

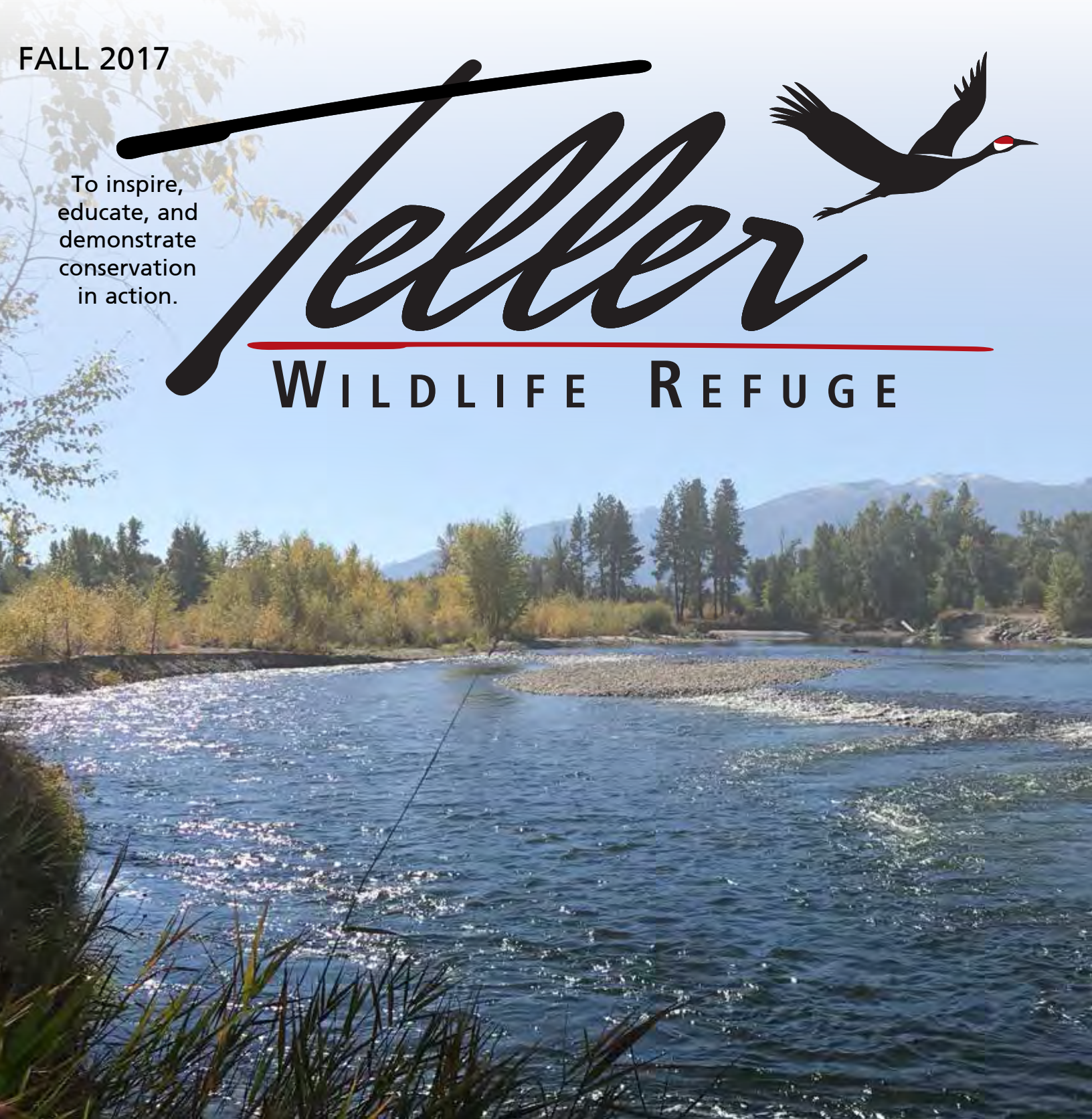
FALL 2017

To inspire,  
educate, and  
demonstrate  
conservation  
in action.

# Teller

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## WILDLIFE REFUGE



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## MESSAGE FROM TELLER'S BOARD CHAIR

*By Herb Depp*

Cooler evening temperatures mean fall is here. It's always a special time at Teller as the foliage changes, waterfowl appear in massive numbers and hunting season is underway.

We have a privilege to protect for today and beyond the legacy of Otto Teller and the wondrous Teller Wildlife Refuge. We do this with a staff of four, a Board of Trustees, Conservation Council and many volunteers that are totally dedicated to ensuring that the next generation will have the same opportunity to enjoy what we have worked so hard to enhance and protect.

