policy

Informative Presentations

- Kevin Hurley current status of wild sheep in US and Wyoming, including the Dall,
 - Stone, Desert, Peninsular Desert, Sierra Nevada California, other California, and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep; Wyoming's population is about 6,600, is 13% of bighorn sheep in existence; are 15 herds, 8 native and 7 reintroduced; native herds are concentrated in the Greater Yellowstone Area national forests; bighorn numbers have been declining since 1990
- Mary Thoman, current status of domestic sheep in US and Wyoming; numbers are stabilized at 9 million nationally due to farm flocks - range flocks are still declining and "endangered;" that's compared to 10 million in the British Isles and Falkland; reading trappers' journals indicates that range condition is better now than historically
- Kevin Hurley, how herd objectives are set and changed (see 2 attachments); geographic boundaries are set, then population objectives are set between the biological minimum and maximum (forage carrying capacity) of that area; differences of opinion between all involved publics, landowners, etc., are politically mediated; objectives are reviewed at least every 5 years; 6 of the native herds are below objective, 2 are above; all 7 transplant-augmented herds are below objective; 24% of the population of the Whiskey Mountain herd is removed by ram hunting (Whiskey Mtn is the only herd G&F manages for population control, they may have ewe hunts before too long - that is the only herd nearing carrying capacity); the only way to increase bighorn numbers is to manipulate habitat
- Doug McWhirter, Bighorn Sheep Working Group was established in 1997; major concern is bighorn susceptibility to stressors and respiratory disease; the lungs are bighorns' Achilles Heel; they carry their own Pasturella and have their own dieoffs triggered by stress; other Pasturella strains and other microbes are introduced by domestic sheep; the Working Group is working on where bighorn and domestic sheep should be emphasized ... domestic on the lower flanks of mountains and flatlands, and bighorns in the higher mountains? G&F wants to give the native herds top priority over the transplant-augmented herds; he provided a colored map of the FS domestic sheep allotments (attached, in blackand-white). Management strategies/options considered by the Working Group: use of natural barriers; modify domestic grazing system to buffer bighorn areas; remove strays after domestic sheep rotate out of an allotment; permittee notify G&F whenever/wherever domestic-bighorn contact is observed; acknowledge/ accept high risk of die-offs; convert allotments to cattle where appropriate (what is appropriate, who decides?); shift domestic sheep use to other allotments; buy out domestic sheep allotments; close domestic sheep allotments (G&F is not advocating this); thre are 7 or 8 permittees on 25 allotments in the native herd areas (Bridger-Tetons, Gros Ventres, Absarokas)
- Melanie Woolever, co-mingling as addressed in other states by the FS; she works directly for Chief Dombeck; did lit review, found no instance where co-mingling occurred and bighorns stayed healthy; FS is under pressure to be more aggressive about dealing with co-mingling (to develop guidelines similar to BLM's), as in Hells Canyon National Recreation Area - there, after 25 years of conflict and a

lawsuit, the FS decided to remove bighorn sheep, found other allotments for the sheep producers, or converted the allotments to cattle, did one buy-out with private dollars for the sole unhappy permittee, developed an Area Plan amendment on resolving domestic-bighorn sheep conflicts; did about the same in the White River Forest. 1997, with a collaborative effort which developed standards and guidelines (which will be put into a revised Forest Plan) for resolving conflicts; due to lawsuit decision, FS can no longer assume species viability, they have to begin managing actively for viability under NFMA

Barb Franklin, what happens to vacant FS allotments; if a permit is waived back to the FS, they can re-issue with current terms and conditions to a different permittee, modify the terms and conditions and issue to a different permittee, convert the class of livestock, close the allotment, or leave it vacant (but who maintains the improvements if it's vacant?); adjacent Forests will work together to solve resource problems; NEPA has to be done on vacant allotments unless it is reissued with exactly the current terms and conditions (but NEPA is done on them all, eventually)

