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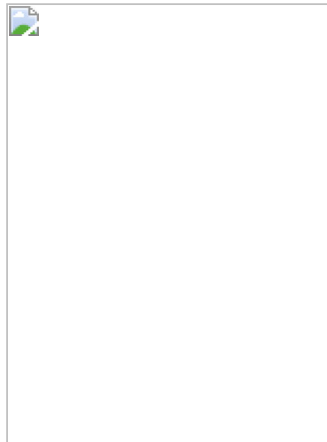
**A Newsletter from the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection  
Exploring Long Island Sound - Issues and Opportunities**

## **A CENTENNIAL OF CONNECTICUT STATE PARKS: 1913-2013 ... and How Three Connecticut Shoreline Parks Were Viewed From the Very Beginning**

This fall marks the 100th anniversary of the creation of Connecticut State Park system. On September 1st, 1913 the State Park Commission, by act of the state legislature, officially came into being. Before the month was out, on September 29, in the old court house building in New Haven, the six appointed commissioners held their first meeting and the Connecticut State Park system was underway.

It had taken some time just to get to the starting point. Four years earlier, in 1909, there had been a proposal to protect reaches of the lower Connecticut River from ongoing development. that did not meet with success. Two years later, in 1911, the state was presented with a gift of land atop Mount Tom in Washington to be used specifically as a state park. Since there was no park commission at that time, the gift resided with the Forestry Commission. Later that year, a three-man temporary Park Commission was formed to assess the practicality, need, and likelihood of success of a permanent park commission. Not surprisingly, when the report came back in early 1913, it glowed with the prospect of parks in the state. And appropriately so, since New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island had already established state parks and the concept was growing nationally.

From the very first commission meeting, the six new permanent Park Commissioners wanted to purchase a piece of real estate to launch the state into land ownership. They quickly realized, however, that the first order of business should be a complete



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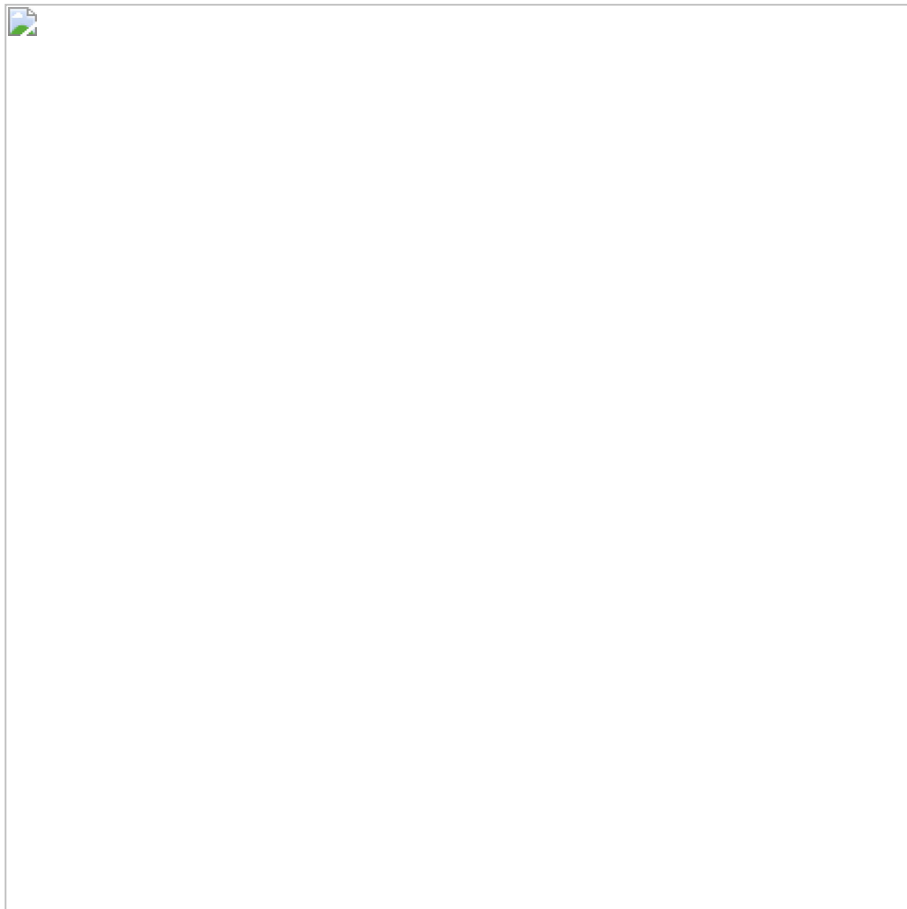
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inventory of the state's resources to prioritize their work in capturing and preserving pieces of the Connecticut landscape. They needed a field man.

