

# Natural Ohio

Division of Natural Areas and Preserves

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## Finding fitness along the preserve trail



**ALTHOUGH MANY VISITORS USE OHIO'S STATE NATURE PRESERVES FOR BIRDWATCHING AND NATURE STUDY, A GROWING NUMBER OF VISITORS ARE EXERCISERS USING THE TRAILS FOR DAILY WORKOUTS. WHAT BETTER PLACE TO EXERCISE THAN IN AN OHIO STATE NATURE PRESERVE?**

Walking is one of the best (and easiest) ways to stay healthy. It's easy on the joints and doesn't require any special skill or expensive sporting gear. Just remember to wear appropriate shoes and consider taking along a walking stick for some extra support.

If running is your preferred choice of exercise, some of the preserves' more rugged natural trails will provide a scenic alternative to urban or suburban streets. Again, no special gear needed but runners may take advantage of the trail running footwear now available.

Nature preserve trails are some of the prettiest trails in the state—and because of their relative short lengths, they are perfect for both the beginner and veteran walker or jogger. Trails are diverse, ranging from flat prairies to steep gorges and ravines. They wind through

woods, swamps, transitional meadows and along streams and rivers. More than a dozen sites feature boardwalked trails which are perfect for handicapped visitors, as well as those walkers who are seeking a leisurely stroll.

Using nature preserve trails does require some trail etiquette on the part of walkers and joggers. Remember, you are sharing the trail with other visitors; please pass other hikers with caution.

The number and length of trails varies from site to site. Some trails are only a quarter of a mile long. Most feature loop systems that range from 1 to 3 miles—the perfect distance for walkers or runners. A loop trail allows you to easily increase your workout by adding additional miles.

Because so many preserves offer a variety of topographies, you can pick which level of difficulty you'd like. Starting out, choose short, relatively flat trails like those found at Fowler Woods, Johnson Woods or Irwin Prairie. Or, if biking is more your fitness style, try the 4.6 mile trail at Blackhand Gorge. It's the only preserve that allows biking.

*(continued on page 2)*

## New ODNR Director Named



Sean D. Logan is the 11th person to serve as director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Appointed by Governor Ted Strickland in early January, Director Logan is a veteran Ohio public servant.

"I was fortunate to work with Sean when I was a member of Congress representing Columbiana County, and I know first-hand how bright and hard-working he is," said Governor Strickland when announcing Logan's appointment.

Logan, 40, most recently served as president of the board of commissioners in Columbiana County, where he had been a commissioner since 2001. From 1990-2000, Logan was a member of the Ohio House of Representatives. During his time in the state legislature, Logan served on the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee for six years.

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# Field Notes

## New year ushers in new look

After 30 years of service, the division is bidding a fond farewell to a member of its family—its logo.

Like other divisions within ODNR who have updated their logos in recent years, the division began the process of developing a new logo in mid-2006. It had become apparent to staff that elements of the logo (the blue heron, orchid and trilobite) weren't easily identified by visitors, especially those in younger generations. The division wanted an image that would better represent its mission of protecting Ohio's special places.

Mindful of the costs associated with designing a new logo, the division turned to Sergei Itomlenski of the Itomik Design Studio, who in addition to designing *Natural Ohio*, teaches a series of graphic design courses at a local community college. He agreed to use the logo redesign as a final project for graduating students. Of the 50 designs received, the winning design, by student Joe Rivera, was fine tuned by ODNR's Office of Communication.

Adopted in December 2006, the division is transitioning in the new logo as publications are updated and reprinted. Later, the division will redesign its website to complement the green, blue and gold colors of the new logo.

## Retirements change the face of the field

The new year brought more changes to the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves—most notably in the field.

In late 2006, the division lost a number of long-time employees to retirement. In October, we said goodbye to **Emiliss Ricks**, a 32-year preserve manager in northeast Ohio and **Walt Jinks**, another 30-year ODNR employee who

had served as north central district manager since 2002. Read Ricks' career recollections on page 7.