If you would like see what we're doing and become more involved, please give our office a call at (406) 961-3507. I also want to thank the hundreds of people that have so graciously made contributions to ensure our success. We just couldn't do it without you. Thanks again!

## A NOTE FROM TELLER'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*By Kim Vietz*

It's been a hot, dry summer. The western U.S. has finally received some rain to help end this terrible fire season. While smoke obscured the view of our beautiful mountains for much of the summer, there was still plenty of activity at Teller Wildlife Refuge. A successful TnT Dinner & Auction, fun summer day camps, farming activities, weddings, and volunteer projects kept us busy.

With the arrival of fall comes hunting season, and year-end planning. During our smoky summer, I've been doing some planning of my own, and will be leaving Teller at the end of this year. It's a decision that wasn't made lightly, but will hopefully be good for me and my family. It won't be easy to leave this amazing place, but it will be even harder to leave all of the wonderful people I've met over the past 10+ years. Your involvement has made a positive difference for wildlife, habitat, area kids, and also for me personally. I'll miss you all! Please continue to support Teller's conservation and education efforts in the Bitterroot Valley. Thank you!



*Photo By Mel Holloway*

# MEET A FRIEND OF TELLER

Karen Zumwalt is Teller's new Program Assistant. She was born and raised in California and has always had an interest in wildlife and habitat. Her first job was with the Youth Conservation Corps and she dreamed of a career as a naturalist. After thirty something years of a busy life raising three children and seeing them through college, Karen decided it was time to "Go West" to Montana. Please join us in welcoming Karen to Teller!



## How and why are you interested in conservation?

While still living in California, I decided I wanted to start hunting. A Women's Duck Hunting Camp sponsored by California Waterfowl taught me about identifying, calling, shooting, cleaning and cooking waterfowl. I left with new hunting partners and the desire to give back by volunteering for the California Deer Association and California Waterfowl. Working on fundraising events or building wood duck nesting boxes gave me the satisfaction that I was doing my part and sharing my enthusiasm with others.

## What do you like best about living in the Bitterroot Valley?

One of the first things I noticed about the Bitterroot Valley, aside from the spectacular beauty, is the genuine friendliness. My day is always better when I can greet people with a smile and "Hello." Public access is another amazing advantage. Montana invites you to explore and I am happy to accept! It is a gift to live in an area with so many opportunities to hike, camp, fish, and hunt.

## What are you looking forward to in your new role with Teller Wildlife Refuge?

I am excited to join the team at Teller and look forward to meeting all of the people that donate their time and energy. My goal is to do whatever it takes to continue to promote the motto, "To inspire, educate, and demonstrate conservation in action."

# POPULAR WOMEN'S BEGINNER FLY FISHING CLINIC BACK AGAIN



In May, Teller Wildlife Refuge hosted "A Cast for Conservation" clinic for the 13th time. Over thirty women enjoyed a Sunday at Teller learning about the art of fly fishing from local outfitters, Jenny West and Eddie Olwell. The participants gathered in Teller's historic Slack Barn for a morning of instruction on fly casting techniques, fish habitat, fish identification, knot tying, fly selection and entomology, and local Bitterroot River fishing knowledge. The group shared stories while they enjoyed a catered lunch. The afternoon included hands-on casting lessons on the lush lawn of Teller's Slack Barn where Jenny and Eddie helped hone the participants' casting techniques. The outfitters generously donated part of the proceeds from the course registration to Teller and the Bitter Root Water Forum. Thanks again to Jenny and Eddie for leading this informative event!

We look forward to hosting the Women's "A Cast for Conservation" Clinic every May. Let us know if you are interested in participating in the 2018 class!

Photo By Jenny West

# OUTDOOR PLAY & LEARNING AT TELLER'S SUMMER CAMPS

Thanks to the generosity of Teller's Lucy's Fund contributors and a Bitterroot Audubon scholarship, almost 50 children from 3rd through 6th grade joined us on Teller this summer for our Nature Connections day camps!

They spent their week outdoors experiencing interactive, hands-on activities. Jenell Semple, camp director, taught the kids fun, nature-inspired games and activities while they learned about the importance of open space and conservation practices.

They learned bicycle safety and maintenance and biked daily to three prime locations on Teller from the historic Slack Barn. Campers waded in Thomas Pond and Gird Creek, journaled and picnicked in the woods, and found natural materials galore for treasure hunts and habitation games.