### Enter Albert Turner

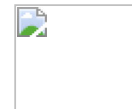
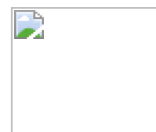
The Commissioners were well-connected men with their feet on the ground and noses to the wind. Astutely selected from around the state, the six hailed from Cornwall to the west, Putnam to the east, as well as Hartford, Middletown, and New Haven. But the gap in their expertise was familiarity with the state's natural resources. They closed that gap by hiring Litchfield native Albert M. Turner. A Yale grad with an engineering degree, Turner, 46, began his field work immediately in the spring of 1914. He was guided by one premise: the nearly universal desire to be near the water, and the most valued among our water locations was Long Island Sound saltwater frontage.



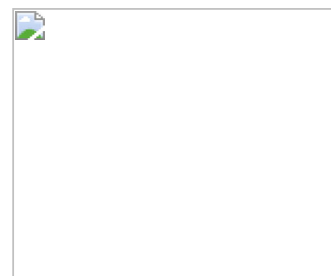
Litchfield, Connecticut native Albert M. Turner spent 28 years of his adult life dedicated to the concept and implementation of a diverse and accessible park system in the state.  
Photo Credit: DEEP Parks Division, Historic Archives

Thus, Turner's first task was the reconnaissance of the entire Connecticut coastline. It is difficult in retrospect to know for sure how Turner traversed the shoreline. We know he began at the Rhode Island border and traveled west. And while much of his eight week investigation must have been on foot, he no doubt took advantage of the shoreline trolleys and automobiles.

Astounded by his findings, he at first described what he saw as disheartening. Turner, born in 1868, grew up knowing the Connecticut coast as an open area which anyone could access at any time. It had only been since the late 1890s that the shoreline had begun to acquire value and precipitate into the world of private property. The world



**Sound Tips:**  
**Want up-to-date  
information on  
Connecticut's State Parks  
and Forests? There's an  
App for that!**



Visitors to Connecticut's state parks and forests now have a fast and easy way to access information on-the-go through their iPhone or Android phone.

The new [CT State Parks & Forests Outdoors Guide GPS Mobile App](#) puts a park-full of information instantly at your fingertips.

App features include:

- Thorough information on all State Parks including general policy and contact information.
- Detailed, cacheable maps of park facilities, trails and campgrounds.
- Up-to-date news and information on park advisories and weather information.
- A Calendar of Events, updated in real time, listing all State Park events with the ability to filter by desired park.
- Access to online reservations that make it

of 1914 was a very different place than that of his younger days. He described his initial shoreline investigations:

*I found the shore of Long Island Sound an almost endless row of individual vagaries, nondescript caricatures of habitations, alternating with miles of sea walls, land walls and hedges, behind which towered huge piles of granite, brick or concrete, which I judged also to be habitations, though the casual democratic eye might frequently conclude otherwise.*

Despite his disappointment, he had to formulate a plan. He was able to shake off his surprise and conclude what was needed amid what was available:

*While the number of (park) sites to be recommended was at first indeterminate, it was further considered that as a whole they should present adequate examples of the various types of our shore, the high weather-beaten rocks, the bluff upland with gravel and boulders below, and sandy beach with salt meadow and tidal creeks. Also that each site should possess some particular charm of its own, in distinction from the others, and that they should be distributed as evenly as might be along the length of the State.*

Turner's three principal locations are easy for us to recognize today. Starting from the east, the first must-have coastal locale he identified was [Bluff Point](#) in Groton. Replete with bluffs, upland, rocky coast and small pockets of sandy beach, this was the perfect fit for his coastal recommendations.

