

Living Legends

Where the field meets the forest



A COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROJECT



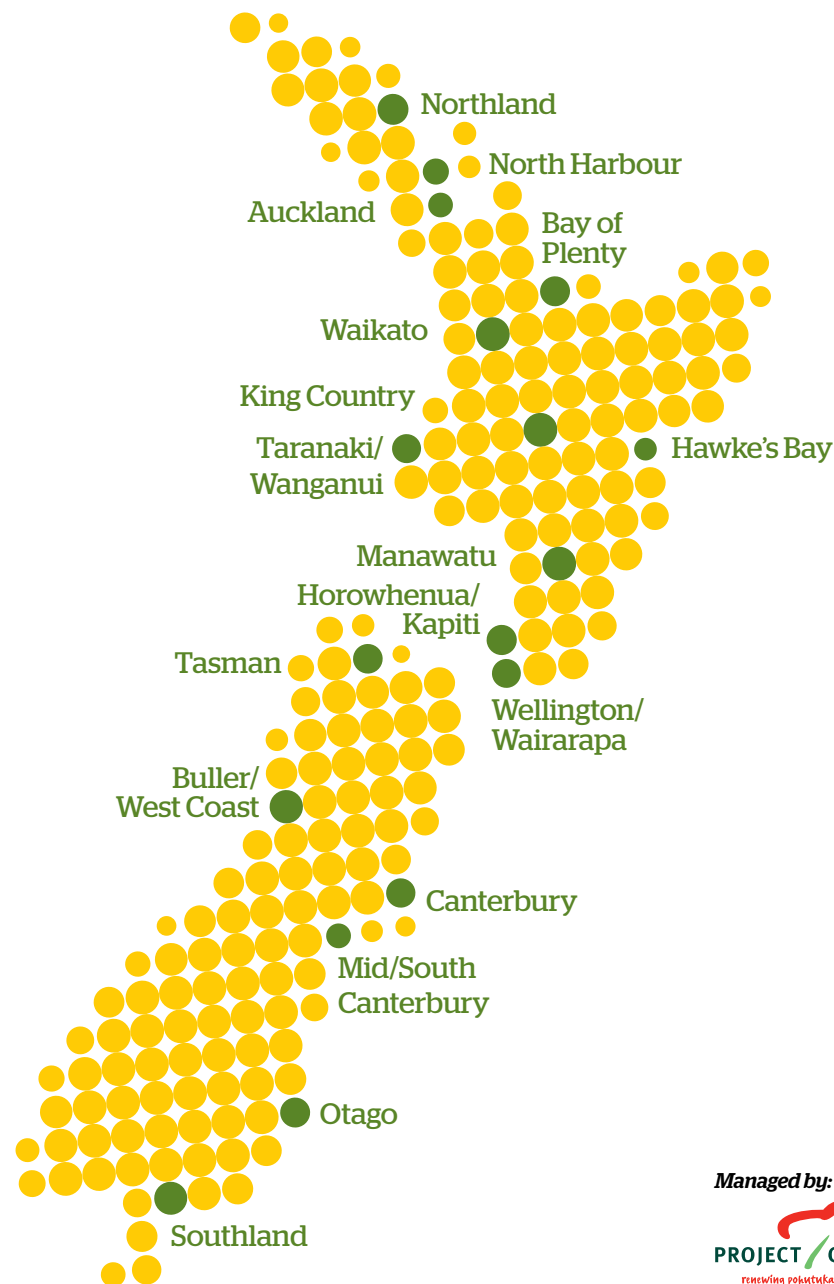


Living Legends was a community conservation project that was established in 2011 to celebrate and leave a legacy of New Zealand's hosting of Rugby World Cup.

17 community planting projects were undertaken, each honouring a local "Rugby Legend".

Over three years thousands of Kiwis joined these Rugby Legends to plant 170,000 native trees throughout New Zealand.

