

New Horizons

The Newsletter of the Wisconsin Association of Professional Ag Consultants

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Presidentially Speaking Challenges

•Eric Birschbach,
WAPAC President
and Owner of Ag Site Crop
Consulting, Inc., Verona, WI



Greetings to all! In reflecting on the past year and planning ahead for this coming year, a word surfaces to describe them both...Challenging. Now, you would think that an established consulting business would have all the wrinkles smoothed out in the first couple years after dealing with Uncle Sam, sometimes-not-so-understanding clients, and unpredictable weather patterns. Likewise, you would think that an established organization would have smooth sailing with a clear direction, lots of active involvement, and good cash flow.

The challenges of the 2003 growing season are easy to define in retrospect, right? The season was: too cold, too hot, too wet, and too dry. The farm economy likewise ranged from really quite good to really quite poor. Throw in a dash of dubious media coverage and the waters are not so clear or smooth anymore.

WAPAC has done well this past year navigating through the program season. Ag business mergers and tight corporate budgets have impacted our cash flow, yet WAPAC continues to search for better ways to serve our members and to perhaps help smooth those rough seas from time to time.

Let your challenges be known and together we can face them. Challenge us, and challenge yourself, to make a difference this year, whether it be professionally or personally. Together we can help the system run more smoothly.

Eric's office phone number is: (608) 848-3742. In March Eric completes a three-year term on the WAPAC Executive Council and finishes his one-year term as President. Thank you, Eric!

Spring Seminar / Annual Meeting Set for March 4 in the Dells

We're wrapping up the meeting season with one last WAPAC event before spring arrives. The Spring Seminar and Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 4, 2004 at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Based on member suggestions, the Program Committee, chaired by Steve Abrams, has planned a day with interesting educational presentations as well as a little extra breathing room to allow time for conversation. We know that an important part of the meetings we sponsor is the opportunity for you to share ideas and mutual concerns with peers. We will also ask for your input at the Annual Meeting as we chart the course for WAPAC in the next year.

Presentations at the Seminar will include:

- Dangers to Human Health from Agricultural Work
- Implementation Costs of Old and New 590 NMPs
- Effects of Early Tillage, Planting & Management Decisions on Corn and Soybeans
- Prion Diseases of Cattle and Deer

As always, pre-registration is appreciated.

Come prepared to learn and to contribute to the discussions. There's something here for everyone!

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Member Profile

Meet Bill Stangel

The guy in the straw hat is collecting field data using a GPS system. Always on the cutting edge of technology, Bill Stangel is a founding father of WAPAC. He completes a three-year term on the Executive Council in March. He served as WAPAC's first president in 1988-89, and returned to hold the gavel in 1993-94. A loyal WAPAC member, Bill is devoted to professionalism, and he emphasizes WAPAC's role as a voice for ag consultants.

Are you a native

Wisconsinite, Bill?

Where did you receive your education?

I was born and raised on a dairy farm on the western shores of Lake Michigan in Kewaunee County, Wisconsin. I spent my formative years cleaning calf pens and spreading manure while dreaming of the days when I would get paid to deal with the stuff! I attended UW-Madison to complete a degree in Soil Science and do some graduate work in soil fertility.



Tell us about your family and your hobbies.

I am a single father of two girls - ages 7 and 13. We enjoy doing the regular family things - soccer and basketball, traveling, movies and family events. Hiking, fishing & swimming - or about any outdoor opportunity falls into the category of hobbies for me.

Tell us about your business and the services you offer.

How many years have you been in the crop consulting business and what changes have you seen?

I began Soil Solutions Consulting in 1985. Fortunately I hooked up with a few of the outcasts of the former Centrol of Sauk City to get my business off the ground and begin building a client base. Currently I have one full time employee, Lee Nolden. He and I work with clients in South Central and East Central regions of Wisconsin. Our services include the usual mix of crop consulting services plus an area of specialization in the technology arena.