In central office, the Natural Heritage Program lost **Roger Barber**, who also retired from the division after 22 years. Barber was a researcher who worked in the field surveying rare plants, coordinated volunteer activities and managed the demonstration prairie at the Ohio State Fair.

Saying goodbye to veteran staff means welcoming several new employees to the division. **Jody Holland**, most recently with ODNR's Division of Parks, is managing the north central district which includes Springville Marsh and Howard Collier state nature preserves.

After realigning the northeast lakeshore and northeast preserve districts, the division hired **Adam Wohlever**, who was working in the south central district, to manage the northeast lakeshore district which includes Headlands Dunes and Eagle Creek state nature preserves. **Charlotte McCurdy**, who was the northeast lakeshore district manager, is now managing the northeast district including Jackson Bog, Kent Bog and Johnson Woods.

There's also a new face in the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program. As an assistant scenic rivers manager in northeast Ohio, **Matthew Smith** will be developing a watershed plan and scenic river study for the Ashtabula River.

## Identification made easier

A common complaint we've heard over the years has been the lack of color photos. We're pleased to report that *Natural Ohio* will be a full-color newsletter beginning with the Spring 2007 issue. We look forward to offering photos which will help our readers identify featured plants in the field and better appreciate the beauty of Ohio's natural areas.



(*Fitness*, continued from page 1)

If you really want a calorie-burning hike, try the upper rim trail at Conkle's Hollow or use both the upper and lower rim trails at Clifton Gorge. Other bracing hikes can be found at Rockbridge, Desonier and Lake Katharine. Consider adding a weighted backpack to increase the difficulty of your workout routine.

Walking or running outside on a trail is a much better workout than slogging along on an indoor treadmill. It burns more calories by requiring you to use more muscles, especially the core muscles which you need for stabilization on uneven surfaces. Nature preserve trails are generally well maintained but be prepared to jump over fallen logs and puddles or duck those low hanging branches. All these corrections force your body to use more muscle, which improves coordination and burns more calories.

Exercising in a preserve setting isn't just good for your body, it will improve your well being. You won't need to drown out unwanted urban noises with headphones, instead you'll be surrounded by the sounds of nature. Your other senses will be stimulated as well. Every season will bring new sights to see—the green of spring and summer or the colorful leaves of autumn will add to your experience.

Take safety precautions when using less visited sites. Consider exercising with a buddy, but remember to leave your furry friends at home because pets are prohibited at state nature preserves. Always tell someone where you are going and when you plan on returning.

Be aware of your surroundings and keep in mind that preserves are only open from sunrise to sunset. Finally, and most importantly, always stay on the designated trail; off-trail use is strictly prohibited by law.

To learn more about the preserves in your area, visit [www.ohiodnr.com/dnap](http://www.ohiodnr.com/dnap).

**Mark Reinemann**  
Southwest District

## Bracken – a fern with a defense plan

THE BIOLOGICAL WORLD IS A WORLD OF WONDERS. PLANTS SUSTAINING THEMSELVES BY INGESTING BUGS, GORGEOUS BLOOMS ONLY POSSIBLE BY UNIQUE POLLINATION PROCESSES AND HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF UNIQUE SPECIES, ALL GROWING WITHIN DRIVING DISTANCE OF OUR OWN BACKYARDS.

Ferns seem ubiquitous—their bright green fronds can be found everywhere from our local florist shops to the deepest, most rugged woods. One particular fern species, bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) doesn't leave its survival to the whims of nature. It uses chemicals to fend off its enemies.

This species of fern is found throughout the world, occurring on all continents except Antarctica. Because of its wide range, it is highly variable with up to a dozen varieties. Some species are considered by botanists to be quite distinct. Its common name, bracken, is of old Norse origin meaning fern.

Its fronds, or fern leaves, can grow to more than 3 feet tall. This plant has an extensive, deep underground stem called a rhizome which allows bracken to form extensive colonies that sometimes form a dense understory in the woods. Colonies may live for hundreds of years and their age is difficult to estimate. Their deep root system is also difficult to eradicate.

The fronds of this fern produce the chemicals it needs to fend off its predators. Not content to settle for just one chemical, this plant produces several including a hormone which arrests insect development and eventually causes death.