Second, in his search for significant open spaces, Turner arrived at the long beach in Madison, even then known as [Hammonasset](#), and noted:

*It is about as open a place as I have found in Connecticut. It consists about equally of low-lying upland and salt meadow, with a mile of sandy bathing beach equal to any in the State.*

It then took some serious consideration to identify and gain a toehold on the third coastal location, beyond the urban buildup of New Haven and Bridgeport, but Turner found it in Westport:

*salt meadow and beach sand at the easterly end of the tract known as [Sherwood Island](#), which is here separated from the mainland only by a small tidal creek. Large tracts of undeveloped and desirable upland lie directly to the west.*

As it turned out, the scouting and recommendations were the easy part.

easy to secure overnight visits.

The App also features the ability for users to take photos and mark and record the coordinates of plant life, animal species, or landscape views. It's like having your own personal Albert Turner on your mobile phone!

Join in the Centennial Celebration of Connecticut's State Parks and download the free App today.

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Look Out For  
Upcoming Events!

Long Island Sound Study  
(LISS) [Committee Meetings](#)

Please be sure to check the  
[Calendar of Events](#) on  
DEEP's website

November: Harbor seals arrive  
in LIS from northern New  
England; winter flounder move  
into shallower water

December: Bald eagles return  
to Connecticut for the winter.  
For eagle viewing at  
[Shepaug Dam Bald Eagle  
Observation Area](#),  
Southbury, CT,  
call 1-800-368-8954  
after Dec. 7 to register.

### NROC Boater Survey Update

If you're a boater and a regular reader of Sound Outlook, you may recall that the [June 2012 issue](#) announced an opportunity to participate in a survey of approximately 68,000 boaters in the northeast region being



A very early picture of the first park land purchased at Sherwood Island in Westport. The land just beyond the creek in the foreground was the first five acres of state park property.

Photo Credit: DEEP Parks Division, Historic Archives

### The First Purchase

Being well connected is always a good thing when land purchases are the subject, and the State Park Commissioners were well connected. They learned in late June, 1914 of a coming foreclosure opportunity on a shoreline property at Sherwood Island in Westport. Turner had scouted this earlier in the year and, given their budget, their desire to acquire property, and Turner's reminders that coastal land values were and should be a priority, they agreed in principal to the purchase. And when it was recorded in the land records on December 22, 1914, five acres at Sherwood Island became the first state park property. But it wasn't quite a park yet since there was no access. In fact, the public would not have access to Sherwood Island until 1932.

### Growing up

When the Park Commission completed its first five years in 1918, Turner did a review. There were then 15 state parks as the Commission had been busy acquiring hill tops, Connecticut River properties and brook-side lands. But there still was no coastal access. Turner made it clear that the coast was a top priority and should be acted upon immediately, before rising land values pushed everything out of fiscal reach. Heeding his pronouncement, within 19 months the Commission opened the gates at the newly conceived of, acquired, planned, executed, and constructed Hammonasset Beach State Park. From the moment it opened in July 1920 until this

conducted by the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC), SeaPlan, the University of Massachusetts, state coastal management programs, and the boating industry. The survey's goal was to help determine where boaters in the northeast go, what they do, and how they contribute to the local economy.

Well, the results are in! Based on 12,000 boater respondents from Maine to New York, the survey found that recreational boating in New England contributed about \$3.5 billion--that's billion with a "b"--to the region's economy in 2012.

The survey indicates that boaters spent an average of \$1,150 on boating trips in 2012 and more than \$7,000 merely visiting, docking, and maintain their boats. Boaters supported nearly 27,000 jobs, most of them in the leisure, hospitality, trade, transportation, and utilities sectors.

The survey results also provide maps and economic data that can be used by coastal managers, the boating industry and others to help shape regional ocean policy, plan for compatible and sustainable ocean uses, and protect areas that are important to boaters.

