FRIENDS OF THE RIVER, ET AL.


Consolidated appeals from a Decision Notice/Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact of the Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management, adopting an interim strategy for managing anadromous fish-producing watersheds on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in eastern Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and portions of California and from a subsequent Decision Record extending the interim strategy.

Dismissed.

1. Rules of Practice: Appeals: Dismissal—Rules of Practice: Appeals: Timely Filing

Departmental regulation 43 C.F.R. § 4.411 provides that if a decision is published in the Federal Register, a person not served with the decision must transmit a notice of appeal in time for it to be filed within 30 days after the date of publication. A notice of appeal is not filed until it is received in the proper office. When the 30th day falls on a day when the office is closed, the appeal period is extended to the close of the next day on which the office is open.

2. Rules of Practice: Appeals: Dismissal—Rules of Practice: Appeals: Timely Filing

Departmental regulation 43 C.F.R. § 4.401(a) provides that a delay in filing may be waived if the document is filed no later than 10 days after the deadline, and the document was transmitted on or before the deadline date. When the date on a notice of appeal or the postmark on the envelope containing a notice of appeal shows that it was transmitted after the due date, the delay in filing may not be waived. The timely filing of a notice of appeal is a jurisdictional requirement and the failure to file timely mandates dismissal of the appeal.

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As a general rule, the Board of Land Appeals has authority to review decisions by BLM relating to the use and disposition of the public lands. See 43 C.F.R. §§ 4.1(b)(3), 4.410(a). However, the Board does not have jurisdiction to review appeals of decisions to approve or amend a resource management plan, which is designed to guide and control future management actions. Nevertheless, specific decisions that implement a resource management plan are subject to appeal to the Board.


Whether the Board of Land Appeals exercises jurisdiction over a BLM action as an implementation decision depends on the effect of that action. If it is in the nature of a direction to BLM's employees, so that further action would be required to produce an adverse effect, the Board does not have jurisdiction. Thus, a BLM decision adopting an interim strategy for managing anadromous fish-producing watersheds in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and portions of California is not a decision within the jurisdiction of the Board of Land Appeals because it is designed to guide and control future management actions, but does not implement those actions.

APPEARANCES: Patti Goldman, Esq., Adam J. Berger, Esq., Katherine S. Poole, Esq., Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Inc., Seattle, Washington, for Friends of the River, et al.; Pamela Huston, pro se; Western Partners, Boise, Idaho; Pat Holmberg, Boise, Idaho, for the Alliance of Independent Miners; Dick Beyers, Horseshoe Bend, Idaho, President, Boise County Coalition; Pat Holmberg, Boise, Idaho, for the Independent Miners Association; Dennis Tanikuni, Boise, Idaho, Assistant Director-Public Affairs, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation; Ron Harrington, Emmett, Idaho, for the Northwest Timber Workers Resource Council; Kari Allred, Garden Valley, Idaho, pro se; Gary Wood, Idaho City, Idaho, pro se; Clark Gardner, Garden Valley, Idaho, pro se; Darl Allred, Garden Valley, Idaho, pro se; David Bedal, Garden Valley, Idaho, pro se; Steve Alley, Garden Valley, Idaho, pro se; Sterling Alley, Garden Valley, Idaho, pro se; Charley Huston, Garden Valley, Idaho, pro se; R.C. "Bob" Sears, CAE, Boise, Idaho, Executive Vice President, Idaho Cattle Association; Karen Mountsen, Esq., Laura Brown, Esq., and Kristina Clark, Esq., Office of the Solicitor, Washington, D.C., for the Bureau of Land Management.
On February 24, 1995, the Chief of the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Department of the Interior, signed a Decision Notice/Decision Record (Decision) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) adopting an interim strategy for managing anadromous fish-producing watersheds on lands administered by the Forest Service and BLM in eastern Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and portions of California. That interim strategy, as set forth in an accompanying environmental assessment (EA), is commonly referred to as PACFISH.