LIVING LEGENDS PLANTING PROJECTS



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A CONSERVATION LEGACY

A nationwide planting project of the scale of Living Legends will benefit New Zealanders for years to come. Living Legends plantings will enhance some of our most special parks and reserves, these are places where we reflect, refresh and can escape the hustle and bustle of our daily lives. Trees play an important role in moderating our climate, improving our air quality, providing homes for native wildlife and landscapes for us to enjoy.

The idea for Living Legends was birthed in 2009, when The Tindall Foundation asked conservation organisation Project Crimson to lead a project that would create a green legacy during Rugby World Cup 2011. Meridian and the Department of Conservation then joined the project to give New Zealanders and international visitors the opportunity to enjoy and contribute to the environment.

The Department of Conservation helped the Living Legends project team to select appropriate public spaces for these plantings to ensure that all New Zealanders can enjoy them for years to come. Living Legends has a commitment to ensure ecological credibility so maintenance and protection of the plants will continue for years to come.



“Living Legends was an amazing achievement. Not only was a very large, innovative, risky and initially under-funded project completed beyond even the most ambitious expectations, but it also delivered many additional outcomes, all under budget. The professionalism, experience and dedication of the Living Legends project team to achieve this impressive array of results is appreciated and admired.”

- Trevor Gray, the Tindall Foundation

FROM THE FIELD TO THE FOREST

In 2011, 17 Rugby Legends were selected by their respective provincial rugby unions to join the Living Legends project, honouring their significant contribution to rugby in New Zealand. Each of our planting sites is dedicated to one of these Rugby Legends who got involved and helped at the Living Legends planting days.

“It’s pretty humbling to be selected alongside some of these rugby people, many of whom I know. It’s an honour for me, because it’s a great thing to be part of. It’s also a high class of ambassador with people like Sir Brian Lochore, Sir Colin Meads, Tane Norton and Richie Guy also involved, so I’m pretty chuffed about that.”

– John Sturgeon, West Coast Rugby Legend



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CONNECTING KIDS TO NATURE

In every region, local schools were invited to participate in a schools-only planting day, the day before each public planting event. Children were able to participate in hands-on environmental education which they will be able to watch slowly turn back into native bush over years to come.

“It was great to see lots of young people get involved, and show their commitment to keeping New Zealand green. Times really have changed as I did make special note that they were planting lots of manuka, and I thought hell, I’ve spent most of my life cutting it down! It’s great that these kids are learning about the importance of our environment.”

- Sir Colin Meads, Kind Country Rugby Legend

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LIVING LEGENDS PROJECTS

In 2011, planting events were held in each region during the Rugby World Cup tournament, allowing both local and international fans to get involved in the project.

Subsequent planting days then followed in 2012 and 2013 for most regions.

Management of each region's planting project has now been handed over to the Department of Conservation or a local community group, who will undertake weed control and site management until the plants are well established.



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NORTHLAND

Living Legends volunteers and Northland Rugby Legend Richie Guy helped to plant over 10,000 native trees at the Uretiti Rest Area – which is located on State Highway 1 and forms part of the Bream Bay Coastal Reserve. The area that Living Legends has worked on is adjacent to the DOC campground and was formerly a weed infested waste land.



An area that was previously filled with gorse, wattle, and ginger is being transformed by cabbage trees, karo, pohutukawa and flax. The task was big, but volunteers ranging in age from children to those of a grander vintage worked hard to dig holes, apply fertiliser and place the trees into their new home.



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NORTH HARBOUR

Long Bay Regional Park is a popular recreation area for Aucklanders, attracting over a million visitors a year with its sweeping beach which adjoins a marine reserve and contains stands of native forest. It's home to a significant area of coastal forest with a canopy of pohutukawa, puriri, and taraire. Living Legends planted 13,000 native trees at Long Bay Regional Park which will help restore a rare habitat type, wetland forest, to what we expect was there in the past.



