

PLANNING FOR 2025 AND BEYOND

Chesapeake Bay Program



Advisory Committees Briefing

Beyond 2025 Process

April 3, 2025

2024 Executive Council Charge

The Executive Council's Charge for Phase 2 activities directs the Principal Staff Committee to complete *“[r]evisions to the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement with modifications to the existing vision, principles, preamble, goals, **and outcomes...**”*, and to do so by December 1, 2025.



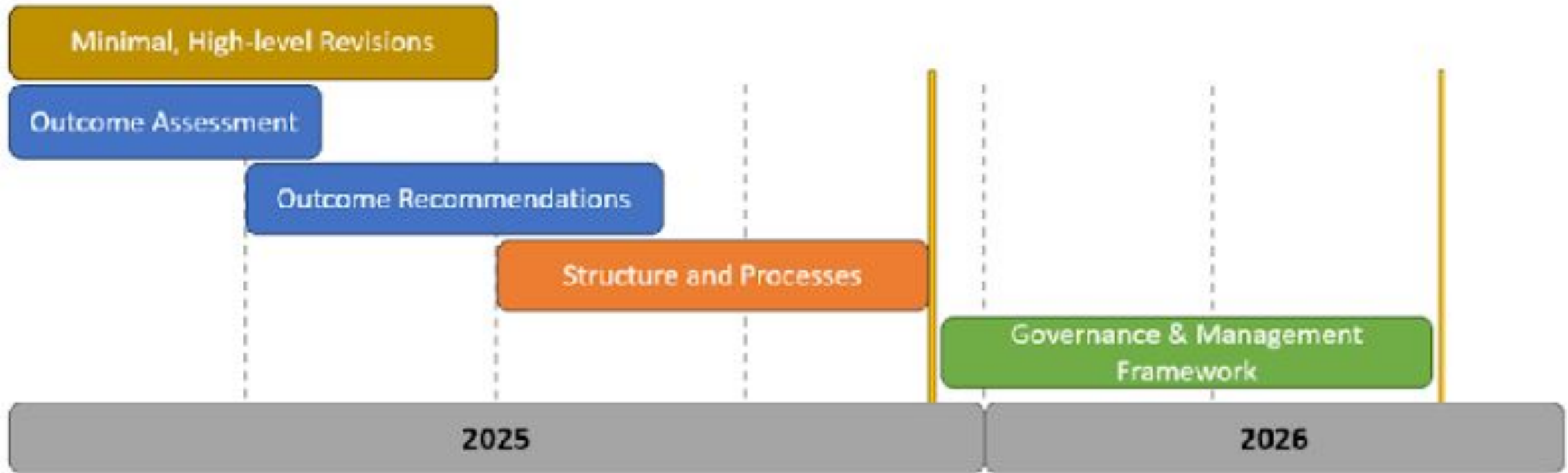
EC Charge: Revise the Chesapeake Watershed Agreement

It is the intent of the EC that any changes reflect:

- Renewed and greater emphasis on engaging all communities;
- Address water quality and living resources throughout the bay and watershed;
- Elevating conservation as a key pillar of the PSC;
- A grounding in the most recent scientific understandings and issues that have emerged since the 2014 agreement was signed;
- Goals and outcomes that are measurable and time bound;
- Acknowledgement that our scientific understanding is continuously evolving and that our efforts need to adapt;
- All partners are approaching common goals from different perspectives, challenges, and opportunities.



Beyond 2025: Phase II Schedule



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Outcome Review and Disposition Meetings

- **Outcome Review Meetings** (February 13, February 27, March 13): Receive GIT recommendations and discuss Management Board member preferences for the disposition of existing Outcomes from the 2014 Watershed Agreement.
- **Outcome Disposition Meeting (March 27th):** The Management Board (*including advisory committees*) completes consensus-based disposition of existing outcomes from the 2014 Watershed Agreement.



Pulse Check: Outcome Dispositions

- **Update:** Outcome intent is largely kept intact. Unique language may be necessary if it is more than just a SMART update. Key principle is maintaining the intent.
- **Consolidate:** Multiple Outcomes are combined in a single Outcome, or activities contributing to an Outcome are dispersed across others.
- **Remove:** The Outcome is removed from the 2014 Agreement.
- **Reclassify:** Outcome is changed to an output or a different structure is adopted.
- **Replace:** This language suggests that a novel Outcome replaces a current one and that it relates in its intent or subject area.
- **Stand aside:** I am not registering agreement or disagreement but consciously determining not to influence the decision.