Bracken also produces an enzyme called thiaminase, which breaks down the vitamin B1. The delicate fiddleheads, which are the young, rolled fronds, are a livestock favorite. Livestock feeding on bracken fronds for long periods often suffer from B1 deficiency. Before the automobile, it was fairly common to see signs of B1 deficiency in livestock. Horses would stagger sideways, righting themselves by keeping their legs spread wide. In England, this condition was called “bracken staggers.” Other symptoms included fever and muscular tremors. Eventually, if livestock continued to eat bracken, massive seizures would occur.

The bracken's chemical defenses don't end there. Another deadly weapon in the bracken's arsenal, hydrogen cyanide, is produced when the plant's tissue is torn by an insect's mandibles. An enzyme is released which produces hydrogen cyanide. The chemical can lead to the death of the munching insect.

Yet another chemical, tannin, creates a bitter taste to grazers. Tannins are toxic if ingested in large quantities. Effective against a wide range of enemies, this chemical builds up as the fern's fronds mature.



The fiddleheads of bracken are considered a delicacy in regions of the world, especially in the Far East. The tannins and other chemicals are mostly removed by cooking. However, in regions where bracken fiddleheads are commonly eaten, stomach cancer is more frequent. In the 1980s, scientists isolated a carcinogenic compound in the fronds. While people still eat bracken fiddleheads, it is strongly recommended to limit the frequency and quantity of this potentially-toxic snack.

Commonly found in eastern Ohio, bracken grows in dry woods. One of the best places to view this silently armored plant is in the dry, oak woods along the boardwalk at Kent Bog State Nature Preserve in Portage County. Next time you see this lovely, yet deadly fern, you can appreciate it without fear—it hasn't developed any airborne chemical defenses... yet (who knows what another 100 million years will bring).

**Rick Gardner**  
Natural Heritage Botanist

*(Director, continued from page 1)*

His interest in Ohio's natural resources is long standing. The first piece of legislation he sponsored in the general assembly created the forest development, wildlife habitat and Ohio River management funds.

When sworn in, Logan quoted President Lyndon Johnson, who said upon the signing of the Wilderness Act, “If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, then we

must leave them with something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them with a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning.”

Until his appointment to ODNR, Director Logan had been a member of the Little Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River Advisory Board and held an appointment to the Ohio Solid Waste Advisory Council.

“I believe I have received the best Cabinet appointment of all. My respect

for the Department of Natural Resources runs deep,” Logan said. “I look forward to ensuring that our state's natural heritage will be protected and wisely managed so Ohio's families can enjoy those resources for generations to come.”

Logan received a bachelor's degree in political science and speech communication from Muskingum College. He earned his law degree from Capital University Law School in 2001.

# Finding the beauty of a winter woods

## Preserve Spotlight – Seymour Woods

*In the woods in a winter afternoon one will see as readily the origin of the stained glass window, with which Gothic cathedrals are adorned, in the colors of the western sky seen through the bare and crossing branches of the forest.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON  
1803-1882

Walking in the woods in winter allows us a chance to really see the lay of the land, and in Emerson's words, "the bare and crossing branches of the forest," which do indeed resemble stained glass. Stripped of greenery, the bare trees echo the quiet side of nature's beauty.

Despite its size and lack of rarities, Seymour Woods Natural Area still delivers on Emerson's promises. This 115-acre site is located in southern Delaware County, outside of Columbus. It is the perfect place to spend an hour or two in the woods.

A 1.75 mile trail system winds along heavily wooded ridge tops and open fields in various stages of succession. The best views are of deep ravines cutting into steep shale cliffs. The trail crosses a small tributary of the nearby Olentangy State Scenic River, giving visitors a close view of the exposed layers of shale along the streambed.

In 1972, James O. Seymour donated the site to the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves for use as a natural area. After walking through Seymour Woods in early December, it's easy to see why the land was a favorite family destination for more than 42 years.