“Living Legends is a fantastic project that brought together rugby and conservation, and it was a privilege to be able to help make a difference to New Zealand for generations to come” – Buck Shelford, North Harbour Rugby Legend



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AUCKLAND

On the idyllic Motuihe Island in the Hauraki Gulf, Living Legends teamed up with Motuihe Island Trust to plant over 8,000 native trees. The island is a Department of Conservation controlled Recreation Reserve, and is a popular spot for day trips, either by 30-minute ferry trip from Auckland or by private boat. The island is famed for its beautiful beaches.



As an island, now free of predators and most weeds, Motuihe is an outstanding ecological asset both regionally and nationally.



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WAIKATO

Peat lakes in the Waikato basin have been severely degraded as farming around their periphery has intensified, making the restoration of Lake Areare, Living Legends Waikato location, particularly significant. The establishment of over 11,000 plants under the Living Legends project has greatly extended shoreline re-vegetation and given impetus to ongoing work by other groups.

“The idea is 10 or 15 years from now anyone who came to this planting can go to the lake and say ‘remember when we hosted the World Cup in New Zealand’.” – Duane Monkley



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BAY OF PLENTY

Living Legends completed plantings in two locations in the Bay of Plenty – one in Tauranga and one in Rotorua. With the help of our volunteers and Bay of Plenty Rugby Legend Hika Reid, we planted over 13,000 native trees at these two sites.

The Kaituna Wetland near Tauranga is a very significant conservation initiative with wide community support. The Living Legends plantings will help to enhance the largest remaining stand of kahikatea trees within the Reserve. These kahikatea are a seed source for the future, carrying the legacy of mature swamp forest that would have covered this area long ago.

Further south in Rotorua, Living Legends planted 5,130 native trees at Hamurana Springs Recreation Reserve - famous for its beautiful crystal clear fresh water springs that emanate from the ground and flow downstream into Lake Rotorua.

Hamurana residents and members of the wider Rotorua community have a long association with Hamurana Springs Recreation Reserve. The local community and tangata whenua have been involved in community working days, undertaking weed control and revegetation.



Only 3% of the Bay of Plenty's original wetlands remain, so protecting and restoring what remains is priority work for the Department of Conservation, other environmental agencies and community conservation groups.



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KING COUNTRY

The Whakaipo Bay Recreation Reserve is one of the most stunning locations that Living Legends has helped to restore. This former farm is now a very significant recreation area for Taupo and the wider New Zealand community. Bordering the lake and less than 15 minutes from Taupo central, it is seen as a key area to promote recreation opportunities. It is inevitable that this landscape, with its spectacular views across Lake Taupo and entry to the W2K mountain bike trail, will become a national icon within the lands managed by DOC.

Sir Colin Meads mucked in alongside hundreds of volunteers at Living Legends planting events in 2011 and 2012, adding over 11,000 native plants to the area, significantly extending re-vegetation efforts.



“The completion of the Living Legends project was a mighty effort and it has been a privilege for me to be part of such a worthy project.” - Sir Colin Meads



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TARANAKI /WANGANUI

Local Rugby Legend Ian Eliason joined Living Legends in helping local groups to develop part of the award-winning Coastal Walkway, a 10km path that forms an expansive sea-edge promenade stretching almost the entire length of New Plymouth, beside the Tasman Sea.



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The extension of the Coastal Walkway just beyond the spectacular Te Rewa Rewa bridge has benefited from Living Legends planting of over 10,000 plants in the area between the walkway and the sea. It is hoped the dense plantings will not only suppress persistent weeds but also help in the stabilisation of the fore-dune.



HAWKE'S BAY

Napier's Ahuriri Estuary is home to a wide diversity of shore birds and with the formation of cycling and walking tracks is becoming an increasing focus for recreation. Along with Rugby Legend Ian MacRae and local supporters, Living Legends established over 10,000 plants in two areas providing security and habitat for wading birds along the farmland edge and re-vegetating the railway embankment.

The man who spent seven years as an All Blacks centre and President of NZRU is the Hawke's Bay Rugby Legend. Napier's Ian MacRae said at the time of appointment that it was flattering and close to his heart. "I am excited to be part of Living Legends as I started my working career as a forest ranger. I trained in conservation in the back country, trying to prevent erosion, so it's quite fitting that now I am involved in this."