Over the few years I've been in the business we have all seen a very real shift in margins available for our clients and a corresponding increase in the size of our clients' operations to maintain profitability. Much of this has occurred during a period of lower commodity prices and increased regulatory and environmental concerns. These factors have resulted in changes to the services we provide. As many other consultants have done, we now spend considerable time and resources on dealing with issues of compliance. A void we have always wrestled with across our client base as a whole is how little information we have available to identify costs of production and opportunities for profit. We have struggled with the challenges of integration and coordination of our

services with the farm management. We are currently developing services to address the issues of regulation, environmental stewardship and financial management in a systematic manner that will hopefully become a key component of our clients' operations. To effectively develop and implement these services we have decided to form a new company - AgCompass LLC. This is a merger of the clientele from ITAC of Wisconsin, Soil Solutions Consulting, Kalmia Consulting Inc. and Rabata Crop Consulting.

Why did you join WAPAC?

I got involved with the formation of WAPAC because there was an obvious need. The consulting community had been visible in the state for almost a decade but really hadn't moved beyond the discussion phase of organization by 1986. I happened to connect with Dave Cole, Ed Liegel, Ev Chambers, Lew White, Randy Welch, Randy VanHaren, John Wedberg, Terry Howard, Steve Tuttle and a few other players at a time of transition and motivation for many of us. The outcome was quite a bit more than I expected when we began the process. I think I have the first unofficial meeting notice written by Lew White on the margins of the late June UW-Herbicide Management Field Day in 1987. Lew spent the first dollars on postage to bring a group together after the field day to make something happen. Well, it stuck. We put together a crew of people and kicked around the ideas and started the ball rolling. We held our first annual meeting six months later and approved a constitution and bylaws.

What do you see as challenges and opportunities facing WAPAC in the next few years?

The history of this group is interesting and I feel very fortunate to have been involved with a group of outstanding people in the process. The future is what is critical for any association such as ours, and I see a few challenges ahead. First off, we now have a declining membership. That is something that has fluctuated over the years but has generally increased or held a flat line pattern. If we fall from that trend line over two years, I think it is a forecast of future fiscal challenges for WAPAC. There are many reasons for the drop, and we can debate them if necessary. I see the important challenge is to maintain and increase membership.

WAPAC has effectively helped the collective consulting community in many ways since 1988. Look at the number of times our presence is requested when issues of agricultural regulation and research are on the table. Without WAPAC we are less effective. For me membership is an easy sell primarily because I am aware of the tremendous effort many in this group put forward without asking for a financial gain. That collective effort has provided me the opportunity to improve the services I offer to my client base. Our challenge as a group is selling the success of WAPAC to current and future members.

Bill's Beaver Dam office phone number: (920) 885-9301.

Member Profile**Mark Vanden Plas**

Mark completes 6 years on the WAPAC Council in March. He served as WAPAC President in 2001-02. An avid bow hunter, Mark also runs a busy consulting business in the Green Bay area and has coordinated the WAPAC Corn Trials for several years.

Where did you grow up, Mark, and where did you receive your education? I

was born and raised in Northeast Wisconsin, near New Franken, which is just northeast of Green Bay...home of the Packers! I attended high school at Green Bay Preble...home of the Hornets! There I was active in both the FFA and athletic programs...football, wrestling, and track. Athletic honors included being a first team all-state selection in football as a senior offensive guard for the Hornets!



I attended college at UW-Platteville...home of the Pioneers! I majored in Soil and Crop Science with comprehensive minors in agronomy and chemistry. I was an active member of the Agronomy Club on campus and participated on the soils, crops and weed science teams at various times throughout my academic career. I was also a member of the football team for four years and participated on the track and field team for a couple years.

Tell us about your family and your hobbies. I am currently single and 41 years of age. I am also the fifth of ten children born to my parents...so in case anyone wonders what I do with my spare time...that should just about answer that question... Large families are great...most of the time!

Honestly, when I do find time to relax, I can usually be found bow hunting for deer somewhere in Northeast Wisconsin during the fall and winter months. I am an enthusiastic member of the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association and never miss a chance to get a child or adult involved in the sport whenever the opportunity arises.

During the winter months of January and February, I also enjoy spending some time cutting timber and firewood in the North Woods. It's very hard work and I would probably never want to do it for a living, but it's great exercise to keep me in shape for the next growing season.