Before he passed away in 1982, Seymour wrote, "I have planted many hardwood trees... such as beech, oak, maple, hickory and walnut." He was adamant that the site retain its natural look. He also wrote, "A natural forest is not neat... trees grow old and die and fall down." Seeing his woods today, I think he'd agree, nature is still as untidy as ever at Seymour Woods.

In addition to the planted trees, there are many other varieties to see. Oaks and hickories may be found on the ridges and sycamore, elm, maple and willow grow in the lowlands. A number of mature white pines tower overhead, providing a wonderful fragrance because of the scattered pine cones and small branches littering the trail.

The understory provides excellent brush cover and nesting habitat for many birds. On an early December day, I was greeted by a downy woodpecker, red cardinal and robin within a moment of arriving at the kiosk. The birds weren't the only inhabitants – squirrels scampered across tree branches and deer tracks and rubbings were easily spotted along the trail.

Winter isn't the only time to visit – in spring, Seymour Woods delivers a nice array of native wildflowers including harbinger-of-spring, jack-in-the-pulpit, trilliums, bloodroot and spring beauty. Later in summer, its open fields are filled with colorful goldenrods, ironweed and asters.

Before the buds of spring begin to color the trees of Seymour Woods, take a moment to savor the woods in winter. It's never time wasted – just ask Ralph Waldo Emerson.



**Heidi Hetzel-Evans**  
Public Information



## Ohio's fascinating flora and fauna

# Join us for the 2007 Ohio Botanical Symposium

*Friday, March 30, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.*

Presented by the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, the 2007 Ohio Botanical Symposium features captivating presentations, displays and an opportunity to meet other people interested in nature, conservation, biodiversity, and of course, botany.

Now in its seventh year, this year's symposium features five new topics, as well as the annual "best finds" presentation. Keynote speaker Dr. James Amon, a wetland and microbial ecologist with Wright State University, will discuss wetland restoration and conservation.

Symposium materials feature the state threatened birdfoot violet, as drawn by Butch Grieszmer, a data specialist in the division's Natural Heritage Program. Ohio's largest flowered violet,

the birdfoot violet is just one of 30 varieties of native violets that Ohio University's Dr. Harvey Ballard will cover during his presentation.

People find carnivorous plants fascinating, yet few know the relationships that have evolved between these intriguing plants and their prey. Dr. Greg Dahlem, an entomologist with Northern Kentucky University, will speak about North American pitcher plants and the insects who call these carnivorous plants home.

The Division of Wildlife's Jim McCormac will talk about Ohio's best natural areas. He is well known for both his botanical and birding skills. Jeff Johnson, a district preserve manager for the Division of Natural



Areas and Preserves in the Hocking County area, will discuss early uses for native plants and the medicinal remedies they continue to provide.

This year's event, co-sponsored by The Nature Conservancy and The Ohio State University Herbarium, is being held at The Ohio State University's Fawcett Center. Registration is \$15.

To learn more, please visit [www.ohiodnr.com/dnap/symposium](http://www.ohiodnr.com/dnap/symposium) or call Rick Gardner at (614) 265-6419.

## Learn more about Ohio's Scenic Beauty

*Natural Areas Discovery Series Runs April – October*

The Division of Natural Areas and Preserves invites you to participate in the 2007 Natural Areas Discovery Series. This annual series features scheduled hikes, canoe floats, demonstrations and other special programs. Check out the April and May events below.

For a complete listing, log on to [www.ohiodnr.com/dnap](http://www.ohiodnr.com/dnap).

### The chorus of spring

Learn more about Ohio's frogs and toads on **Thursday, April 12, 7-9 p.m.** in Lucas County. A short presentation at the Secor Metropark Nature Photography Center will be followed by an evening walk at Irwin Prairie State Nature Preserve. To reserve your place, call (419) 407-9701.

### Beautiful buds and blossoms

Discover the beauty of an Ohio spring at Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve on **Saturday, April 14, 1 p.m.**, in Greene County. A naturalist-led hike will take you along the gorge trail which features the pastels of spring ephemerals and breath-taking views of the Little Miami State and National Scenic River. Meet in front of the maintenance building. For more information, call (937) 544-9750.