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MANAWATU

Living Legends planted 10,000 native trees in the Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve, as part of Department of Conservation's Manawatu Gorge Biodiversity project. This project is a major initiative involving local authorities, transport agencies, DOC, community organisations, Iwi, and individual land owners. The project has a vision to raise this dramatic landscape to a model of restoration for biodiversity and recreation at a national and international level.

The upgraded Gorge track is a must do for walkers from across the country, experiencing the outstanding views not seen from the gorge itself and a wonderful piece of hardwood/podocarp forest.



HOROWHENUA /KAPITI

Just north of Paekakariki village, Whareroa Farm has a significant Maori and European history which once included forming part of the McKays marine camp during WW2. The Department of Conservation has undertaken significant work in developing the entrance, visitor centre, and associated walking tracks. A local guardians group is involved in restoration planting.



With the help of volunteers, Living Legends was pleased to be able to contribute a further 5,300 native trees to Whareroa Farm.

WELLINGTON /WAIRARAPA

The Town Belt adjacent to the Berhampore golf links forms part of Wellington's "City to Sea Walkway". The re-vegetation of this area has been a high priority for the Wellington City Council and much progress has been made. With the help of Rugby Legend Sir Brian Lochore and local volunteers, Living Legends has been delighted to be able to extend this work to the tune of 11,000 native plants in the ground.



"I take my hat off to the Living Legends project and sponsors on what was a great occasion to be involved in. To plant trees throughout New Zealand and increase our biodiversity is a great achievement." – Sir Brian Lochore

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TASMAN

Living Legends planted a total of 6,700 native trees in the Wakapuaka Wildlife Reserve. The area where Living Legends has planted is focused around the Department of Conservation administered Wakapuaka Wildlife Reserve. The Haven Estuary is of national importance as a major feeding area and roost for wading birds and regionally important as a nursery and feeding area for fish. The Boulder Bank is internationally recognised and is a fragile and ecologically unique feature.



The Wakapuaka area, located at the head of the Haven Estuary adjoining the Boulder Bank north of Nelson, is a valuable ecological and recreational resource and is a prominent feature seen by those arriving in Nelson via State Highway 6.



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WEST COAST

Living Legends contributed to the Punakaiki Coastal Restoration project on the beautiful West Coast of New Zealand's South Island. With the help of our volunteers and Rugby Legend John Sturgeon, we planted a total of 10,000 native trees at this site. On his appointment to the project John Sturgeon said being named a Rugby Legend was a great honour. "I feel humble, almost overwhelmed and really appreciate the honour."



"John Sturgeon has been a tremendous supporter of Living Legends. Despite John being on a walking stick because of recent surgery to his knee he got stuck in and the kids loved having him there."
– Devon McLean, Living Legends Project Manager

CANTERBURY

Ōtukaikino Reserve is a 13ha freshwater wetland reserve to the north of Christchurch. It is one of the few remaining original wetlands that were once common around Christchurch. Ōtukaikino is significant for Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu, as it was once used for burial preparation and is designated a Wai Tapu site. The water, vegetation and mud were used by Tohunga (priests) for embalming purposes. The Department of Conservation, in partnership with Lamb & Hayward Funeral Directors and Tuahuriri Runanga, is restoring this wetland and Living Legends is proud to have been able to bolster their efforts through the planting of 10,700 additional natives.



“Living Legends is a fantastic project that has brought together rugby and conservation. It has been an absolute privilege to be selected as the local Rugby Legend and to contribute to a project that will make a difference to New Zealand for generations to come.” – Tane Norton



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MID/SOUTH CANTERBURY

Mid-Canterbury's Jock Ross joined local volunteers to plant nearly 7,000 native trees at Harris Scientific Reserve – a kanuka sanctuary which protects one of the last stands of dry-land kanuka in Canterbury. The Harris Scientific Reserve has only been preserved through the willingness of the past landowner, Arthur Harris, and the efforts of the Ashburton Community Conservation Trust. Living Legends was keen to assist in the extension and restoration of this remnant because of its great scientific value and the commitment of the local community.