Describe your business and the services you offer. What changes have you seen over the years? I started my business, Agro-Tech Crop Production Services, in 1990 after working for three years out of college as an agronomist for an independent fertilizer dealer in Northeast Wisconsin. I currently have approximately 25 clients and manage approximately 10,000 acres of

cropland which includes farms in Brown, Door, Kewaunee, and Outagamie counties. Although it's a small operation compared to some consulting firms today, it's a comfortable size for me. I feel that as long as I continue to work very hard to provide a good service at a fair price, I will retain clients in the long run.

Over my years as a crop consultant, I have witnessed many changes in crop production practices. It seems that much of the work done on farms today is a bit easier as a result of technology advances. The size of farms and the hours worked certainly have increased as profit margins continue to narrow with increasing costs of production.

What other groups are you active in? In addition to WAPAC, I am a member of NAICC (the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants) and have been a member of the American Society of Agronomy since graduation from UW-Platteville in 1986...almost twenty years! Man, am I getting old! I am also a member of the Wisconsin Corn Growers Association and the Wisconsin Soybean Association, although the only corn and soybeans that I can honestly say I grow personally are 2.5 acre plots each of corn and soybeans in Marinette County for...that's right!...the deer!

Why did you join WAPAC, and what do you think are the advantages of WAPAC membership? I joined WAPAC about the time I started my business in 1990, although I do remember being around at the time of the discussions that led to the organization of WAPAC in 1987. I joined WAPAC to gain the benefits from networking and idea-sharing with other crop consultants working in the state and also to gain some insight into other disciplines such as animal nutrition, finance and marketing. As I became more involved with the organization and aware of some of the opportunities that were available to help me grow professionally, I took on a more active role in the leadership of the organization. This was a way for me to improve my skills in leadership, administration, public speaking, etc.

As a WAPAC member, I have gained valuable experience in many areas needed for my work as a professional ag consultant in Wisconsin. I certainly look at the overall experience to date as a positive one! I would encourage everyone to become more active in the organization, as the benefits from involvement certainly are worth the time commitment involved.

What do you see as challenges and opportunities facing WAPAC in the next few years? A basic challenge facing WAPAC is to develop programs, discussions, and activities that provide opportunities for the organization to grow and remain strong with a diverse membership base of ag professionals who are willing to work together. Our mutual goal is to ensure that Wisconsin agriculture continues to be a viable industry providing a sound economic base for the entire state for years to come!

Mark's Green Bay office phone number: (920) 465-3853.

Roundup: Resistance or Not?

Commentary by Daniel R. Peterson, Hilltop Agronomics

Sue Bellman and I had the opportunity to represent WAPAC at the “Glyphosate Resistance Roundtable” this past August at Arlington. After three seasons of increasing personal concern with the widespread use of glyphosate (see my commentary “Temptation”, Winter ’03 issue of *New Horizons*), I entered this roundtable discussion with great interest. Certainly at Hilltop the increasing field tolerance we are observing in our clients’ fields is increasing our level of interest in the issue of resistance. As would be expected, there was a diversity of opinion expressed at the Roundtable. This diversity helped make the Roundtable a valuable exercise. UW Agronomy was well represented by Chris Boerboom and Dave Stoltenberg, and two people represented Extension Team Grain. Industry was represented with speakers from Syngenta and Monsanto. Mark VanGessel, Extension Weed Scientist from the University of Delaware, presented an interesting perspective and history of the marestail resistance problem. In addition to WAPAC, other associations represented were: Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin; Wisconsin Corn Growers Assn; Wisconsin Fertilizer and Chemical Association; Wisconsin Soybean Marketing Board; and the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association. Mindy Habecker, Extension specialist from Dane County, moderated the roundtable. The recorder was Richard Proost.

Mark VanGessel presented an overview of the resistance issue, primarily focusing on the marestail situation in the eastern states. The single most important point made by Dr. VanGessel, in my view, was the compelling evidence that glyphosate resistance in marestail arose *simultaneously* (emphasis mine) across a very broad geographic area (several states). Secondly, that herbicide resistance is naturally occurring in a weed population and *is selected for* (emphasis mine), not caused by herbicide-induced mutations. The simultaneously occurring marestail resistance across regions corroborates this. As for how fast selection for resistance can occur, he made the observation that resistance was confirmed in some fields after only five glyphosate applications. As for which weed species are most likely to develop resistance, he said it will likely be weeds with a high degree of genetic variability (like lambsquarters) and those that put a lot of resources into seed production (such as marestail, lambsquarters, and waterhemp).