MB Consensus Achieved – No Follow Up Needed

Update - 13
Reclassify - 3
Remove – 2
Consolidate – 2
Replace - 1

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Sustainable Schools – Reclassify (to Environmental Literacy Planning) | 12. Toxic Contaminants Research– Consolidate |
| 2. Environmental Literacy Planning - Update | 13. Toxics Policy and Prevention – Consolidate |
| 3. Student - Update | 14. Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring – Update |
| 4. Stewardship - Update | 15. 2017 Watershed Implementation Plan – Remove |
| 5. Diversity – Replace (with Workforce Development) | 16. 2025 Watershed Implementation Plan – Update |
| 6. Public Access – Update | 17. Black Duck – Reclassify (to Wetlands) |
| 7. Protected Lands – Update | 18. Wetlands – Update |
| 8. Submerged Aquatic Vegetation – Update | 19. Local Leadership – Update |
| 9. Oysters – Update | 20. Adaptation – Update |
| 10. Blue Crab Abundance – Update | 21. Land Use Methods and Metrics Development – Reclassify (to Land Use |
| 11. Blue Crab Management – Remove | |



MB Consensus Achieved – Follow Up Needed

Update - 6
Reclassify - 2
Remove – 0
Consolidate – 0
Replace - 2

1. Tree Canopy – **Update**
2. Forest Buffers – **Update**
3. Monitoring and Assessment – **Replace**
4. Land Use Options Eval - **Replace**
5. Healthy Watersheds – **Reclassify**
6. Fish Habitat - **Update**
7. Forage Fish – **Reclassify**
8. Brook Trout - **Update**
9. Stream Health- **Update**
10. Fish Passage - **Update**

Proposed Novel Outcomes

- Soil Health Outcome
- Braiding Knowledge Streams
- Oyster Abundance
- Nontidal Fish Habitat



Outcome Revision Next Steps

- **April 10th MB Meeting:** Consider PSC input on recommended outcome dispositions. Approve final Outcome disposition list and novel Outcomes; begin updates to revise Outcome language.
- **May 7-8 MB Meeting** - Finalize recommended Outcome revisions; discuss any changes necessary for Goals and Management Strategies based on Outcomes status; discuss any changes necessary for structure and governance work.
- **Public Feedback Period** opens on July 1st.

MB Consensus Achieved – Follow Up Needed

1. Tree Canopy – **Update**
2. Forest Buffers – **Update**
3. Monitoring and Assessment – **Replace**
4. Land Use Options Eval - **Replace**
5. Healthy Watersheds – **Reclassify**
6. Fish Habitat - **Update**
7. Forage Fish – **Reclassify**
8. Brook Trout - **Update**
9. Stream Health- **Update**
10. Fish Passage - **Update**

Update - 6
Reclassify - 2
Remove – 0
Consolidate – 0
Replace - 2

1. Tree Canopy Outcome

Current Outcome: Continually increase urban tree canopy capacity to provide air quality, water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed.
Expand urban tree canopy by 2,400 acres by 2025.

Disposition Agreed to: **UPDATE**

Proposed Update:

- New, more achievable targets
- More focus on unit of acres planted
- Shift “urban” to “community” wording
- Emphasize all communities, co-benefits, and importance of conservation and stewardship



2. Forest Buffers Outcome

Current Outcome: Continually increase the capacity of forest buffers to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Restore 900 miles per year of riparian forest buffer and conserve existing buffers until at least 70 percent of riparian areas throughout the watershed are forested.

Disposition Agreed to: **UPDATE**

Proposed Update:

- Update with better, more granular, metrics (revisit 70 percent coverage)
- Units of acres instead of miles
- Maintain both a riparian forest cover target and annual planning target
- Focus on co-benefits etc.



Tree Canopy & Forest Buffer Outcomes CAVEAT

“The MB recognizes the importance of and supports maintaining an emphasis on Tree Canopy and Forest Buffer. The MB directs the Forestry Workgroup to consider how we can broaden and better highlight opportunities for forest conservation and restoration. The Forestry Workgroup will consider if consolidation or reclassification under a single outcome makes sense, with the inclusion of distinct Tree Canopy and Forest Buffer targets. This discussion will be revisited on April 10, 2025.”