"It's pleasing to see all these people here, it's great for future generations as people here today can come back in 40 or 50 years' time with their grandchildren and say I helped plant this,"
– Jock Ross



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OTAGO

Living Legends planted close to 10,000 native trees at the Orokonui Scenic Reserve which is adjacent to the township of Waitati, on the shore of Blueskin Bay. This estuary fringe was largely in rough pasture prior to the Living Legends project, with the exception of one area of well established native species. Living Legends, in partnership with DOC, the local community and Rugby Legend Kees Meeuws, have successfully established thousands of native plants in this heavily grassed and very wet site.



“Hosting the Rugby World Cup meant that we were center stage in a world class event, as a small nation of 4 million taking on the world. We got to show the world why New Zealand is regarded as a paradise of land, water and people.” – Kees Meeuws



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SOUTHLAND

The Otatara Landcare Group has been managing a 14 hectare reserve at Bushy Point under an agreement with DOC since 2000. They have been restoring the grazed land into a self sustaining eco-system featuring ponds, native plants and fantastic birdlife. This outstanding community project aims to link the coastal fringe vegetation with the residual totara forest by re-vegetating the pasture separating the two. With the help of volunteers and Rugby Legend Kevin Laidlaw, Living Legends contributed an extra 11,380 native trees to Bushy Point.



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The Bushy Point area has been quoted as having vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna of national significance. It is home to the best remaining example of formerly more widespread coastal sand dune totara and totara – matai forests in New Zealand, and supports good populations of endemic forest birds including nationally threatened species that are strongly dependent on the forest remnants.

FUTURE GUARDIANS

Whilst the public planting events concluded in 2013, Living Legends has a commitment to ensure ecological credibility so maintenance and protection of the plants will continue for years to come. In some regions we have been able to invest into further planting programmes that will enable community groups to achieve their goals more quickly.

In other regions, the Living Legends contribution was enough to complete their revegetation projects so long term management has been handed back to either the Department of Conservation, a council, or local community group.



“It’s something that has made a big difference throughout New Zealand,” – Department of Conservation community relations member Amy Brasch



“The Living Legends planting day was the culmination of a sterling effort by the people of Southland. In the three years of planting almost 2500 volunteer hours have been put into Living Legends planting project. As a group we are extremely humbled that so many people would think enough of what we are doing to give up some time to come and assist. We have now achieved what we originally thought would take us until 2023.” – Barry Smith, Otatara Landcare Group

SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

A project on the scale of Living Legends would simply not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors and partners.

Living Legends was a joint venture of Project Crimson, a conservation charity with over 25 years experience in community-based native restoration projects and The Tindall Foundation.

Department of Conservation and Meridian were major sponsors.

Our thanks also to other supporters of the project:

- Ocean Design
- Paper 4 Trees
- Taranaki Tree Trust
- Crown Relocations
- Real New Zealand Festival
- Ashburton Community Conservation Trust
- Motuihe Island Trust
- Motukarara Conservation Nursery
- Otatara Landcare Group
- Taupo Native Plant Nursery
- Plant Hawkes Bay
- Auckland City Council
- Royal New Zealand Airforce
- Conservation Volunteers NZ
- Wellington City Council
- Bream Bay Coastal Care Trust
- Alter-Natives Nursery