More information about the survey results can be found at the Northeast Boater Survey website, and you may contact [Nick Napoli](#) at NROC with any questions.

**Speaking of Surveys,  
Surfrider Foundation  
Needs Your Help with a**

day, Hammonasset set the standard for state park beaches, and it was, and has remained, the most visited of all the state parks.



Beachgoers in the mid 1920s enjoy the sunshine and fresh air at  
Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.  
Photo Credit: DEEP Parks Division, Historic Archives

For many years the various pieces of Sherwood Island real estate continued to coalesce into a park for public use. But by far and away, Bluff Point has the record for longest-to-obtain. First envisioned as a coastal park in 1914, it was not until 1963 that it was actually acquired, a wait of 49 and a half years!

### Today

In large measure, the park system that we have today, including the wide variety of coastal parks, is the vision of Albert Turner. His recommendations of acquisition amounted to a well-crafted assemblage of uplands, river lands, hilltops, stream valleys, and coastal lands. Taken together, these have produced a system of state parks upon which the diversity of the Connecticut landscape is both protected and enjoyed by the visitors of today and will continue to be by their children and grandchildren well into the future.

To learn more about the Connecticut State Park Centennial year and activities, please visit our web page: [www.ct.gov/deep/stateparks100](http://www.ct.gov/deep/stateparks100)

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## Survey of Coastal Recreational Users

The Surfrider Foundation, in partnership with Ecotrust, Monmouth University's Urban Coast Institute, and The Nature Conservancy, and in close coordination with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO), is conducting an [online survey](#) of coastal recreational users such as beach goers, swimmers, beach wildlife viewers, surfers, kayakers, windsurfers, and divers.

Your help is needed to ensure that your favorite coastal recreational activities and areas in Connecticut are considered in coastal and ocean planning from Connecticut through the Mid-Atlantic coastal region.

The information collected in this survey will be incorporated into an online data portal operated by MARCO. Similar to NROC in the Northeast, MARCO is an arrangement by the Governors of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia to improve the health of Mid-Atlantic ocean and coastal resources, and ensure that they continue to contribute to the economic vitality of coastal communities.

More information about the survey can be obtained from [Surfrider Foundation's Mid-Atlantic Chapter](#).



## SPOTLIGHTED COASTAL ACCESS: Celebrate 100 years of Connecticut State Parks at One of These Lesser-Known Coastal Gems

When it comes to state parks, Connecticut's beach parks are the Crown Jewels of the coastal area, and each of them has been highlighted in past issues of *Sound Outlook*. [Bluff Point](#), [Harkness](#), [Rocky Neck](#), [Hammonasset](#), and [Sherwood Island](#) are well known and frequently visited for their beautiful beaches and sweeping panoramic views of Long Island Sound.

But many other coastal towns can also claim bragging rights to some of Connecticut's lesser-known but equally beautiful state parks. When planning your next outing, consider celebrating Connecticut's State Park Centennial by visiting one of these gems:

### [Farm River State Park](#), East Haven

The Farm River flows through this 62-acre state park where visitors can enjoy bicycling, birding, fishing, crabbing, and hiking. The park is managed for the DEEP by Quinnipiac University. Please note that launching of canoes and kayaks at Farm River State Park is limited to those holding a boat launch pass that can be obtained from the [Quinnipiac University Community Boating Program](#). Dock rentals at the site for motorized vessels are also made available to the public once a year through a lottery system administered by Quinnipiac University. Contact the University at 203-582-3777 for more information on how to apply for boat launch passes and dock rentals.

### [Fort Griswold State Park](#), Groton

Connecticut is truly "Still Revolutionary" at this state park, designated in 1953. This is the historic site where, on September 6, 1781, British Forces commanded by the infamous Benedict Arnold captured the Fort and massacred 88 of the 165 defenders stationed there. The Ebenezer Avery House which sheltered the wounded after the battle has been restored on the grounds. A museum also gives visitors the chance to experience the Revolutionary War era.