Chuck Foresman (Technical Business Manager, Syngenta at Greensboro, NC) presented a well balanced overview of the resistance situation, including Syngenta’s philosophy and strategy, what occurred in the past with resistance to other chemistries, glyphosate usage statistics, and a description of how Syngenta is tracking weed escapes

with glyphosate. His concerns largely echoed mine, particularly with respect to the drop in research and introduction of new chemistries (no new modes of action on the horizon). He believes we must be diligent in preserving the efficacy of the ones we have, including glyphosate. Another very important point he made is that the labeled use rate of glyphosate has increased by 38% to 200% (depending on species) since its introduction. This corresponds to my field experience. He asserts, “Selection pressure is more severe since the introduction of RR crops, and this selection pressure is occurring at a higher rate than industry is willing to believe.” For example, he said, “It used to take 0.5 lb a.i. to provide good control of lambsquarters, and now 1.0 lb a.i. leaves plants unaffected next to dead ones.” This echoes exactly my own scouting observations on my clients’ fields (I know this isn’t the case everywhere). Further, “the rates used are increasing at a faster speed to control weeds that were normally controlled at lower rates, thus making the technology *economically resistant*” (emphasis mine).

Dave Heering (Roundup Technical Lead, Monsanto, St. Louis) presented a message fundamentally different than VanGessel and Foresman. Essentially he attempted to minimize the risk of glyphosate resistance development. He pointed out, correctly, that different chemistries carry different risks of resistance. He asserted that “duration of use does not dictate frequency of resistance,” and that “resistance to glyphosate is possible but known to be a rare occurrence.” He pointed out that there are only two potential sites of change within the enzyme inhibited by glyphosate that confer resistance. This is in contrast to ALS chemistry which has 10 sites with up to 24 potential changes within the enzyme inhibited by ALS which can confer resistance. One of the more controversial points Mr. Heering made was that “tank-mixing with other modes of action may contribute to rather than reduce the probability of resistance” (because of possible reduced rates of glyphosate). As to addressing, or preventing, the development of resistance, his main argument was to use glyphosate exclusively (no tank-mixing with other products nor using residuals) at high rates, with multiple treatments (two or more field applications). He then spent some time discussing the weed resistance/weed shift research at UW and pointed out that in their research UW had seen “no evidence of resistance development after 5 years.”

After the formal presentations the meeting format changed to a true roundtable discussion, with the opportunity for many questions and comments from participants. Ms. Habecker kept everything on an even keel which allowed calm and reasonable discussion of everyone’s point of

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Roundup: Resistance or Not, *continued*

view. During this period Dave Stoltenberg commented extensively regarding Dave Heering's take on the UW research. Using Mr. Proost's minutes to quote Stoltenberg: "The strength of Wisconsin's research is examining weed species shifts. That is what it is designed to do. It showed some species shifts in the weed community, but weed resistance is a fundamentally different question that requires a much larger population than what this study included. It involves examining use rates, the size of the population being exposed, the frequency of resistance in the population, etc. If the chances of getting resistance are small, then the weed population being studied is the 50 million plus acres using glyphosate technology. That is the population of concern, not the small population used in this study. The population in our study is likely too small to develop resistance, especially if the frequency of resistance is small." Dr. Stoltenberg also took exception to Monsanto's assertion that there are only two enzymatic sites within the plant where resistance could occur. He pointed out that while that is true as far as the enzymatic mechanism goes, weed resistance *can and does occur through other mechanisms*, such as translocation, metabolism, uptake, and so forth. Personally I believe that this is one of the more important points – that resistance can develop through different mechanisms, and that the actual glyphosate resistance mechanism may vary from weed species to weed species. It was re-stated that selection pressure is occurring on a staggering amount of acres (60 million on beans and 10 million on corn), and *that this selection pressure is for any mechanism of resistance*.