Camp registration opens in early May 2018 for next summer's adventures.

Check our website's camp page on [www.tellerwildlife.org](http://www.tellerwildlife.org), or follow us on Facebook (search Teller Wildlife Refuge) for more information.



## LODGING AT TELLER WILDLIFE REFUGE

*Teller's historic farm houses and rustic fishing cabins are booking fast for the 2018 season!*

*There are plenty of great dates remaining, but the time to reserve is now.*

*For rates, details, calendars and online booking, please visit:*

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*Photo By Mel Holloway*

# FALL FIELD NOTES

*By Pete Lindbergh*

Fall is in the air at last here at Teller! After one of the hottest, driest, smokiest summers on record, we are all looking forward to cooler weather and clear skies. What a relief to finally get some rain and see snow on the mountains! For the past two months we have diligently practiced extreme fire awareness; avoiding driving and parking in tall grass, making sure our farm equipment fire extinguishers are fully charged and readily accessible and watching for sparks whenever we mow.

Fortunately, our irrigation water supply held up through the drought and our croplands, food plots and wetlands are as lush as ever and teeming with waterfowl and wildlife. It's always a treat to show up for work this time of year and see flock after flock of ducks and geese dropping into the alfalfa and barley to feed side by side with the sandhill cranes, and to flush deer and pheasants whenever we stop to open pasture gates.

Hunting season is upon us and Teller bow hunters have had great success to date. We would like to extend a big thank you to all of our volunteers; we have completed numerous projects with their help, including constructing new goose nesting platforms and sprucing up all of the waterfowl hunting blinds.

Bird numbers are up on our grounds this year and hornet numbers are down (one possible silver lining to all of the wildfire smoke we have endured??).

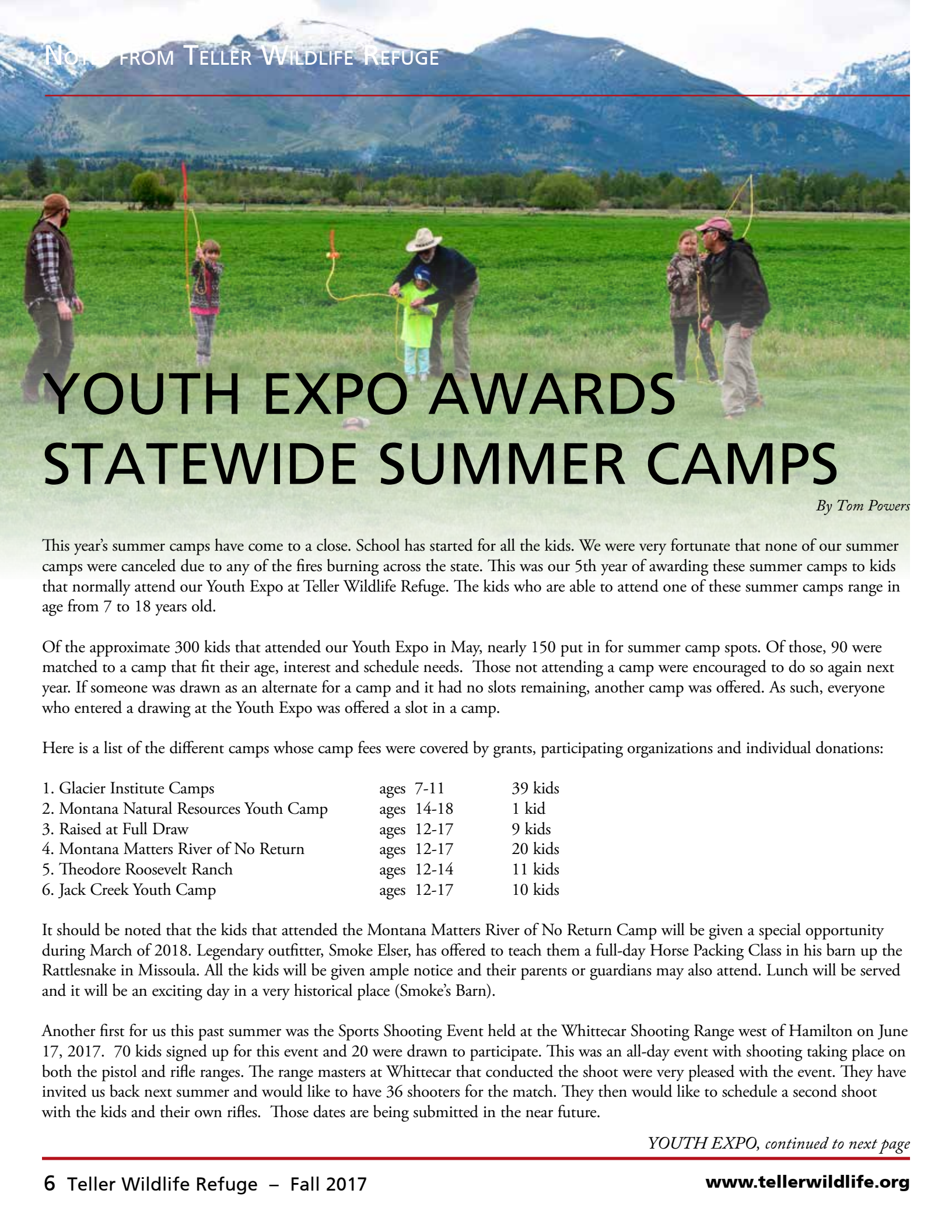
Here's to beautiful Montana fall weather and an end to fire season!



## YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNT

Thanks to a partnership with Ducks Unlimited, nine youth hunted at Teller during the youth waterfowl opener. Many thanks to volunteers, Jon Miller and Bridger Pierce, who led the effort and were proud to say that all the youth had a fun and successful hunt.

*Photo By Bridger Pierce*



# YOUTH EXPO AWARDS STATEWIDE SUMMER CAMPS

*By Tom Powers*

This year's summer camps have come to a close. School has started for all the kids. We were very fortunate that none of our summer camps were canceled due to any of the fires burning across the state. This was our 5th year of awarding these summer camps to kids that normally attend our Youth Expo at Teller Wildlife Refuge. The kids who are able to attend one of these summer camps range in age from 7 to 18 years old.

Of the approximate 300 kids that attended our Youth Expo in May, nearly 150 put in for summer camp spots. Of those, 90 were matched to a camp that fit their age, interest and schedule needs. Those not attending a camp were encouraged to do so again next year. If someone was drawn as an alternate for a camp and it had no slots remaining, another camp was offered. As such, everyone who entered a drawing at the Youth Expo was offered a slot in a camp.

Here is a list of the different camps whose camp fees were covered by grants, participating organizations and individual donations:

1. Glacier Institute Camps	ages 7-11	39 kids
2. Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp	ages 14-18	1 kid
3. Raised at Full Draw	ages 12-17	9 kids
4. Montana Matters River of No Return	ages 12-17	20 kids
5. Theodore Roosevelt Ranch	ages 12-14	11 kids
6. Jack Creek Youth Camp	ages 12-17	10 kids

It should be noted that the kids that attended the Montana Matters River of No Return Camp will be given a special opportunity during March of 2018. Legendary outfitter, Smoke Elser, has offered to teach them a full-day Horse Packing Class in his barn up the Rattlesnake in Missoula. All the kids will be given ample notice and their parents or guardians may also attend. Lunch will be served and it will be an exciting day in a very historical place (Smoke's Barn).

Another first for us this past summer was the Sports Shooting Event held at the Whittecar Shooting Range west of Hamilton on June 17, 2017. 70 kids signed up for this event and 20 were drawn to participate. This was an all-day event with shooting taking place on both the pistol and rifle ranges. The range masters at Whittecar that conducted the shoot were very pleased with the event. They have invited us back next summer and would like to have 36 shooters for the match. They then would like to schedule a second shoot with the kids and their own rifles. Those dates are being submitted in the near future.

*YOUTH EXPO, continued to next page*

# YOUTH EXPO, *continued from page 6*

There were several other camps and prizes awarded at the Youth Expo:

- Teller Wildlife Refuge's Nature Connections Summer Camp: 2 kids, plus 2 kids sponsored by Bitterroot Audubon
- B.E.A.R.: 1 kid to their choice of summer camp
- MT Bow Hunters Teen Camp: 2 kids
- MT Natural History Center Summer Camp: 1 kid
- Ducks Unlimited Youth Waterfowl Hunt on Teller Wildlife Refuge
- Pheasants Forever Youth Pheasant Hunt on Teller Wildlife Refuge
- National Wild Turkey Federation Youth Turkey Hunt on Teller Wildlife Refuge
- Upper Missouri River Walleyes Unlimited one day fishing trip at Gates of the Mountains for 2 kids
- Free Organization Merchandise

Many of the older kids are now requesting to become camp assistants at some of next year's summer camps.