Dave Roberts, co-mingling has been addressed in other states by the BLM more fully since 1990; their national advisory committee of experts says bighorns and domestic sheep should be separated; that led to BLM's current guidelines (attached) issued in 1992 and revised in 1998; ideally, BLM wants to use the bighorn sheep guidelines as part of the Standards and Guidelines for healthy rangeland. Dave could find only two cases so far where the bighorn guidelines have been used, and in both instances bighorn reintroductions were discouraged because domestic sheep allotments already existed in the area (Tom McDonnell said he's not aware of any conflicts, using the BLM bighorn guidelines)

Bob Budd asked Dan Stroud to add layers indicating vacant domestic sheep allotments, seasons of use, management strategy if any (such as rotation, etc), and bighorn herd management units to their existing map of FS domestic sheep allotments in Wyoming

There was considerable discussion on disease resistance in various bighorn species and herds (appears to be some variation, but is anecdotal, not results of hard science research)

Habitat Committee Report (attached)

Additional discussion:

Logging opens up bighorn habitat areas, as well as burns

Need to include Wind River Reservation, State Lands, and private landowners (like in the South Fork area), Grand Teton National Park, and Yellowstone National Park Efforts must be collaborative, and long-term

Want some action -- stop talking and planning, Just Do It

Disease Committee Report (see attached)

Additional discussion:

Whole group agreed to support Tom McDonnell's literature review effort

through the Wyoming Wildlife Disease Partnership, and to have that group set a research agenda.

There needs to be significant education/information outreach to the public It will be important that the federal agencies have flexibility to manage

Where Do We Go From Here?

Can we affect federal agency actions? (those agencies indicated "yes") What are the habitat problems/opportunities in bighorn herd management units? Need more interaction time at the meetings, not just information presentation Are we far enough along to define long-term objectives?

Since the objective is to have a Wyoming plan for managing bighorn sheep, and not a reaction to outside forces, maybe this group can develop a set of guidelines, a suite of solutions, some on habitat, some on disease, etc., to take to the federal land managers or, just a comprehensive technical report?

Mesia Nyman indicated she'd like it if the group can facilitate resolution between permittees and the G&F with guidelines, or something similar

Truman Julian said the group needs to develop something that will be used

Kevin Hurley would like to see bulleted lists from each committee, of recommendations (backed up by rationale), to give to state and federal decision makers

Lee McKinney wondered about applying recommendations to a site-specific case to test the feasibility

Bob Budd recommended building a report incrementally, which will be a dynamic document -that way what is known and decided right now could be implemented now, then as more information becomes known other decisions could be implemented

- The FS would like reports and ideas as they are developed, rather than waiting for one huge report; the local forests do have some flexibility to implement recommendations; the national FS wants to use processes just like this one to address these types of issues, and will use what outcomes they can (per their regulations); as Forest Plans are revised, more recommendations may be able to be built into those Plans; FS folks recommended submitting the group's recommendations as comments during Forest Plan revisions
- BLM will consider amending or appending their national guidelines, if necessary to include recommendations from this group

This process fits G&F's preferences, too

- Tom McDonnell believes the FS process paper obviates the reason for this group's working because it only allows elimination of domestic sheep grazing on FS lands; he wondered if it could be updated in a year
- Melanie Woolever responded that is not a hard-wired document, and is meant to recommend a process just like this one

Action Plans:

- Dan Stroud will work with G&F people to develop the desired bighorn herd management unit/domestic sheep allotment map
- Bob Budd, Tom McDonnell, Tom Thorne, and Bryce Reece will discuss folding the Disease Committee and the Research Committee together
- All committees should meet and develop <u>some</u> list (at least the start of one) to be presented at the next meeting

Bob Budd and OFLP will invite missing stakeholders

Proposed Agenda for Next Meeting

Habitat obstacles/opportunities within each bighorn herd management unit Discussion of recommendations presented today and at the next meeting Where do we go from here

Questions?