3. ~~Monitoring and Assessment~~ “Framework” Outcome

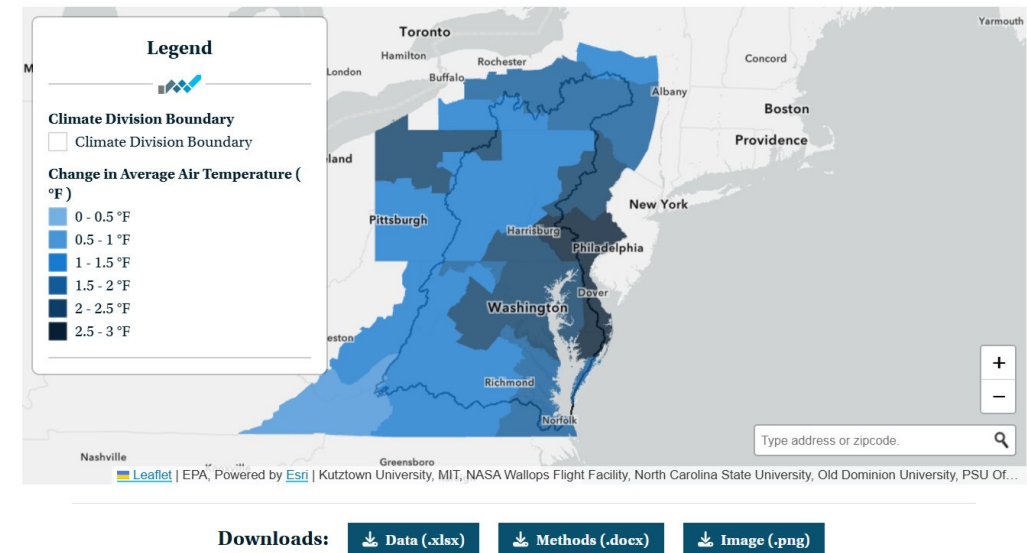
Current Outcome: Continually monitor and assess the trends and likely impacts of changing climatic and sea level conditions on the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem, including the effectiveness of restoration and protection policies, programs and projects.

Disposition Agreed to: **REPLACE**

Proposed Replacement:

- Redirect focus from reporting trends that other organizations are already tracking
- Focus on integrating science on changing environmental conditions into all of the Outcomes via a “Framework” (name TBD)
- Use “Changing Environmental Conditions”

Average Air Temperature Increases in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed (1901-2021) 



~~Monitoring and Assessment~~ “Framework” CAVEAT

“The MB recognizes that a framework for changing environmental conditions is an important aspect of managing our outcomes; this should be reflected in our work. A framework for changing environmental conditions should be developed and implemented across the partnership, but may not be an outcome. The MB will discuss how this framework can be lifted up into practice across the partnership.”

4. ~~Land Use Options Evaluation~~ “Land Use Decision Support” Outcome

Current Outcome: By the end of 2017, with the direct involvement of local governments or their representatives, evaluate policy options, incentives and planning tools that could assist them in continually improving their capacity to reduce the rate of conversion of agricultural lands, forests and wetlands as well as the rate of changing landscapes from more natural lands that soak up pollutants to those that are paved over, hardscaped or otherwise impervious. Strategies should be developed for supporting local governments' and others' efforts in reducing these rates by 2025 and beyond.

Disposition Agreed to: **REPLACE**

Proposed Replacement:

- Combination of collecting data, planning support, outreach, and conversation as “Land Use Decision Support”
- Develop and disseminate locally-relevant and actionable information
- Includes LUMM Outcome and Healthy Watersheds as outputs



5. Healthy Watersheds Outcome

Current Outcome: 100 percent of state-identified currently healthy waters and watersheds remain healthy.