The interim strategy is "designed to halt the degradation and begin the restoration of anadromous fish habitat and see that future opportunities are not foregone by management decisions taken over the next 18 months while comprehensive studies and NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act of 1969] analysis and documentation are completed for the long-term management strategies." (Decision at 1.) According to the Decision, Forest Service and BLM would apply seven management measures to all proposed or new projects and activities and ongoing projects and activities that pose an unacceptable risk involving the management of timber, roads, grazing, recreation resources, riparian areas, minerals, fire and fuels, and land uses such as leases, permits, rights-of-way and easements, as well as restoration of watershed, fish, and wildlife habitat within all anadromous fish habitat occurring in the States of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and California (except those areas under the direction contained in the Northern Spotted Owl ROD [Record of Decision]) during the interim period.

The first management measure is the establishment of riparian goals to maintain or restore various aspects of fish habitat, such as water quality, stream channel integrity, instream flows, water table elevation in meadows and wetlands, diverse and productive plant communities, and riparian vegetation. (Decision at 2, Appendix C, C-3 and C-4.) The second management measure is the establishment of numerical riparian management objectives for streams in watersheds with anadromous fish, consisting of specific criteria for pool frequency, water temperatures, large woody debris, bank stability, lower bank angle, and width/depth ratio. (Decision at 2, Appendix C, C-4 through C-6.) For example, the plan adopts an objective for "[n]o measurable increase in maximum water temperature with maximum temperatures below 64 degrees Fahrenheit within migratory and rearing habitats and below 60 degrees within spawning habitats."

The third management objective calls for the delineation of Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCA's) in anadromous fish-producing watersheds using interim widths for four categories of streams or water bodies: (1) fish-bearing streams; (2) permanently flowing nonfish-bearing streams; (3) ponds, lakes, reservoirs, and wetlands larger than 1 acre; and (4) intermittent streams and wetlands smaller than 1 acre. (Decision...
The fourth objective is to establish management standards and guidelines to govern actions within RHCA's or degrading RHCA's including actions involving timber, roads, grazing, recreation, minerals, fire and fuels, lands, general riparian area management, and fish and wildlife. The remaining three objectives are the establishment of criteria for identifying key watersheds among the anadromous fish-producing watersheds, establishing criteria for watershed analysis, and establishing requirements for monitoring.

On March 2, 1995, notice of PACFISH was published in the Federal Register, 60 Fed. Reg. 11655. That notice provided that the Decision could be appealed to this Board by filing a written notice of appeal "within 30 days of the date of publication of this legal notice of availability." 60 Fed. Reg. 11656. The Board docketed 17 separate appeals from the Decision. See Appendix A.

The Appellants in the appeal docketed as IBLA 95-407 allege that they and their members use and enjoy the salmonid populations and their public land habitats in the Pacific Northwest for recreational, scientific, aesthetic, and commercial purposes and have offered extensive arguments about the inadequacy of the strategy to protect them. They fault BLM for failing to develop a plan to protect resident salmonids, such as the bull trout, in addition to anadromous salmonids. (IBLA 95-407 Statement of Reasons (SOR) at 6-14.) They contend that PACFISH fails to address the importance of setting aside roadless areas and rejects the only alternative that would limit new entries into existing roadless areas. Id. at 14-19.

PACFISH, they argue, fails to (1) address impacts of upland actions such as even-aged timber management, road construction, and grazing on aquatic habitat and watershed level functions; (2) include a substrate sediment standard; (3) establish correct temperature standards to adequately protect salmonids; (4) protect salmonids from the adverse impacts of salvage logging; (5) provide adequate assessment of and protection from the impacts of grazing on salmonids; (6) encompass all activities that adversely affect salmonid habitat; (7) protect intermittent stream habitat adequately; (8) provide assurance that monitoring and enforcement will be funded and conducted. Id. at 19-40. Finally, they assert that the economic analysis is flawed in that the economic benefits of preserving watersheds, fisheries, and other resources are "unacknowledged in the EA." Id. at 40-43.

