

- 2025 -

Central Minnesota

LAKE LIFE

AUTUMN EDITION  
Issue. No. 4



Never Too Early for Ice Safety • Page 3

Fall is Prime Time for Fishing • Page 7

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE PAYNESVILLE PRESS & EDEN VALLEY-WATKINS VOICE

AUGUST 6, 2025

### Lake Community Living

## Get Your Lakefront Property Ready For Winter With Ease

When it comes to winter, there are two types of lakefront homeowners – those who weather the storms and those who head for warmer water. If you own or are considering buying a lake house, but not interested in sticking around for the Finger Lakes snowfall, you'll need to winterize your home.

Winterization protects your lakefront asset and forces you to understand your home, inside and out. Plus, you'll return to fewer maintenance issues, so you can jump right into summer.

### Properly prepare for winter and check these items off your to-do list:

#### Inspect your roof and clean out your gutters.

Take a good look at your roof before leaving town to ensure that shingles aren't missing or unsecured. A weak roof is susceptible to leaks and damage from the weight of heavy

snow. Clogged gutters can also lead to water damage, so clean out those leaves!

#### Seal up air leaks.

Check all areas where air leaks could occur, like dryer vents, windows, and doors. Caulk any gaps in the siding or foundation where air could get in – the first year its air, the next year its water or pests. Consider sealing windows with an insulation kit and laying down draft stoppers in exterior doorways.

#### Remove your seasonal dock.

Ice can easily damage or destroy a dock over the long winter months. Some docks are permanent, but for pipe docks, floating docks, and other seasonal docks, removal is your best strategy for long term care. A lakefront property manager should be able to advise you on removal and find a local professional that can take care of this for you.

*Continued on page 2...*



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Lake Community Living - Continued From Page 1

Store seasonal and outdoor items.

Don't leave out items you enjoy all summer to be ruined by Mother Nature. Store watercraft, patio furniture, garden hoses, and décor in a shed or basement for safekeeping. You won't have to replace them nearly as often and it will keep them from blowing into the neighbor's yard or the lake!

Drain or insulate pipes.

This is the most important step in protecting any home during the winter months. Inspect your pipes and seal any leaks you may find. Then, insulate pipes that may be exposed to the cold. This is easily done using pipe sleeves and electrical heat tape or strips of pipe wrap. Adding wall insulation and insulating the gaps where pipes enter through walls will also help prevent your pipes from bursting. For more tips, click here.

**Another tip:** leave your cupboard doors open to allow heat to get to pipes under the sinks and appliances.

For seasonal cottages with no heat, shut off the water supply and drain your pipes to prevent freezing. Remember to also drain water-fed appliances, like washing machines, to prevent line freezing as well.

Switch utilities to vacancy mode.

If you have occupancy sensors, you'll

want to switch them to vacancy mode. Otherwise, make sure all lights are shut off, exterior water spigots are shut off, and your thermostat is set no lower than 55 degrees. Unplug major appliances so they are unaffected by possible power outages.

Clean out your cupboards.

Remove all perishable food from the cupboards. This might go without saying, but anything you can do to keep pests out of the home is a win. If your cottage is not heated, remove all food to avoid cleaning up a frozen-thawed mess in the spring. If unplugging the refrigerator, leave the door open to prevent musty smells from developing.

Keep an eye on your investment.

There are some things even proper winterization can't prevent (fallen trees, break-ins). If you plan to be away for an extended time, entrust a neighbor or local property management company to regularly check on your lake house. They can alert you to issues before they cause major damage and maintain a more lived-in appearance. You may also want to contract snow removal services for heavy snowfall that could cause damage to your property.

Your lake house is an investment – in your future and in a quality summer vacation. Winterize your home today, so you can enjoy it tomorrow!







Boat Maintenance & Winter Preparation

Prepare your boat for the frigid winter months



*Before you store your boat away for the cold winter months, consider implementing these helpful practices to protect your vessel against the elements.*

The winter months are easily the most dangerous months for a boat. Winter weather can wreak all kinds of havoc (cracked blocks, corrosion, etc) if a vessel isn't prepared for hibernation.