Contact Carol Kruse at 307.777.5261 or ckruse@state.wy.us

BIG GAME HERD POPULATION OBJECTIVE CHANGE PROCEDURE

Identify need for herd unit population objective change based on local field personnel judgment or public input.

Proposed change (actual #) developed by responsible biologist(s) and wardens.

Proposed change considered and tentatively approved by region administration (Regional Wildlife Supervisor and Coordinator). Wildlife Administration and Biological Services notified of intent to propose change via advisory memo. If the change is merely combining two hers and the resultant single objective is the same as the sum of the objectives of the combined herds, steps 5 and 6 do not apply.

Changes discussed with local Commissioner. This may occur at step 2 or 3 also.

Hold public meeting(s) about the proposed changes.

Three weeks prior to the Commission Meeting, complete the Commission Agenda Sheet (attached). Include results of public input plus a map illustrating herd unit and narrative regarding proposed change. Send to Cheyenne Administration for inclusion in Commission notebooks. See attached examples.

Propose objective change presented to the Commission by the Coordinator, Regional Wildlife supervisor or Biologist.

Objective change submitted to Biological Services for inclusion in herd unit database. r3iologic I Services will forward to Division Administration for permanent filing.

WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

WGFD Bighorn Sheep Contacts:

Kevin Hurley, WGFD, Thermopolis 03/24/00

Hunt Area	Wildlife Biologists	Office Phone	Game Warden(s)	Office Phone
1	Larry Roop, Cody	527-7125	Mac Black, Powell	754-5290
2	Larry Roop, Cody	527-7125	Mac Black, Powell Craig Sax, Cody	754-5290 527-7125
3	Larry Roop, Cody	527-7125	Craig Sax, Cody Tim Fagan, Cody	527-7125 527-7125
4	Kevin Hurley, Thermoplis Pat Hnilicka, Lander Doug Brimeyer, Jackson	864-9375 332-2688 733-2321	Tim Fagan, Cody Cole Thompson, Dubois Bill Long, Jackson	527-7125 455-2424
5	Kevin Hurley, Themoplis Pat Hnilicka, Lander	864-9375 332-2688	Tim Fagan, Cody Jerry Longobardi, Meeteetse Tim Fuchs, Thermoplis Cole Thompson, Duboise	733-2321 868-2212 864-3834 455-2424
6	Doug Brimeyer, Jackson	733-2321	Doug Crawford, Jackson	733-2321
7	Doug Brimeyer, Jackson Gary Fralick, Thayne	733-2321 883-2998	Doug Crawford, Jackson	733-2321
8,23	Doug McWhirter, Pinedale	367-4353	Duke Early, Pinedale	367-4353
9,10	Pat Hnilicka, Lander	332-2688	Cole Thompson, Dubois	455-2424
11	Tom Ryder, Lander	332-2688	Bob Trebelcock, Lander	332-2688
12	Tom Easterly, Greybull	765-2742	John Hyde, Lovell	548-7310
17	Greg Hiatt, Sinclair	324-7927	Kathy Crofts, Rawlins	324-2973
18	Steve Loose, Saratoga	326-5033	Biff Burton, Saratoga Bill Haley, Laramie	326-5583 745-4046
19	Mark Zornes, Chugwater Rich Guenzel, Laramie	422-3236 745-4046	Roger Bredehoft, Laramie Todd Graham, Wheatland	745-4046 322-2067
21	Steve Loose, Saratoga	326-5033	Biff Burton, Saratoga	326-5583
22	Pat Hnilicka, Lander	332-2688	Cole Thompson, Dubois	455-2424
24	Gary Fralick, Thayne Doug McWhirter, PInedale	883-2998 376-4353	Brad Hovinga, Big Piney	276-3359

WGFD Bighorn sheep population objectives and estimates for 16 herd units, plus <u>Yellowstone National</u> <u>Park, post-season 1999.</u>