The Appellants in the 16 other appeals, on the other hand, are individuals or groups who believe that their activities may be restricted by actions that implement the plan and who want BLM to withdraw the Decision. They argue that there was not adequate time to review the Decision during the time given to appeal; that the economic analysis is not accurate in light of what they believe will be a severe impact on public land users; that the plan is not authorized by Congress; that BLM has failed to make a takings analysis required by Executive Order; that the FONSI is flawed because there are significant effects and it failed to discuss mining and the effects on small communities; and that the action greatly impacts grazers and agricultural economies. Some individuals refer to "family budget problems," such as the increased cost of firewood. Others argue that it
is arbitrary and capricious to assume standards adopted in the Decision can apply basin-wide; that parties who commented were not notified of the Decision; and that the action would remove or reduce funds for schools. In a series of Orders dated May 9, May 16, and May 26, 1995, we consolidated the appeals and denied requests for stay, which some Appellants had filed.

The 18-month period during which PACFISH was effective expired during the pendency of these appeals. On December 23, 1996, BLM's Deputy Director signed a Decision Record (Decision II) extending PACFISH until completion of the long-term strategies of the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Project. The only appeal from Decision II was filed by the same Appellants whose earlier appeal was docketed as IBLA 95-407. Those Appellants rely on the SOR filed in their earlier appeal. By Order dated May 19, 1997, we granted their motion to consolidate their new appeal, docketed as IBLA 97-232, with the earlier appeals. Although none of the other Appellants filed an appeal from Decision II, we do not consider their appeals moot, given the continuing nature of the action that was originally appealed. See generally Bureau of Land Management v. Thoman, 139 IBLA 48, 54 (1997); Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, 114 IBLA 326, 330 (1990); Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, 111 IBLA 207, 210 (1989); Colorado Environmental Coalition, 108 IBLA 10, 15 (1989).

[1] We first consider BLM's motions to dismiss as untimely the appeals of Kari Allred (IBLA 95-415), Gary Wood (IBLA 95-416), Clark Gardner (IBLA 95-417), and Darl Allred (IBLA 95-426), that we took under advisement in our May 16 Order. Departmental regulation 43 C.F.R. § 4.411(a) provides: "If a decision is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, a person not served with the decision must transmit a notice of appeal in time for it to be filed within 30 days after the date of publication." A notice of appeal is not "filed" until it is received in the proper office. See 43 C.F.R. § 4.22(a). The end of the 30-day period for filing an appeal from the March 2 publication of the Decision fell on April 1, a Saturday, so a notice of appeal would be considered timely if it were received on Monday, April 3. See 43 C.F.R. § 4.22(e). None of the appeals were received on that date.

[2] However, under 43 C.F.R. § 4.401(a), a delay in filing may be waived if the notice was filed no later than 10 days after the deadline, and it was transmitted or "probably transmitted" on or before the deadline date. Postage meter marks on envelopes transmitting the appeals show that Kari Allred's appeal was sent on April 18; Gary Wood's appeal, April 12; and Darl Allred's appeal, April 18. Thus, those appeals were not transmitted until after the expiration of the grace period.

The timely filing of a notice of appeal is a jurisdictional requirement and the failure to file timely mandates dismissal of the appeal. Ahtna Inc., 100 IBLA 7, 15 (1987); Lyman J. Ipsen, 96 IBLA 398, 400 (1987); Oscar Mineral Group #3, 87 IBLA 48, 49 (1985). Accordingly we grant BLM's motions to dismiss the appeals of Kari Allred (IBLA 95-415), Gary Wood (IBLA 95-416), and Darl Allred (IBLA 95-426).

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Gardner's appeal was dated April 1, and although BLM asserts that the envelope containing his notice of appeal was not postmarked until April 5, the envelope is not included in the record. Accordingly, we deny the motion to dismiss the appeal of Clark Gardner (IBLA 95-417) as untimely. See Gail Schmardebeck, 142 IBLA 160, 162 (1998).