So it pays to take care of any problems and dealer-required maintenance in the fall, before your craft is clutched by winter's icy grip. Here's what you need to do.

Take Care of the Hull

Because boats and engines differ, start by checking the winterizing/storage sections of the owner's manual.

Fiberglass is made to stand up to the ravages of summer sun and water, so a little snow should be a problem, right? Wrong. Ice accumulation can split open hatches and window tracks, causing leaks. So outside storage demands the proper boat cover.

An individual will also want to check the hull, looking for stress cracks (common around the bow eye) and gelcoat blisters. Stress cracks can indicate structural damage, and anything serious should be looked at by a professional. The thing to remember with blisters is to puncture, drain, dry and patch with an epoxy-based filler made for this purpose. If a boat's hull is made primarily from aluminum, strike the drum slowly with a rubber

mallet to remove dents. Barnacles and any other obstructions attaching themselves to a boat bottom should be removed by scraping and then sanding any residue. A thoroughly cleaning from a pressure washing will assist in the removal of dirt, algae and other unsightly blemishes.

Vinyl Interiors

Winter air can be humid or dry, and both conditions can deteriorate vinyl interiors. Vinyl cleaners and protectants, available in gels and sprays, can prevent your vinyl from drying out and cracking. Be weary of moisture as that can lead to mildew. Vent your boat cover for good airflow to minimize trapped moisture. Mildew sprays are a big help, as are chemical dehumidifiers that pull excess moisture from the air.

Another important reason to keep moisture out of your boat is because moisture can corrode a boat's on-board electronics and electrical system. If wiring is of the non-marinated variety, it's especially prone to corrosion that can cause shorts, and blown fuses, booth of which can be quite costly. Remove any electronics that can be removed, and let them winter in a kinder environment. Then, spray all exposed electrical connections with a moisture-displacing lubricant. Now is also a good time for a thorough cleaning of all brightwork, vacuuming/washing of the carpets and deck, and so on.

If your boat has a removable head, clean and dry it before you store it. Built-in

units, including sinks and showers, should be drained and pumped with antifreeze.

Choose a Good Cover

When choosing a boat cover, make sure the cover protects the waterline. Poly tarp covers are relatively inexpensive but, as with any cover, they should be used with a frame to distribute the weight of snow evenly and away from the weak areas of the boat. A boat owner can make their own frame from 2 x 4s or 2 x 2s or PVC pipe. There are also kits that allow a person to make a reusable frame from aluminum tubing using special clamps that attach the tubes at any angle.

Polyvinyl covers are often used for maximum water repellency and resistance to mildew and stains. Be sure the cover is securely tied down or taped so wind won't get underneath the cover, blowing in snow or shredding the cover itself.

Shrink wrap is another alternative to cover your boat, and when installed correctly, won't be suspect to heavy snows or falling objects that otherwise could dislodge a tarp.

The Engine

The biggest risks to engines during the winter months are freezing, corrosion, and fuel degradation. Pull the engine cover and check for such problems as frayed or loose wires, connections and clamps. Check the condition of all hoses and replace those that are frail or that show cracks. Check the condition of the

belts and adjust the tension if necessary. Touch up any paint nicks to prevent corrosion. Run the engine up to temperature and change the oil and filter.

Flush the engine with fresh water. Some outboards have an attachment for a garden hose to make the job easier on the average boat owner. Otherwise, use Dual Flow Motor Flusher to reverse flush outboards and sterndrives; these are available at most marine equipment stores and dealerships. Idle the engine when flushing, making sure it doesn't overheat, until the water flushes clean. Clean all outboard telltales with a piece of wire, and store the engine in a vertical position to make sure the water drains completely. Even a small amount of water left in the engine can freeze and cause significant damage to the various manifolds of your engine. Inboards and sterndrives require refilling with propylene glycol antifreeze to prevent small ice pockets from forming, which can crack the block.

To protect engine internals from rust and corrosion, remove the engine flame arrestor and spray fogging oil down the carburetor with the engine running. Shut off the fuel supply - either with the fuel valve or by pinching off the fuel line—to burn up the remaining fuel in the carb/ fuel-injection system. When the engine stops, pull the spark plugs and squirt some fogging oil into the cylinders. Rotate the engine a few times for a good oil coating and reinstall the plugs.