Areas	Origin	Herd Unit	Objectives	Estimate
6	Native	Targhee	125	110
7	Native	Jackson	500	600
24	Transplant	Darby Mountain	150	50
1	Native	Clarks Fork	500	410
2	Native	Trout Peak	750	575
3	Native	Wapiti Ridge	1000	960
4	Native	Younts Peak	900	830
5,22	Native	Francs Peak	1360	1455
	Transplant	Shell Canyon	100	20
18	Transplant	Douglas Creek	350	125
19	Transplant	Laramie Peak	500	250
21	Transplant	Encampment River	200	40
8,9,10,23	Native	Whisky Mountain	1350	950
11	Transplant	Temple Peak	250	25
16 ^a		Sweetwater	400	0
17	Transplant	Ferris	300	20
		Total	8735	6420
^a Scheduled Transplant; no population established yet				
YNP	Native	Yellowstone NP		400

Grand Total Population Estimate for Wyoming

6820

1998 Revised Guidelines for Domestic Sheep and Goat Management in Native Wild Sheep Habitats

The Bureau of Land Management desires progressive native wild sheep management compatible with appropriate grazing on public lands by domestic sheep and free-ranging goats.

It is recognized by State and Federal agencies, native wild sheep organizations, and the domestic sheep industry that:

- There are some disease agents that occur in both domestic sheep and goats and native wild sheep. There is evidence that if native wild and domestic sheep are allowed to be in close contact, health problems and die offs may occur. Some disease agents may be transmitted between both species. There is evidence indicating that some disease agents could be transmitted between domestic goats and native wild sheep;
- There are native wild sheep die-offs that occur with no apparent relationship to contact with domestic sheep or goats;
- The above observations are both valid and not mutually exclusive;
- Bacterial pneumonia's are not the only diseases of concern, although perhaps they are the most catastrophic;
- The risks of disease transmission are often unknown; they may, however, be site specific, and;
- Reasonable efforts must be made by domestic sheep and goat permittees and wildlife and land management agencies to minimize the risk of disease transmission, and to optimize preventive medical and management procedures, to ensure healthy populations of native wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats.

In recognition of the above factors, the guidelines set forth below should be followed in current and future native wild/ domestic sheep and goat use areas unless a specific cooperative agreement that includes the State wildlife management agency, the BLN1 and the livestock permit holder is in place. When such agreement is in place, the agencies and the livestock permit holder will be held harmless in the event of disease impacting either native wild sheep or domestic sheep and goats.

- 1. State wildlife and Federal land management agencies, native wild sheep interest groups, and domestic sheep and goat industry cooperation and consultation are necessary to maintain and/or expand native wild sheep numbers. When _agency and industry agreement has been reached to maintain and/or expand native wild sheep numbers, the agencies and the domestic sheep industry will be held harmless in the event of disease impacting either native wild sheep or domestic sheep and goats.
- 2. Domestic sheep or goat grazing and trailing should be discouraged in the vicinity of native wild sheep ranges.
- 3. Native wild sheep and domestic sheep or goats should be spatially separated to reduce the potential of interspecies contact.
- 4. In reviewing new domestic sheep or goat grazing permit applications or proposed conversions of cattle permits to sheep or goat permits in areas with established native wild sheep populations, buffer strips surrounding native wild sheep habitat should be developed, except where topographic features or other barriers minimize physical contact between native wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats. Buffer strips could range up to 13.5 kilometers (9 miles) or as

developed through a cooperative agreement to minimize contact between native wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, depending upon local conditions and management options.