Disposition Agreed to: **RECLASSIFY**

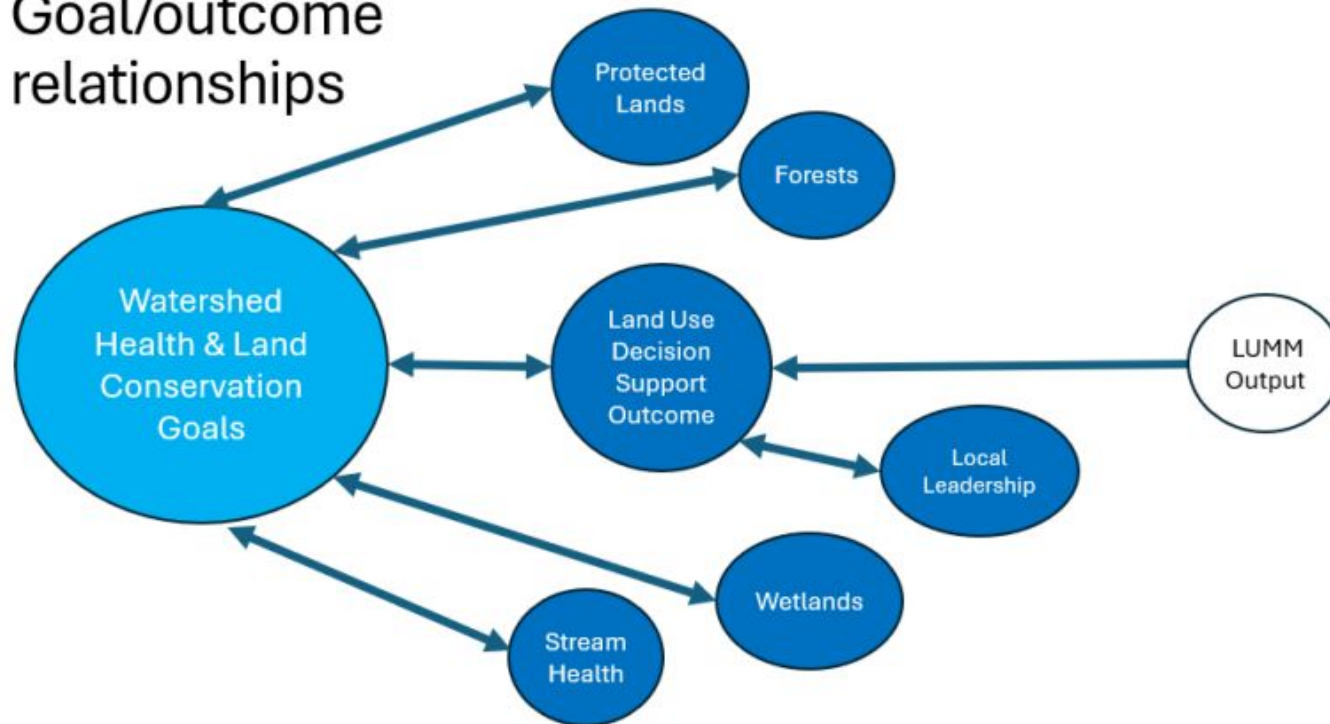
Proposed Reclassification:

- Focus on prevention of pollution through proactive activities under Land Use Decision Support, Stream Health, and Protected Lands Outcomes
- Suggest changing the Health Watersheds Goal to “Watershed Health” Goal focused on protecting and sustaining waters and watersheds to achieve and maintain high ecological value



~~Land Use Options Evaluation~~ “Land Use Decision Support” & Healthy Watersheds CAVEAT

Goal/outcome relationships



“The MB appreciates the work that the GIT has put into redeveloping its recommendations and supports the outcome dispositions proposed by the GIT. The MB reserves the prerogative to pursue structure conversations and decisions outside of the GIT’s recommendations. The MB may make recommendations related to changing the Goals.”

6. Fish Habitat Outcome (Tidal/Nontidal Distinction)

Current Outcome: Continually improve effectiveness of fish habitat conservation and restoration efforts by identifying and characterizing critical spawning, nursery and forage areas within the Bay and tributaries for important fish and shellfish, and use existing and new tools to integrate information and conduct assessments to inform restoration and conservation efforts.

Disposition Agreed to: **UPDATE**

Proposed Update:

- Increase specificity and shallow water focus
- Include and Fish Forage output
- Separate tidal from nontidal work - not yet clear if that will be one Outcome with two outputs or two separate Outcomes

CAVEAT: “We will UPDATE Fish Habitat.”



7. Forage Fish Outcome - Noncontroversial

Current Outcome: Continually improve the Partnership's capacity to understand the role of forage fish populations in the Chesapeake Bay. By 2016, develop a strategy for assessing the forage fish base available as food for predatory species in the Chesapeake Bay.

Disposition Agreed to: **RECLASSIFY**

Proposed Reclassification:

- Become an output under Fish Habitat



8. Brook Trout Outcome

Current Outcome: Restore and sustain naturally reproducing brook trout populations in Chesapeake Bay headwater streams, with an eight percent increase in occupied habitat by 2025.