### [Haley Farm State Park](#), Groton

Established in 1970, Haley Farm is used for passive recreational purposes. A 0.8 mile bike trail winds its way through the scenic old shoreline farm, and Bluff Point can be reached from Haley Farm via a bridge over the railroad tracks.

### [Nehantic State Forest](#), Lyme and East Lyme

Nehantic State Forest was the first state forest established in Connecticut, in 1925. The land is mostly covered with a second growth of hardwoods, and there are a number of good trout streams in the forest. Visitors can enjoy boating, hiking, swimming, picnicking, and [letterboxing](#).

### [Quinnipiac River State Park](#), North Haven

Quinnipiac River State Park contains 320+ acres of forested floodplain supporting nearly six miles of the Quinnipiac River's western shoreline. Visitors to the park can enjoy car-top boating, hiking, fishing, and hunting. The park provides remarkable wildlife habitat thanks to its combination of diverse environments (i.e., forest cover and tidal wetland), location, and water availability. In fact, the park enjoyed its first recorded overwintering--and possible permanent residence--of two bald eagles in the winter of 2006-07. Other wildlife taking up residence in the park include wild turkey, deer, great blue heron, kingfishers, osprey, owls, an occasional otter, and wood ducks. Four miles of the 24-mile blue blazed Quinnipiac Trail passes through the Park.

#### Purchase of a LIS License Plate Supports the LIS Fund



As of May 31, 2013:

Plates Sold: 151,928  
Funds Raised: More than \$5.3 million  
Number of Projects Funded: 331  
(includes Ecosystem Management projects)

The LIS Fund supports projects in the areas of education, public access to the shoreline, habitat restoration, and research.

For information on ordering a  
Long Island Sound License Plate,  
call 1-800-CT-SOUND.

More information on Connecticut's coastal state parks, and approximately 300 other places open to the public on Connecticut's coastal waters, can also be found in the [Connecticut Coastal Access Guide](#).

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## The Civilian Conservation Corps 80th Anniversary: Creating Jobs and Realizing Dreams in Connecticut's State Parks

The year 2013 marks several significant anniversaries. Connecticut is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the creation of the State Park Commission that established our State Park system. On August 28th, the nation celebrated the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech given during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. September 21st marked the 75th anniversary of the 1938 Hurricane. And the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)--coincidentally related to Connecticut State Parks, the creation of jobs during hard times, and the 1938 hurricane--is also celebrating its 80th anniversary this year.

By 1913, the year the State Park Commission was established, the industrial era was in full swing. Many people working and living in the cities were hungry to get out into the country, yearning to get a break from city life and enjoy nature. Thanks to the vision and dreams of those first State Park Commissioners and its first state park employee, Albert M. Turner, more and more land was acquired and added to the State Park system, and over the next 15 years improvements were well underway. The Roaring 20's gave way to The Great Depression, however, and the State Park Commission's dream was put on hold.

In light of the high level of unemployment that had befallen the nation, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the CCC on May 23, 1933 in an effort to create jobs. From 1933 to 1942, approximately 3.2 million young men between the ages of 17 and 24 participated nationwide in the CCC, serving six-month stints while living in military-style camps. They were paid \$1 per day.

In Connecticut, 23 works camps were established throughout the state. The "CCC boys," as they were called, built bridges and fire towers and planted thousands of trees. They built dams to create swimming ponds. They built hiking trails and picnic shelters in recreation areas, and constructed miles of roads that provided access to Connecticut's fledgling state forests and parks. They also helped with disaster relief, fighting fires and providing assistance during the 1938 Hurricane. In all, the work of the CCC crews helped make improvements in 25 of Connecticut's state parks. If not for the establishment of the CCC, many of these projects, on hold due to the Great Depression, would have taken years and millions of state dollars to complete.

The outdoor recreation boom that followed the Second World War carried through the 1950s and '60s. Later, in the 1970s and 1980s, help from local benefactors (such as 'Friends' groups) and federal works programs provided refreshing aid to Connecticut's parks.