### Birding along Ohio's North Coast

Well-known for its migratory bird visitors, Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve is located in the heart of the Lake Erie flyway. Two morning hikes (**8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.**) on



**Saturday, May 5** in Erie County will give you a chance to see colorful neotropical warblers, shorebirds and other species. Don't forget your binoculars! For more information, call (419) 433-4919.

### Ohio rarity in bloom

The bright yellow blooms of Ohio's rarest wildflower, the Lakeside daisy, will greet visitors at the annual Open House on **Saturday, May 12, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** at Lakeside Daisy State Nature Preserve in Ottawa County. For more information, call (419) 433-4919.

# Proper identification is key to protecting native species

ONE OF MY EARLIEST MEMORIES WORKING FOR THE DIVISION OF NATURAL AREAS AND PRESERVES IS OF MENTOR MARSH STATE NATURE PRESERVE IN 1999. IT WAS HARD FOR ME TO GRASP THE VAST EXPANSE OF COMMON REED, ALSO KNOWN TO BOTANISTS AS *PHRAGMITES AUSTRALIS*, THAT FLOURISHED THERE.

I learned from Preserve Manager Emliss Ricks that this grass, easily surpassing 10 feet tall and dominating hundreds of acres at the preserve, was considered an invasive non-native species. The former wooded swamp community has been mostly replaced by this invasive species after salt contamination occurred in the mid 20th century.

Several years ago, I learned that scientists had identified a native strain of *Phragmites* using genetic analysis, separating it from the invasive form (the same one enveloping Mentor Marsh), which is thought to have arrived at eastern U.S. ports from Europe in the 1800s. In 2004, researchers from the University of Maryland and Smithsonian Institution officially described this new species, naming it *Phragmites australis* subspecies *americanus*.

Fast-forward to the spring of 2006 when *Phragmites australis* subspecies *americanus* was added to the Ohio rare plant list. One of Ohio's leading botanists, Jim Bissell from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, suggested adding the native species to the rare plant list at the February 2006 meeting of the Ohio Rare Plant Advisory Committee.

Division staff currently attempt to remove the exotic invasive *Phragmites australis* from state nature preserves using several ecological management techniques. Now that a possibly rare native species of *Phragmites* has been recognized in Ohio, it will become critical for the division to teach land managers how to separate the native species from the non-native invasive species.

Native *Phragmites* superficially resembles the aggressive non-native invader, however, with careful inspection, the two can be easily recognized. The native species is much less weedy than its invasive relative. Although the native subspecies grows via stolons and rhizomes, its colonies typically stay the same size over time and do not grow as a dense, single species monoculture as the non-native *Phragmites*.

The stems of native *Phragmites* are shiny and smooth to the touch, while the culms of the invasive species are ridged, rough and matte. Native *Phragmites* can also have reddish coloration on the stems, especially near the base. In addition, the native *Phragmites* possesses "caducous" leaf sheaths, which means "falling off early." Early autumn is the best time of year to

check for this characteristic. Leaves of the native species will begin to fall off the culms, while the leaves of the invasive species persist through late fall.

Native *Phragmites* is also known to be infected with a fungus that leaves small black dots on its stems, another useful field characteristic.

To date, native *Phragmites* has been found in coastal marshes along Ohio's north coast, and inland in calcareous wetlands, such as Cedar Bog in Champaign County and Springville Marsh in Seneca County. The native species could potentially be found in any high quality undisturbed wetland across the state.

The next time you're out exploring Ohio's natural diversity, be on the lookout for the native *Phragmites australis* subspecies *americanus*. Reporting your observations to the division's Natural Heritage Program at (614) 265-6472 will help us better understand this plant's distribution across the state.

**Tom Arbour**  
Ecologist, Natural Heritage Program

## Farewell from the field

AS I WRITE THIS, I'M BOTH EXCITED AND MELANCHOLY—EXCITED BY THE PROSPECT OF A PRODUCTIVE AND ENJOYABLE RETIREMENT AND SADDENED BY THE THOUGHT OF LEAVING A JOB THAT I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED AND THAT HAS EMBRACED MY PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.