In our May 16, 1995, Order denying a stay in this case, we questioned whether we had jurisdiction to review appeals of the PACFISH decision. Citing cases such as Idaho Department of Fish and Game, 112 IBLA 72, 75 n.2 (1990), and Oregon Natural Resources Council, 78 IBLA 124, 127 (1983), we noted that the fact that the Federal Register notice provided for the right to appeal to this Board was not dispositive because the Board of Land Appeals is the sole arbiter of its jurisdiction and employees of BLM may not create the right of appeal where it does not exist or deny that right where it does exist. We stated:

On a number of occasions the Board has made the distinction between planning decisions and implementation decisions, concluding that we only have jurisdiction over the latter. E.g. Idaho Natural Resources Legal Foundation, Inc., 96 IBLA 19, 23, 94 I.D. 35, 38 (1987); Wilderness Society, 90 IBLA 221, 224-25 (1986). We recognize that those decisions cited the regulations at 43 CFR Subpart 1610 and distinguished between the approval or amendment of resource management plans and the implementation of those plans. We also recognize that PACFISH itself does not amend any resource management plans, but only "provides management direction applicable to the 7 BLM LUPs [land use plans]" (Decision at 2). Nevertheless, statements by BLM in its motions in opposition to the stay requests indicate that there is a distinction between PACFISH and implementation decisions. BLM states: "Implementation of the PACFISH interim strategy will be at the project level where site-specific decisions may be protested or appealed by adversely affected parties" (Motion at 2 in IBLA 95-408, Pamela Huston). "Since site-specific activities will receive separate analysis to determine if other siting alternatives are available, it is speculative to assume impacts on the ground at the broad policy-level of the PACFISH decision. Analysis and determination of whether a stay is justified is more appropriate at the site-specific level" (Motion at 7 in IBLA 95-409, Western Partners). "Adoption of the 18-month interim strategy does not authorize any ground disturbing activities and in no way obviates the need for site-specific, project-level NEPA analysis, thus public involvement and appeal opportunities for project decisions are maintained" (Id). "The decision does not change any of the procedures for approval of individual projects or activities, so the appellant and the public will have the opportunity to protest or appeal decisions associated with individual projects" (Motion at 4 in IBLA 95-413, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation).
In conclusion, we requested that in its answer in the case BLM brief the Board on the question of the Board's jurisdiction to entertain appeals from the PACFISH decision.

[3] As a general rule, the Board has authority to review decisions by BLM relating to the use and disposition of the public lands. See 43 C.F.R. §§ 4.1(b)(3), 4.410(a). However, the Board does not have jurisdiction to review appeals of decisions to approve or amend a Resource Management Plan (RMP) which is "designed to guide and control future management actions" rather than implement decisions on actions that affect specific parcels of land or rights to use Federal lands. 43 C.F.R. §§ 1601.0-2, 1601.0-5(k); see Harold E. Carrasco, 90 IBLA 39 (1985). Under 43 C.F.R. § 1610.5-2, decisions to adopt or amend an RMP are subject to review by the Director of BLM whose decision is final for the Department. Nor do we possess authority to review land classification determinations made by BLM. 43 C.F.R. § 4.410(a)(1). Thus, those claiming to be adversely affected by such decisions may not appeal them to this Board. Under 43 C.F.R. § 1610.5-3(b), however, specific decisions that implement an RMP are subject to appeal to the Board.

In Petroleum Association of Wyoming, 133 IBLA 337 (1995), we dismissed appeals from a decision approving a bald eagle habitat management plan (HMP), finding the appeals premature because there had been no final BLM action adversely affecting the appellants. We stated:

When and if specific implementation decisions are made, adversely affected parties will have the opportunity to challenge those decisions either before this Board or before the Director, BLM, and the adequacy of the environmental analysis underpinning those final implementation decisions, including the sufficiency of the EA and HMP to the extent BLM relies on those documents as justification for its decisions, will then be reviewable.

Id. at 344. Similarly, we dismissed an appeal challenging a rangewide Desert Tortoise HMP because it was designed to guide and control future management actions and did not take specific action or implement a decision or action. California Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs, Inc., 108 IBLA 140 (1989). We did not consider the "management actions" identified in the plan to be the type of specific actions or land use decisions which are appealable to the Board.