Moving to the stern end, wedge a block of wood between the prop and anti-ventilation plate, loosen the prop nut and pull the prop. Check the condition of the prop, hub and splines. Changing the water pump impeller is cheap insurance against water pump failure next season.

Drain the gear case lube and look for a milky color, which would indicate water in the oil. Also look for metal chips, which mean your gears are grinding more than horsepower.

If you practice these helpful winterizing tips and you're conscientious about winter maintenance, your reward will be a quick launch in the spring—instead of time spent with your boat stuck on the trailer.



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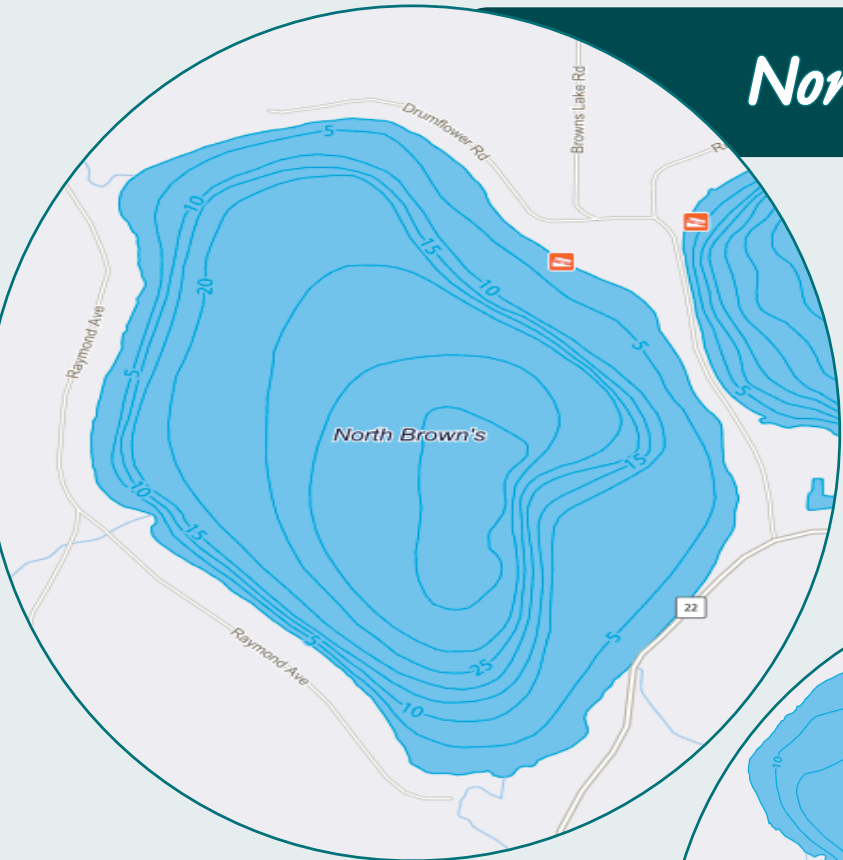
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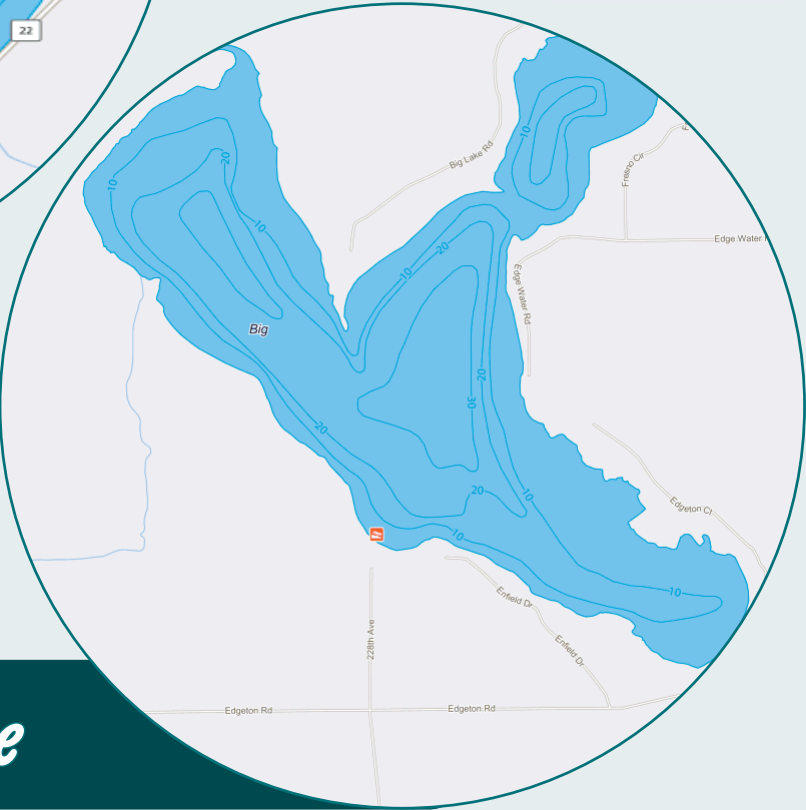