- 5. Domestic sheep and goats should be closely managed and carefully herded where necessary to prevent them from straying into native wild sheep areas.
- 6. Trailing of domestic sheep or goats near or through occupied native wild sheep ranges may be permitted when safeguards can be implemented to adequately prevent physical contact between native wild sheep and domestic sheep or goats. BLM must conduct on-site use compliance during trailing to ensure safeguards are observed.
- 7. Cooperative efforts should be undertaken to quickly notify the permittee and appropriate agency to remove any stray domestic sheep or goats or wild sheen in areas that would allow contact between domestic sheep or goats and native wild sheep.
- 8. Unless a cooperative agreement has been reached to the contrary, native wild sheep should only be reintroduced into areas where domestic sheep or goat grazing is not permitted.
- 9. Extraordinary precautions will be followed to protect special status subspecies, e.g., federally listed threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate subspecies, State listed subspecies and BLM sensitive subspecies.
- 10. For desert bighorn sheep, (Ovis canadensis nelsoni, O.c. mexicana, and Oc. cremnobates), the following additional guidelines are recommended:
 - a. No domestic sheep or goat grazing should be allowed within buffer strips less than 13.5 kilometers (9 miles) surrounding desert bighorn habitat, except where topographic features or other barriers prevent physical contact.
 - b. Domestic sheep or goats trailed and grazed outside the 13.5 kilometers (9 mile) buffer and in the vicinity of desert bighorn ranges should be closely managed and carefully herded.
 - c. Unless a cooperative agreement has been reached to the contrary, domestic sheep or goats should be trucked rather than trailed, when trailing would bring domestic sheep or goats closer than 13.5 kilometers (9 miles) to occupied desert bighorn sheep ranges, especially when domestic ewes or nannies are in estrus.
- 11. These guidelines will be reviewed at least every 5 years by a work group comprised of representatives from the domestic sheep and goat industry, State wildlife agencies, BLM and native wild sheep organizations.

BIG HORN SHEEP HABITAT SUBCOMMITTEE INFORMATION 3/00

Direct Habitat Influences

Existing habitat condition, capability and trend (forage, migration corridors, winter vs summer range)/habitat quality

Conifer encroachment/horizontal structure/visibility impairment Vegetation changes (species composition and production) due to domestic grazing or lack of domestic grazing Overgrazing Fragmentation of habitat Mineral licks Mineral/nutritional deficiencies Site productivity/soil erosion hazard and general soil conditions (i.e. escape terrain = high soil erosion hazard)

Condition and trend of potential/suitable but vacant habitat

Fire suppression

Indirect Habitat Influences

BHS limited ability to disperse (herd memory)

Fragmentation of habitat/barriers to migration Landscape scale migration routes - i.e. probability/possibility of genetic interchange among different "herds"

Sub alpine winter ranges especially important

Quality of available habitat vs. population numbers

BHS population/genetic viability

BHS ecological (and social) "role"

Displacement

Recreationists (summer and winter, i.e. snow machine trespass into wilderness and other wildlife winter ranges)

Domestic sheep/herders/clogs

Competition

Other wildlife Domestic livestock (cattle, sheep, recreation horse/l lain a/goat stock)

Predators

Disease transmission

Stresses not mentioned above

Weather General bhs health (internal/external parasites, pink eye, etc) Hunting Timing and duration of external stresses

Loss of habitat quality from existing roads/travel ways (decreased forage production; fragmentation of habitat)

Short term and long term risks to habitat

Historic vs. current vs. potential distribution

Causes for historic decline Current crucial ranges (winter, lambing, summer, migration routes) Potential suitable ranges Observation data Herd unit objectives Crucial range delineations Western Wyoming Crucial Bighorn Sheep Ranges and Domestic Sheep Allotments



Bighorn Sheep/Domestic Sheep Interaction Disease Working Group Red Canyon Ranch March 31, 2000

The working group met from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Participants included: Jim Collins, John Erramouspe, Joy Erramouspe, Kevin Hurley, Truman Julian, Paula Karres, Terry Kreeger, Carol Kruse, Jim Logan, Tom McDonnel, Bill Taliaferro, Mary Thoman, Tom Thorne, Cat Urbigkit.

The working group spent most of the meeting discussing, modifying, adding to, and agreeing to previously circulated "terms of agreement." The discussions were positive and productive.