During the pendency of these appeals, we issued a decision in National Organization for River Sports, 140 IBLA 377 (1997), in which we reviewed our prior appeals involving planning decisions and more clearly articulated how planning decisions were to be distinguished from implementation decisions. We first noted that if the decision under appeal constitutes the approval or amendment of an RMP, it is not appealable to this Board because its approval is subject only to protest to the Director of BLM, whose decision is final for the Department. 43 C.F.R. § 1610.5-2. If the decision is another type of planning action by BLM, such as a Recreation Management

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Plan, HMP, Area of Critical Environmental Concern Management Plan, river management plan, etc., the question is whether that decision contains implementation actions. If so, those implementation actions are appealable to the Board. For example, in Wilderness Society, 90 IBLA 221, 224-25 (1986), the Board entertained an appeal from a recreation management plan to the extent it contained a decision opening a new area to off-road vehicles. On the other hand, as noted above, where an organization challenged a desert tortoise HMP, the Board dismissed the appeal because it found that the management actions identified in the plan were "not the type of specific actions or land-use decisions which are appealable to the Board" because they were not final implementation decisions. California Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs, Inc., supra, at 142-43.

[4] Whether the Board of Land Appeals exercises jurisdiction over a BLM action as an implementation decision depends on the effect of that action. If it is in the nature of a direction to BLM's employees, so that further action would be required to produce an adverse effect, the Board does not have jurisdiction. Our dismissal of appeals such as Petroleum Association of Wyoming, supra, is grounded in the language of 43 C.F.R. § 4.410(a), which provides that "[a]ny party to a case who is adversely affected by a decision of an officer of the Bureau of Land Management * * * shall have a right to appeal to the Board * * *." We concluded that the appellants had not been adversely affected by the challenged BLM decisions. See Colorado Environmental Coalition, 125 IBLA 287, 289-90 (1993); Salmon River Concerned Citizens, 114 IBLA 344 (1990). However, BLM's adoption of a recreation management plan opening an area to off-road vehicle use was subject to appeal to this Board because the adverse effect of BLM's action upon those whose use of the area would be impaired by opening it to off-road vehicles was neither remote nor speculative. Wilderness Society, supra.

In Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA), 132 IBLA 255 (1995), we dismissed an appeal from a BLM document reporting certain Wild and Scenic River eligibility findings, notwithstanding the appellants' assertion that they were adversely affected by the failure to include certain rivers therein. The appellants contended that under Abbott Laboratories v. Gardner, 387 U.S. 136 (1967), and Sierra Club v. Watt, 608 F. Supp. 305 (E.D. Cal. 1985), when the practical effect of a BLM action is to fix rights and obligations, that action is a final decision and is ripe for review. In SUWA, supra, at 59, we distinguished those cases on a number of grounds, including the fact that they concerned "judicial review of final agency actions, and have no bearing upon the jurisdiction of this Board, which is determined by 43 CFR 4.1."

In other cases, we have declined to exercise review over BLM actions that have not directly affected members of the public but have served to provide direction to BLM employees in their activities. For example, in State of Alaska, 106 IBLA 160, 165, 95 I.D. 304, 306-307 (1988), we dismissed an appeal from a BLM instruction memorandum establishing procedures for adjudicating the State's public purpose assertions in determining whether land was to be included in a pool for selection by the Cook.

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Inlet Region, Inc. After noting that the memorandum was merely a document for internal use by BLM employees, we concluded that it was not a "decision" subject to appeal under 43 C.F.R. § 4.410. Also, in Tenneco Oil Co., 36 IBLA 1 (1978), we held that the publication by the Director, Geological Survey, of a "Notice to Lessees" was not an action appealable to this Board because the "Notice" was a generalized instruction to employees of the Department and was not self-executing. We noted that only specific application of the "Notice" to a lessee would constitute a matter subject to appeal and review by the Board.