Disposition Agreed to: **UPDATE**

Proposed Update:

- Focus beyond occupancy to elements such as abundance, population, and habitat resiliency
- No net loss is a more achievable goal than 8% increase



9. Stream Health Outcome

Current Outcome: Continually improve stream health and function throughout the watershed. Improve health and function of ten percent of stream miles above the 2008 baseline for the watershed.

Disposition Agreed to: **UPDATE**

Proposed Update:

- Use existing data beyond the Chesapeake Basin-wide Index of Biotic Integrity (Chessie BIBI) to measure more holistic aspects of stream health -
- ID stresses and how to address
- Broaden to prioritize conservation in addition to nutrient/sediment reduction



10. Fish Passage Outcome

Current Outcome: Continually increase access to habitat to support sustainable migratory fish populations in Chesapeake Bay freshwater rivers and streams. By 2025, restore historic al fish migratory routes by opening an additional 132 miles every two years to fish passage, with restoration success indicated by the consistent presence of alewife, blueback herring, American shad, hickory shad, American eel and brook trout, to be monitored in accordance with available agency resources and collaboratively developed methods.

Disposition Agreed to: **UPDATE**

Proposed Update:

- Increase mileage from 132 to 150 every two years
- Incorporate other aquatic species
- Expand scope of barriers beyond physical (i.e. chemical and pH)



Fish Habitat, Forage Fish, Brook Trout, Stream Health, & Fish Passage CAVEAT

“Management Board members have reached consensus with the following considerations, but have different opinions on the merits of combining, reclassifying, and/or updating Brook Trout, Stream Health, Fish Passage, and the proposed Nontidal Fish Habitat as unique outcomes. Among a variety of points discussed, members noted that combining outcomes creates risks related to public perception and the alienation of partners. Other members noted that not combining outcomes has risks associated with partner capacity to support work towards accomplishing the outcomes, the effective allocation of resources, and the opportunity to work more strategically.

GIT leadership and signatory MB members who have participating members in these outcomes, along with their practitioners, will convene with as many attendees as is feasible to discuss synergies and alignments between the Brook Trout, Stream Health, Fish Passage, and the proposed Nontidal Fish Habitat Outcomes before the April 10, 2025 MB meeting. The Habitat GIT will convene this conversation with support from the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including utilizing a Pennsylvania facilitator. The Management Board also seeks PSC feedback related to the disposition of these outcomes.”

Outcome Organization Possibilities

Fish Habitat + Forage Fish= (1)

Fish Habitat =

Tidal and Nontidal outputs (1) OR Tidal and Nontidal Outcomes (2)

AND

Some combination of
Brook Trout (1)
Stream Health (1)
Fish Passage (1)

Nontidal Fish Habitat =
Some combination of
Brook Trout, Stream Health,
and Fish Passage (1)

Could be as many as (4) Outcomes

Or as few as (2) Outcomes

Principals' Staff Committee / Management Board Meeting

January 16, 2024

Actions and Decisions

Discussion of Structure, Governance, and Operational Management Framework

Decision: GIT 6 will coordinate an informal process and develop a draft scope of work to accomplish the **Executive Council Charge** to simplify and streamline the structure and governance process for the partnership. GIT 6 will also pursue options to standardize partnership meeting processes as well as action and decision documentation.

“A simplified and streamlined structure and process for the partnership that supports all partners as they work toward achieving their commitments in an effective, efficient, and inclusive manner. It is the expectation of the Chesapeake Executive Council that the revised partnership structure and processes will be more inclusive of all communities and more manageable for partnership staff.”

Updated Guidance from the Management Board (03/06)

- “develop a single one-pager that highlights the top 3-5 priorities that would inform the scope of work for the partnership to address the structure, process, and governance component of the 2024 Executive Council Charge.”
- “present the contents of the one-pager [at the 3/27 MB Meeting], highlighting the top level 3-5 priorities. The Management Board will then determine if this work under GIT 6 should continue or if an alternative approach should be pursued. “

Structure/Governance: Proposed Next Steps

- Collecting meeting operations' best practices from staffers and coordinators for MB consideration.
- Review of other regional partnership programs and restoration initiatives to gain insights for MB consideration and Scope of Work development.
- Develop Draft Scope(s) of Work (for potential 3rd party and/or in-house evaluation)
 - Partnership roles/responsibilities
 - SRS revisions
 - Decision-making process
 - Logic Framework and Governance Structure
 - Strengthening communications/engagement

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THANK
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