TERMS OF AGREEMENT:

- Diseases can be interchanged between domestic and bighorn sheep; in Wyoming Pasteurella spp.-induced pneumonia is the most important.
- Pasteurellosis in sheep is a very complex issue that needs better understanding by all concerned individuals, agencies, and organizations.
- Bighorn sheep are important to Wyoming and should be protected and enhanced in terms of numbers, quality, and distribution.
- The sheep industry is important to Wyoming and should be protected; this includes protection and stability of grazing allotments and management changes only on an opportunistic willing permittee basis, not under a sense of urgency or duress.
- Use balanced scientific information.
- Use adaptive management to resolve problems.
- Develop Wyoming-based, multi-disciplined research and solutions that could serve as models for other states.
- Research conducted in Wyoming is desirable, but quality, balanced research conducted and solutions developed elsewhere should be recognized and used.
- Bighorn sheep domestic sheep interaction issues should not be used as surrogate issues to affect land use planning.
- There is a need for open, non-inflammatory communication.
- A variety of stressors play important roles in inducing pasteurellosis in sheep.
- There is a need to better define the role of predation in bighorn sheep dynamics.
- Hybridization between bighorn and domestic sheep should be discouraged.
- Zero risk of disease is unattainable, but management can be used to reduce risk and stress.
- There is risk of disease transmission, but rhetorical dialogue and interchange between researchers, producers, and biologists on degrees of risks is not beneficial or desirable.

These "points of agreement" will serve as a framework and guidelines for the disease working group in future discussions and preparation of recommendations.

In addition, the disease working group discussed two of the elements from the "Where do we go from here" outline developed at the March 30, 2000, meeting:

<u>Research</u> - The proposed Wyoming Wildlife Disease Partnership involving the University of Wyoming, Game and Fish Department, Department of Agriculture, and Livestock Board was discussed. The partnership will have an advisory board, made up of the directors of the four member agencies, which will help solicit funding for disease research, help set priorities, and allocate all funds received by the partnership. The purpose will be to jointly seek funds to conduct applied research on diseases of wildlife that are important to livestock in Wyoming. An obvious research subject is diseases transmissible among bighorn and domestic sheep. The partnership could conduct cooperative research with other entities (e.g., Colorado Division of Wildlife, Caine Veterinary Teaching Hospital, etc.) and could receive competitive grants from NGO's and government agencies. Senator Craig Thomas is attempting to obtain congressional funding for the partnership

It was agreed that research by any entity on bighorn-domestic sheep diseases must be balanced and provide no perception of bias.

- <u>Review of Existing Research</u> In 1995 and 1996, Tom McDonnel, ASI, commissioned several well-recognized and respected researchers to prepare a paper for publication on pasteurellosis, but it has not been completed. With Tom's permission, the working group agreed to complete the publication, and Terry Kreeger, WGFD, was assigned the lead role to work toward that end with Tom's researchers. Terry will report back with a timeline for completion of the publication, which will be technical in nature, suitable for publication, and contain a non-technical summary.
- <u>Establish a Research Agenda</u> A number of research topics were discussed, including Pasteurella spp. vaccines; uses of vaccines; antibiotics; vaccine delivery systems, vitamin, mineral, and nutritional deficiencies; range conditions that might negatively affect disease resistance; etc. It was apparent there is no shortage of important research topics. There was some concern about how to interact with the Research working group.
- <u>Information Exchange</u> The report on Pasteurella discussed previously will be an important means of information exchange. At a future meeting of the Bighorn Sheep/Domestic Sheep Interaction group as a whole, the disease working group should arrange to have several objective, unbiased speakers to discuss some of the aspects of pasteurellosis and disease interchange. Perhaps two meetings from this one would be appropriate. There also was considerable interest in holding a future meeting of the disease working group, or the entire group, at the Sybille Wildlife Research and Conservation Education Center; a tour would be included.
- <u>Identify Agency Ability to Manage Adaptively</u> -The group ran out of time before this topic could be discussed.

Notes of the discussion by the group as recorded by Kevin Hurley and Carol Kruse are attached.

Tom Thorne Chairman

Alphabetical Listing of Attendees and Addresses (updated 5/30/00)

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