In its answer BLM emphasizes the similarity of PACFISH to land use plans and iterates its position that adoption of PACFISH does not authorize any ground disturbing activities or obviate the need for project-level NEPA analysis. In conclusion, it states:

Notwithstanding the fact that the Decision and the Federal Register notice provided information on appeal procedures, since the PACFISH strategy does not result in site-specific actions and is similar in nature to the broad management direction found in resource management plans, the Board could arguably conclude that it does not have jurisdiction to review appeals from the PACFISH decision.

(Answer at 10.)

We find BLM's position is well-taken. We note, for example, that the EA predicts that the effect of the plan on grazing would result in decreases of 42,100 Animal Unit Months of forage, 9 percent of which would occur on BLM-administered lands. (EA at 68.) Although the Appellants in IBLA 95-407 believe that PACFISH does not sufficiently reduce grazing to prevent adverse effects on salmonids, other Appellants believe that PACFISH will result in too great a restriction on grazing. However, BLM cannot implement any reductions until the appropriate administrative proceedings have been conducted. Under section 9 of the Taylor Grazing Act, 43 U.S.C. § 315h (1994), Congress required the Secretary to provide for local hearings on appeals from a BLM decision cancelling or modifying a grazing license or permit. See William N. Brailsford, 140 IBLA 57, 59 (1997); Animal Protection Institute of America, 120 IBLA 342, 344 (1991). We do not construe PACFISH as pre-empting full adjudication of site-specific actions involving grazing determinations by BLM. See Joel Stamatakis, 98 IBLA 4 (1987).

Although the Appellants in IBLA 95-407 complain that "PACFISH exposes fisheries and watersheds to destructive land use practices" (SOR at 1), it does not purport to open previously closed areas to new activities. Cf. Wilderness Society, supra (recreation management plan held reviewable to the extent it contained a decision opening a new area to off-road vehicles). We recognize that some Appellants feel that their enjoyment of the fishery resource will be adversely affected by BLM's adoption of criteria that they claim to be insufficiently restrictive, such as a water temperature standard that they believe is too high, while others may feel that

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their opportunities to use the land will be adversely affected by adoption of overly restrictive criteria, such as a water
temperature standard that they believe is too low. Appellants have made similar arguments about the extent of RHCA's and
other features of PACFISH. Nevertheless, we note that the standards adopted in PACFISH are not established as regulations
that would have the force and effect of law that would preclude their review in site-specific actions. When an agency intends its
action to establish "binding norms" having future force and effect, it publishes regulations under 5 U.S.C. § 553 (1994). See
Brock v. Cathedral Bluffs Shale Oil Co., 796 F.2d 533, 539 (D.C. Cir. 1986) ("The real dividing line between regulations and
[nonbinding] general statements of policy is publication in the Code of Federal Regulations.")

We consider PACFISH as a land management action that does not directly affect members of the public but
serves to provide direction to BLM employees; it is designed to guide and control future actions and did not take specific action
or implement a decision or action.

The Appellants in IBLA 95-407 also fault BLM for failing to develop a plan to protect resident salmonids, such as
the bull trout, in addition to anadromous salmonids. (SOR at 6-14.) BLM acknowledges that it considered but eliminated an
"option" to apply "interim direction to watersheds beyond the range of anadromous fish" because it was beyond the scope of
the EA and because other initiatives addressing resident fish habitat had begun. (EA at 25-26, Appendix F, F-12 and F-13.)
Appellants then attack the adequacy of those initiatives. (SOR at 13-14.)

We conclude that the failure of PACFISH to cover nonanadromous fish does not make this otherwise
unreviewable direction to BLM's employees a decision that is subject to appeal. Nothing in the PACFISH decision precludes
developing a strategy for protection of nonanadromous fish populations and habitats. Cf. Sierra Club v. Watt, supra, at 318
(action held reviewable where its effect was "to preclude wilderness designation for these lands no matter what management
protocol is eventually determined by the BLM state directors.")

Therefore, pursuant to the authority delegated to the Board of Land Appeals by the Secretary of the Interior, 43
C.F.R. § 4.1, for the reasons stated above, the appeals are dismissed.

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Bruce R. Harris
Deputy Chief Administrative Judge

I concur:

David L. Hughes
Administrative Judge

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## APPENDIX A

### Appellants

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