THE NUMBERS

Region	Trees planted	Survival rate at handover	Plant health	Volunteers involved	Future guardian
Northland	10,500	75%	Established plants are growing well, especially ngaio, akeake, and five finger. Plants are generally healthy although growth has been slow on dryer areas.	227	Department of Conservation/Bream Bay Coastal Care
North Harbour	13,000	85%	Plants very healthy, especially C. robusta, manuka, flax, salt marsh ribbonwood, cabbage tree. Once emerged from grass there will be further rapid growth.	380	Auckland Council
Auckland (Motuihe Island)	10,450	95%	Plants healthy with good survival, especially of the 2012 plantings in quite dense grass. Gully on western side has shown particularly good growth with the whole site now occupied.	636	Department of Conservation/Motuihe Trust
Waikato	11,200	98% +	Outstanding growth and health of all plants on this moist fertile site. Kanuka, manuka, coprosma, flax are all flowering and seeding. The closed canopy is at 2 – 4m with cabbage trees at 4m plus.	326	Department of Conservation
Bay of Plenty - Rotorua	5,130	95% +	Very good growth and health of plants along the stream with manuka in full flower. Canopy closure has been achieved on the steep stream bank area.	180	Department of Conservation
Bay of Plenty - Rotorua	5,130	95% +	Very good growth and health of plants along the stream with manuka in full flower. Canopy closure has been achieved on the steep stream bank area.	180	Department of Conservation
Bay of Plenty - Tauranga	6,000	98% +	Excellent survival and growth with successful edge closure of kahikatea stand. Cabbage trees over 4m tall and dense cover over the whole site.	245	Department of Conservation
King Country	11,000	80%	Some damage by rabbits on cabbage trees but established plants are in very good health, particularly on the terraces west of the valley. Some losses continue in the valley bottom.	830	Department of Conservation
Taranaki/Wanganui	10,280	70%+	Healthy spinifex establishment on the fore-dune but some erosion losses in first year. Established plants are generally healthy but slow growth. Long grass is valuable in discouraging rabbits and retaining moisture.	715	Department of Conservation
Hawke's Bay	10,200	80%+	Healthy with good growth of coastal tree daisy, toi toi, tahinau, salt mash ribbonwood, and flax. Plants up to 2m tall. Mulching of replanting on railway embankment has been very successful with good growth and survival.	675	Department of Conservation

Region	Trees planted	Survival rate at handover	Plant health	Volunteers involved	Future guardian
Manawatu	10,000	99%	Exceptional growth and survival on the Woodville Reserve site and good establishment on the upper gorge site. Plants are very healthy with virtually no losses.	470	Department of Conservation
Horowhenua/ Kapiti	5,300	85% +	Plants on the flat have shown excellent growth with the exception of kowhai which has been periodically defoliated. Some losses on the dry eastern area but overall healthy and vigorous.	320	Department of Conservation/Whareroa Guardians
Wellington	10,800	90%	Wet-land plantings are in very good health and well established. Hill slope plantings have suffered a few losses but are generally healthy and vigorous.	800	Wellington City Council
Nelson	7,100	85% +	Health and growth very good with ngaio outstanding but also coprosma, cabbage trees, pittosporum, and flax. 2012 plantings are still struggling in dense grass but most are expected to push through and provide good cover.	258	Department of Conservation
Christchurch	10,700	90% +	Plants in very good health and showing outstanding growth. The infill planting and attention of a full time DOC ranger has ensured weed control and some watering during drought.	452	Department of Conservation
West Coast	9,975	95% +	Plants very healthy and growing well with wineberry over 3m tall. Survival has been good with only a few losses in dense grass. Lincoln University is now a partner in the project involving students in a range of studies and monitoring.	233	Conservation Volunteers
Ashburton	7,100	98% +	Growth and health of plants is outstanding. Self-seeding of kanuka occurring within the site. Inter-planting has been undertaken to break up tracks between blocks.	348	Ashburton Community Conservation Trust
Dunedin	9,950	70%	Some species have done well including, toi toi, hebe, flax, totara, ribbon wood, and salt marsh ribbon wood. Volunteer support through DOC has been strong and will likely lead to the plantings ultimate success.	445	Department of Conservation
Southland	11,350	95% +	Plant health very good but growth has been slow on dry 2012 plantings. The value of rank upright grass has been demonstrated for rabbit control and also moisture retention.	780	Otatara Landcare Group
	170,035			8,320	



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