## North Brown's Lake

North Brown's is located in Stearns County, Minnesota. This lake is 312 acres in size. It is approximately 41 feet deep at its deepest point. When fishing, anglers can expect to catch a variety of fish including Black Bullhead, Bluegill, Brown Bullhead, Channel Catfish, Green Sunfish, Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Yellow Bullhead, Yellow Perch, Pumpkinseed.



Big is located in Stearns County, Minnesota. This lake is 458 acres in size. It is approximately 42 feet deep at its deepest point. When fishing, anglers can expect to catch a variety of fish including Black Bullhead, Bluegill, Brown Bullhead, Channel Catfish, Green Sunfish, Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Yellow Bullhead, Yellow Perch, Pumpkinseed.



## Big Lake



# Let's Go Fishing!

EXPLORE THE LAKES OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA

### Information Every Minnesota Fisherman Should Have:

#### MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

888-MINN-DNR (888-646-6367)  
651-296-6157  
info.dnr@state.mn.us  
mndnr.gov  
LakeFinder mobile website: [mndnr.gov/mobile/lakefinder](http://mndnr.gov/mobile/lakefinder)

#### DNR RESOURCES

Fishing licenses and regulations: Brochure and online information on fishing regulations, including seasons and limits and special regulations for border waters and other specific waters.

Boating: Guide to laws and rules related to boating.

Outdoor recreation: Information on state parks, trails and forests.

Maps: Public boat ramps/accesses, trout streams, canoe routes and fishing piers. On the DNR website, use the LakeFinder feature to download lake-depth maps and get fish surveys, stocking reports, and water level and clarity information. Lake and fishing maps can also be purchased from Minnesota's Bookstore:

[minnesotasbookstore.com](http://minnesotasbookstore.com)

#### MINNESOTA FISHING LICENSES

Residents and nonresidents 16 and older must have a fishing license.

You must buy a trout stamp to fish any trout stream, trout lake or Lake

Superior. Licenses are available from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and from sporting goods stores and some convenience stores. You can also buy your license with a credit card by phone at 888-665-4236, or online at [mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov).

#### LICENSES AND FEES

For a full list of available licenses and their corresponding fees, visit:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/fishing/index.html>

#### BOATING INFO

Boat, canoe and kayak licenses required: All boats, canoes and kayaks (unless non-motorized and 9 feet or less) used in Minnesota must be licensed in Minnesota or the owner's home state. Most states will register any boat upon request.

Contact the Minnesota DNR at:

800-285-2000 or [info.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:info.dnr@state.mn.us) for information about licensing your boat.

**Boat access:** More than 1,900 public accesses have been built on Minnesota's lakes and

streams. Many of these are equipped with concrete boat ramps. The locations of most are shown on county water access maps, available from the Minnesota DNR Information Center: 651-296-6157 or 888-MINNDNR (646-6367).

#### INVASIVE SPECIES AWARENESS

Minnesota waters are threatened by many invasive species of plants and animals. It is illegal to transport any aquatic plants, zebra mussel, New Zealand mudsnail or other prohibited invasive species on public roads, or to launch a boat or trailer with these species attached.