How does one sum up the pure pleasure of having been a preserve manager for more than 30 years? It is difficult to realize how quickly the time has flown by since that August afternoon in 1975 when I first gazed on the river at Blackhand Gorge as a young man beginning a career.

There are so many pictures that I will carry in my memories—standing waist-deep in water in a late summer fen; working with colleagues and friends who share a care and concern for our vanishing heritage; projects that challenged us, and the understanding and appreciation of the complexity of managing these rich and diverse sites. The solitude of a foot patrol on a winter's morning, wildflower walks in early May and nights gazing at the heavens from the amphitheater at Eagle Creek are just a few off the recollections I will treasure for a lifetime.

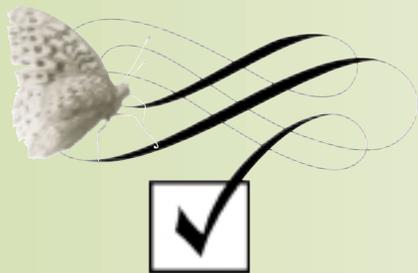
From the dunes of Lake Erie to the rock overhangs at Sheepskin Hollow, I have had the rare privilege to work in Ohio's most beautiful areas. Rewards include



friendships developed over years of public programming and volunteer events, the satisfaction that comes from projects well-done and the delight at each new discovery in the field. I would like to thank everyone who has been a part of this great and wonderful journey. Look for me along the trails in the coming days.

*Emliss Ricks*  
Retired, Northeast District  
Preserve Manager

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*Together, we can make  
a difference!*

Please use **Line 29** on your state income tax form to help protect Ohio's natural heritage. You'll be helping to preserve distinctive landscapes, exceptional habitats and significant plant communities.

If you've given in the past, please accept our sincere appreciation for your continued support.

Direct donations may also be made by sending a check made payable to:

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and Preserves**

**2045 Morse Road, Bldg. F-1  
Columbus, OH 43229**

## Mohican River becomes Ohio's 13th State Scenic River

More than 32 miles of the Mohican River, winding through portions of Ashland, Coshocton, Holmes and Knox counties, became the state's newest scenic river on December 28, 2006.

Two sections were designated including the Clear Fork from the base of the Pleasant Hill Dam to the confluence with

the Black Fork and the entire main stem to its confluence with the Kokosing.

Working with local organizers, the division will be coordinating a designation celebration May 18-19. For more information, contact Frank DiMarco at **(614) 265-6422**.



# Postcard lottery to be held in May 2007

*Cranberry Bog Open House  
Saturday, June 23, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.*

CRANBERRY BOG STATE NATURE PRESERVE IS ONE OF OHIO'S MOST UNIQUE PLACES. ONCE 50 ACRES, THE ISLAND HAS ERODED TO LESS THAN 11 ACRES—AND EACH YEAR IT CONTINUES TO LOSE MORE OF ITS FRAGILE HABITAT. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE, VISITATION TO CRANBERRY BOG IS LIMITED TO PERMIT ACCESS ONLY.

Located off the north shore of Buckeye Lake, the island contains unusual northern bog species, including grass-pink orchid, large cranberry and carnivorous plants, such as sundew and pitcher plant.

To enter the Cranberry Bog Lottery, please submit a postcard (one per family) to:

**Division of Natural Areas & Preserves  
2045 Morse Road, Bldg. F-1  
Columbus, OH 43229**

Postcards must be received by May 31 to be eligible for the lottery. Please include the following information: contact name, street address, city, state, zip and daytime phone number, and total in your party (not to exceed four unless number of immediate family members is greater).

Successful lottery participants will be notified by mail in early June. Tours will be filled in the order of the cards drawn. **Walk-in visitors are welcome to attend; however, you won't be guaranteed a specific time slot.**

Transportation to and from the island is available from the Greater Buckeye Lake Historical Society for a suggested donation of \$5 per person.

For more information, contact **(614) 265-6453**.



## *Preserving Nature Today for the Needs of Tomorrow*

### **Mission Statement:**

*Administer a system of nature preserves and scenic rivers by identifying and protecting Ohio's significant natural features.*

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