We also discussed the UW resistance recommendations that were first published in 1992. Personally, I think these recommendations make sense, are intuitively correct for anyone who has been in the field for any length of time, are easily implemented, apply to resistance issues from all the various chemistries, and would be highly effective if widely adapted. I believe Chris Boerboom and the other UW agronomy/extension staff are fully supportive of these recommendations and understand the importance of conserving the efficacy of all the technologies and chemistries we have available. Chris Boerboom was asked at the meeting to draft a "white paper" (position paper) on the subject of glyphosate resistance. He has done so, and the WAPAC board has voted to support this position paper. There is a lot to chew on regarding this issue. I encourage those who are interested in the topic to comment using our WAPAC member forum, available through our website: wapacinfo.org.

View the Glyphosate White Paper at:
http://ipcm.wisc.edu/uw_weeds/

Reach Dan Peterson at Hilltop Agronomics in West Bend: 262-629-5564

Scoutlink Offered to WAPAC Members

Scout link is a program developed by Bayer CropScience as a service to Independent Crop Consultants. It is available free of charge to members of a state or national association for crop consultants.

What is ScoutLink?

- A precision data collection and recordkeeping software.
- Runs off of handheld computers.
- Observations are transferred to a notebook or desktop computer; allows you to make reports in minutes.

Improve your efficiency:

- Save time scouting - Data is only entered once, in the field.
- Save time making reports; easy to find reports and make recommendations from them.
- ScoutLink documents the time and location of each field observation.

System Requirements:

- Desktop or notebook computer.
- Gather data on any Palm OS or Pocket PC (Pocket PC 2002 or higher).
- Compatible GPS unit.
- Windows 2000 (or higher) and Microsoft Excel 97 (or higher).

To order, go to the following web site:
WWW.BayerScoutLink.com

For technical support, call 877-727-8877.

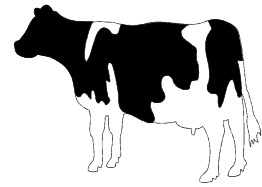
NR 243 Advisory Committee Report

•Jeff Polenske, WAPAC Rep, NR 243 Committee

I really want to thank the people who responded to my e-mail and attended the subcommittee meeting we held in Stevens Point in November to discuss winter manure spreading. Members who served on the 590 rewrite committee say their most difficult discussions were also in this area. To date there are still strong opinions in favor of allowing no manure spreading on frozen ground. The 243 rewrite may have a strong influence on rewriting the 590 again. It seems that we are headed in a direction that will make decisions on all manure applications more complicated. This will add more job security to our business but also increase our liability and continued hours needed for training beyond our current comfort levels. As some of us move into certification as Technical Service Providers with NRCS, this becomes very apparent. Many of us have already discussed how upcoming changes will affect how our businesses will be run in the future. More time will be required per client, limiting the number of clients that we can effectively service. Costs may rise with increasing liability concerns, and one has to wonder if the current state of Agriculture will be able to absorb all this.

The Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium

WLIC is a **Wisconsin** initiative to contribute to and support the development of the U.S. Animal Identification Plan (USAIP). USAIP is a national effort led by USDA to create a national animal identification and trace back system to protect the health of the animal industry. Within the plan it is recognized that key components have to be administered by each state Department of Agriculture.



USAIP's goal is: *“To achieve a trace back system that can identify all animals and premises potentially exposed to an animal with a Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) within 48 hours after discovery.”*

Our **livestock** industry is important to the economic well being of Wisconsin. WLIC members understand that a 48-hour trace back capability is vital to our livestock industry, its well being and the contribution it makes to Wisconsin's economic health. It will make it possible to trace, if necessary to quarantine, and thus limit the economic impact of a disease outbreak. Further, they recognize that Wisconsin's livestock industry has unique facets that can best be addressed by input from our producers, our marketers, our processors and our other industry partners. With everyone's involvement, we can make the USAIP better. We can create a Wisconsin system that not only meets the state requirements in that plan, but serves as a model for other states and provides Wisconsin livestock producers with value added marketing opportunities.