#### Required Actions:

- Remove visible aquatic plants and animals from your boat, trailer and other water-related equipment before leaving the water access.
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash – it is not legal to release bait into state waters.
- Drain water from your boat, motor, live well and bait containers before leaving the water access. Drain plugs, bailers, valves or other devices used to control the draining of water from ballast tanks, bilges and live wells must be removed or opened while transporting watercraft (marine sanitary systems are excluded from this requirement).

#### Recommended Actions:

- Spray, rinse or dry boats and recreational equipment to remove or kill species that were not visible when leaving a water body.
- Before transporting to another water body: spray/rinse with high pressure and/or hot tap water, especially if moored for more than a day, or dry boat for at least five days.

For more information: contact the DNR Invasive Species Program, Division of Ecological and Water Resources, at 651-259-5100 or 888-646-6367 or visit [mndnr.gov/invasives](http://mndnr.gov/invasives).



## Did You Know?

When ice fishing, crappies, sunfish and blue gills will primarily feed on zooplankton. Crappies have large baskets for mouths with finely evolved gill rakers to trap the plankton. That is why you often catch them in the evening, because they just have to swim and strain. Bluegills have excellent eyesight for daytime use and, along with their smaller mouths, that is why you rarely catch sunfish after dark.

Zooplankton generally rise to the surface during low light levels to feed on light-loving phytoplankton, and then drop back to the bottom during brighter periods. This is important to understand, because there are a number of things that affect light levels. Dusk and dawn are generally an important time for massive zooplankton movement because of their instinctive behaviours. They are generally slow moving, so your window of opportunity can be longer, depending on the types of zooplankton moving below your water column.



Outdoor Activities & Living

Great Tips to Keep In Mind While Hiking This Fall

As with any hiking trip, it is key to plan ahead to enjoy a safe and enjoyable adventure this fall.

Fall hiking can be a unique and exciting experience. Thanks to the vibrant foliage, crisp air and smaller crowds than might be around during summer, fall is a prime time to lace up one's boots and hit the trails.

Beyond the opportunity to check out the amazing foliage displays synonymous with this time of year, spending time outdoors in fall provides various health benefits. According to UAB Medical West, some benefits of hiking include improved mental well-being, enhanced balance and improved muscle strength.

As with any hiking trip, it is key to plan ahead to enjoy a safe and enjoyable adventure this fall.

• **Layer your clothing.** Fall weather can be unpredictable and dramatic temperature fluctuations can occur between morning and afternoon. The trick is layering clothing to provide comfort and safety. Start with a moisture-wicking base layer, add an insulating layer like fleece for warmth, and top it with a waterproof and windproof outer

shell. Then you can adjust your clothing as conditions change.

• **Wear proper footwear to ensure ample traction.** Opt for sturdy hiking shoes or boots with significant ankle support and excellent traction. Fallen leaves and rain or early-season ice can make paths slippery. Waterproof footwear is highly recommended, especially if damp conditions are expected. Wool socks (not cotton) will wick away moisture and provide warmth even when damp. According to a study on mountain hiking in the Austrian Alps, 75 percent of fall accidents occur on descents, so having extra traction can help.

• **Mind the daylight.** As fall inches closer to winter, daylight hours diminish rapidly. It's easy to underestimate how quickly dusk will arrive. Plan your route to account for your pace so you can be off the trail well before sunset. Pack a flashlight or headlamp just in case.

• **Mind the habitat.** Anytime you hike you should be mindful of the natural settings around you. Stick to the trails so you do not disturb delicate vegetation. Also, never feed wild animals. They can grow accustomed to an easy hand-out



and lose their fear of humans, putting themselves at risk of harm. Remember to dispose of trash properly and always take out what you bring in.

• **Stay fueled and hydrated.** Despite the cooler temperatures of fall, dehydration may occur as the body loses fluid through exertion and respiration. Pack plenty of water and take sips

regularly. Bring along energy-rich snacks like protein bars, trail mix and dried fruit to maintain energy levels throughout the excursion.

Fall hiking trips enable people to immerse themselves in the stunning beauty of the season while also getting some exercise and enjoying ample fresh air.