The parks around Long Island Sound have benefited from these work programs. Modeled after the CCC, the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) was created in 1970. At its height during the mid-1970s, the YCC enrolled young people each summer in programs operated by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, as well as by states. YCC participants worked in both cities and wilderness across the country, performing a variety of conservation projects, including tree planting, river cleanups, and erosion control.

Later, the Young Adults Conservation Corps (YACC) was formed and operated on a year-round basis. In operation between 1977 and 1982, at its peak the YACC program maintained roughly 25,000 slots nationally for youths between the ages of 16 and 23. The program was open to youths from all educational and economic backgrounds, with the author of this article being one who had the privilege to work as a YACC Crew Chief. The program was intended primarily to complete backlogs of high-priority work that had been identified by state and federal natural resource departments. Connecticut took advantage of this program

### CCC Museum in Stafford Springs

Celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps with a trip to [Shenipsit State Forest](#) (Stafford, Somers, and Ellington), home to Connecticut's museum of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Housed in the only remaining CCC barracks building in the State in what was "Camp Conner," the museum pays homage to the dedicated men who worked in Connecticut camps. The museum features a large collection of tools, equipment, photographs, and memorabilia from the CCC camps in Connecticut.

The Civilian Conservation Corps Museum is located on Route 190 in Stafford Springs, Connecticut. Operating hours for the museum are weekend afternoons 12:00 to 4:00 Memorial Day to Labor Day and by appointment.

and several of its parks along the Connecticut River and coast had crews working on projects. It left a legacy of experienced youth corps advocates and program operators and a number of state programs patterned after its model.

So, as you celebrate the Centennial of State Parks this year at one of Connecticut's beautiful facilities, give thanks to the "CCC Boys" and their legacy who helped realize the dream.

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## **Climate Change Update: The 2013 Connecticut Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan Update Includes Climate Change Considerations**

Connecticut's Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan serves as guidance for hazard mitigation for the State of Connecticut in an effort to reduce or prevent injury from natural hazards to people, property, infrastructure, and critical state facilities. One of the goals of the Plan is to shift from a reactive, disaster-response-driven system, to a proactive system based on effective hazard mitigation planning. The updated [2013 Update to the Connecticut Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan](#), currently under review by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for approval, lives up to its proactive goal by highlighting consideration of potential hazard impacts due to climate change.

Effective mitigation of natural hazards requires on-going planning and diligence, both on a state and local level, to maintain what has been successfully implemented in the past and to improve upon existing efforts. Thus, the plan stresses that climate change and adaptation techniques are an area of continued concern for which new policies and strategies will need to be developed.

Climate change is considered by the plan to be a present threat as well as a slow-onset disaster since it can amplify existing hazards. The updated plan includes a discussion of how climate change might impact the frequency, intensity and distribution of specific hazards. For example, more frequent and/or more extreme weather events, increased rainfall intensity and storm surges coupled with rising sea levels all brought about by climate change will likely have a significant impact on coastal communities.

The coastal damage wrought by Tropical Storm Irene and Hurricane Sandy are recent reminders of hazards already befalling the state. When the next storms hit Connecticut's coast--and they will--the approval and adoption of the 2013 Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan will allow the state to be eligible for federal funding equal to 15% of the total disaster damages from a Presidentially declared disaster under the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

Preserving the state's claim to disaster funding is important. But making Connecticut less vulnerable to damage from tropical storms, hurricanes, and other potential hazards from climate change must be our top priority.

Please contact [Karen Michaels](#) in the CT DEEP Flood Management group at 860-424-3019 for more information on Connecticut's Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan. For information on OLISP's climate change efforts, please contact [Jennifer Pagach](#) at 860-424-3295.

Visit the DEEP website at [www.ct.gov/deep](http://www.ct.gov/deep).

Published by the Connecticut  
Department of Energy and  
Environmental Protection, Bureau of  
Water Protection and Land Reuse.



Editor: Marybeth Hart; Contributing Editor: Mark Parker;  
Layout: Caryn Furbush; Illustrations: Tom Ouellette;  
Contributors: Alan Levere

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