Animal **identification** is a multi-phase process. It begins with registration of any premises where livestock are raised, marketed, processed or held for any period of time. This registration is the vital first phase in developing the trace back system. WLIC has established a premises registration program and is offering free registration for an introductory period. The next phase is actual animal identification, i.e., linking each animal with a number and then linking that number to a registered premise. WLIC is working toward national standards that will accommodate multiple service providers offering competitive animal ID services. These may be livestock breed or industry organizations or private businesses. The final phase will be to record animal movements as they move from one premise to another. Creating this final phase will likely take years to accomplish. How many years will depend on the commitment, the vision and the determination of producers and their partners in the livestock industry—people like you!

A **consortium** is a group working together toward a common goal. USAIP has defined that goal and WLIC is determined to help it become a reality. The members of WLIC represent a broad spectrum of Wisconsin livestock industry gathered together with a common interest. We are a multi-species, cross-industry, grassroots organization. Our goal is to develop, promote and implement a birth to death tracking system for farm animals that makes sense for every segment of the industry. We are equally concerned that the process and the systems adopted are ones that not only work for Wisconsin livestock producers and their partners, but also make our industry stronger and more profitable. We believe it can be done. We believe we can do it. Please join us in this important effort.

For further information about WLIC, contact:

Robert Fourdraine at rfourdraine@WIID.org or 608-848-1907.

Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium, 135 Enterprise Drive, Suite ID, Verona, WI 53593

Website: www.WIID.org

WAPAC Internship Scholarships Awarded

The WAPAC Scholarship Committee met in December 2003 to select two recipients for the 2003 WAPAC Internship Scholarship. Each student was awarded \$500. We are pleased to congratulate these scholars and introduce them to you.



Amanda N. Juhre

Amanda N. Juhre, a senior majoring in Agronomy at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls, is a native of Fredonia, Wisconsin. Amanda interned with agronomist Mike Mulder at the Adell Cooperative Union in Adell, Wisconsin in Summer 2003. After graduation in May 2004, Amanda will begin her career in the agronomy industry. With a great interest in plant genetics and breeding, she may consider graduate work in the future also.

Amanda's internship provided her with great hands-on experience as a crop scout. As a side benefit, she learned to drive a standard transmission pick-up truck and was soon off on scouting missions all on her own!

Amanda writes, "Thanks for selecting me as a recipient of this year's WAPAC Internship Scholarship. I had a great internship experience at the Adell Cooperative. I feel that internships are a great way to gain some hands-on experience in one's chosen field of study before graduation. I highly recommend that all students have an internship experience!"



Eric Scott Riedeman

Eric Scott Riedeman is majoring in Crop and Soil Science with minors in Plant Genetics and Chemistry at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. For the second year in a row, Eric interned with agronomist Dennis Klumpers at Eldorado Farm Center in Eldorado, WI. And for the second year in a row, he received a WAPAC Internship Scholarship!

Eric writes, "I plan to graduate from UW Platteville in Spring 2005. I will then attend graduate school at the University of Iowa or the University of Wisconsin-Madison to earn a Master's Degree in either agronomy or plant breeding. Thank you very much for selecting me as a recipient of the WAPAC Scholarship. My internship as an assistant agronomist was very helpful and an excellent experience!"

WAPAC members, as you prepare to hire interns for Summer 2004, keep the WAPAC Scholarship in mind! Applications for the 2004 scholarships will be available on the WAPAC website in late September. Thank you to the WAPAC Scholarship Committee for their work in selecting the winning scholars. (Bryan Jensen, Chair; Jon Baldock, Steve Abrams and Terry Howard.)

Mega Trends in Agriculture

In late 2003, ag consultant Mike Brubaker, CPCC-I, CCA, president of The Brubaker Corporation, Lititz, PA, and managing director of The Agricultural Issues Forum, released a list of the major mega trends facing ag industry. The list was developed with the help of a group of high-volume ag producers, agribusiness executives and environmental organizations.

The mega trends, listed in order, are:

- Continued consolidation at all levels of the ag industry
- Increasing government and regulatory influence
- Globalization and its impact on local markets
- Development of niche markets
- Technology advances
- Capital/finance pressures
- Animal welfare
- Environmental stewardship
- Workforce development
- Emphasis on food safety
- Ag's role in energy production
- Increased public influences

Source: Doane's Ag Professional Weekly, December 8, 2003. Available at www.agprofessional.com/apweekly.php

New Horizons

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