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Illustration of a man in a green hat and orange shirt fishing with a bucket and a fish.

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Fall fishing along the Lake Country Scenic Byway near Park Rapids

Explore Minnesota!

Fall is prime time for fishing

With cooler weather, more active fish and a beautiful backdrop of changing leaves, fall is one of the best times of year to fish in Minnesota. Here’s a guide to fall fishing in Minnesota’s major regions.

Article By: Erica Wacker\*

Depending on the area and the size of the lake, walleye, muskie, northern pike, largemouth bass and crappie, as well as trout in the southeast Minnesota streams, are all biting.

“Everything bites better in the fall,” says Paul Nelson, a veteran fishing guide in the Bemidji area. As the fish try to fatten up for the coming winter, many species are more active during the day as they look for food, and also start gathering into larger schools. Fall is generally considered the best time of year to catch trophy-size fish.

Fall fishing from a motorboat

Fall fishing along the Lake Country Scenic Byway near Park Rapids

Early in the fall, baitfish move into the shallows to spawn, causing the walleye and other predatory fish to follow. Later in the fall, most gamefish move deep on lakes with a thermocline (a separation of the warmer, upper layer of water and the cooler, lower layer of water). Their preferred location is often the steep drop-offs to deep water. Throughout the fall, areas with remaining green weeds are prime fishing spots.

Despite this being a time of transition, a jig and minnow is usually the best presentation no matter the depth. Another rule of thumb is to “go big and go slow.” The baitfish are at their largest size of the season so this is the time to upsize your live bait. And since all fish are trying to conserve energy, use a slower presentation.

Northern Minnesota

Lakes such as Red and Winnibigoshish do not have a thermocline so fish are more likely to stay close to shore in the fall. On lakes with a thermocline, including Cass, Bemidji and Leech, fish tend to go deep. Before heading out, check with a local bait shop to learn if the lake you plan to fish has a thermocline, and if so, what the status of lake turnover is.

Further north, the annual fall run of walleye takes place on the Rainy River in September and October. The slow-moving river features 40 miles of navigable water, beginning at Lake of the Woods and heading east along the Canadian border. Anglers can watch the

fall bird migration and marvel at the autumn leaves along the way.

To the east, Lake Superior tributaries come to life in the fall with migrating trout and salmon. The holes at the bottom of waterfalls are often teeming with trout and salmon preparing to spawn. Fish the streams and rivers during low light hours. Fly anglers will want to try flashy streamers and small egg flies. Anglers using spinning rods generally do well using spawn bags and nightcrawlers.

“Fall is arguably the greatest time of year to fish the North Shore,” says Jarrid Houston, of Houston’s Guide Service. “Chasing the returning fish from Lake Superior is a wonder that everyone should experience. Pure magic!”

Central Minnesota

On deep lakes with a thermocline, such as Gull Lake, Ten Mile Lake and the Whitefish Chain of Lakes, look for schools of fish at the deepest breaklines. Once a school is located, drop a live-bait rig tipped with a minnow, leech or crawler.

“Fishing throughout central and northwest Minnesota is truly spectacular in September and October,” boasts captain Josh Hagemeister, of Minnesota Fishing Guide Service. “The fall equinox triggers all species of fish to feed heavily in preparation for the winter months, and the combination of low fishing and boating pressure and stable weather patterns contribute to the great fishing success in the fall!”

Southern Minnesota

In Southern Minnesota (particularly in the southeast), the trout are active as they get ready to spawn in October and November. “By fall, they are in their best condition all year long,” says Vaughn Snook of the DNR fisheries office in Lanesboro.

The aptly named Trout Run Creek in Fillmore County is the area’s most popular stream for fly fishing. For casual anglers and kids, rainbow trout are stocked through the fall in downtown Chatfield, Spring Valley and Preston.

Discover more about fishing in Minnesota. Order a Minnesota fishing guide - <https://www.exploreminnesota.com/info/minnesota-fishing-guide-order-form>

\* Erica Wacker is a Midwesterner through and through, growing up in Illinois, going to college in Wisconsin, and settling down in Minnesota. She loves to run, travel with her family, and go to concerts to relive her youth.

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