When you add up the summer camps and other opportunities presented to our youth we can only say **JOB WELL DONE** by everyone in the 46 participating organizations and agencies, and let's continue to work together for our youth and our future of conservation in the great outdoors.



*Kids create pinecone bird feeders at Teller's booth.*

**Sponsored in part by -**

Additional Sponsors: Rapp Family Foundation, Earl Sherron Memorial Fund, and the Upper Missouri River Chapter of Walleyes Unlimited.

Learn more at [www.tellerwildlife.org/youth-conservation-education-expo](http://www.tellerwildlife.org/youth-conservation-education-expo)

# VOLUNTEERS VITAL TO TELLER SUCCESS

Every year, the Teller staff depends on volunteers to help further Teller's mission. Here are volunteer accomplishments from 2017 so far:

- Concrete Upgrade – Volunteers added new concrete slabs in front of the Slack Barn and Slack House.

- Debris/Fencing Projects – Volunteers helped fix and remove hazardous fence and debris from the property. Brush and grass are continually mowed around the perimeter of our riparian electric fence enclosure to ensure functionality. More large rocks were also removed from our farm fields.

- Duck Blind Clean-Up and Dressing – Each fall volunteers reset camouflage netting, cut and place cattails and repair blinds, enhancing volunteer and donor hunts and learning about blind and decoy placement for a successful hunt.

- Flower Bed/Tree Maintenance – Teller homes' lawns, trees and flowers beds are a constant project but thanks to a number of volunteers (special thanks to Jan Jost), they look beautiful throughout the season.

- Garden – Corvallis High School students manage Teller's large garden for produce sale and as a Future Farmers of America (FFA) project.

- Goose Nesting Platforms – Volunteers constructed and installed new platforms that provide a safe location for nesting geese.

- Irrigation Help – Two volunteers assisted with changing irrigation pipes on Teller's farm fields this summer while a group of volunteers stacked all of our handline pipes for the winter.

- Table Room Tally and Clean Up – Before and after wedding season, volunteers inventory and inspect plastic tables and chairs for potential damage, and clean, if necessary.



- Teller Trail – Volunteers routinely walk the Teller Trail in order to help regulate trespassers, watch for dogs without leashes and pick up litter while distributing Teller brochures.

- TnT Dinner & Auction – Over 40 volunteers contributed their time to a variety of tasks before, during and after our most successful TnT event yet. The Darby High School shop class constructed the popular metal fish centerpieces.

- Weed Pulls – Noxious weeds, houndstongue in particular, were attacked with shovels throughout the property. Seeded houndstongue was bagged (including 60 plants from one project!) and the plants will be burned when possible.

- Weekly Volunteer – Chuck Burrier once again spent his Tuesdays (and often more) at Teller assisting Pete Lindbergh, Teller's Lands Manager.

- Willow Creek Bridge – A volunteer repaired an existing bridge across Willow Creek for 4-wheeler access and cleared out overhanging trees and brush for safe passage.

- Willow Exclosures – Volunteers expanded deer-proof fenced exclosures along Willow Creek to increase cover and habitat.

- Wood Duck Nesting Boxes – Led by Jim Hamilton and Paul Hayes, a group of volunteers worked with Hamilton High School's Classroom Without Walls to fix and monitor the nesting boxes.

THANK YOU to all of our volunteers for your support and dedication this year. We are so very appreciative of all you do for Teller!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



TELLER WILDLIFE REFUGE'S 23RD ANNUAL  
**TNT DINNER  
& AUCTION**

*THANK YOU* to our sponsors, donors, attendees and volunteers who supported Teller Wildlife Refuge's TnT Dinner & Auction on June 17, 2017, a fun and special celebration at Teller's Slack Barn in the name of wildlife conservation and conservation education in the Bitterroot Valley.

**SPECIAL  
THANKS TO:**

*Auctioneer:* Rick Peverley and assistant Ron MacDonald  
*Master of Ceremonies:* Sam Lawry  
*Music:* Kelaiah Horat, violinist, & Parr Sound

*Catering:* Burns St. Bistro  
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*Bar Service:* The Rainbow Bar

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# PROJECT NIGHT FLIGHT

By Debbie Leick

In July, bird researchers from MPG Ranch installed audio equipment at Teller. The equipment, which consists of a microphone and a recorder, is part of a larger collaboration called Project Night Flight. This unique research project records the nocturnal flight calls (NFCs) of migrating birds. Many songbird species use these calls to presumably echolocate, communicate with one another, and/or maintain flock spacing as they fly at night.

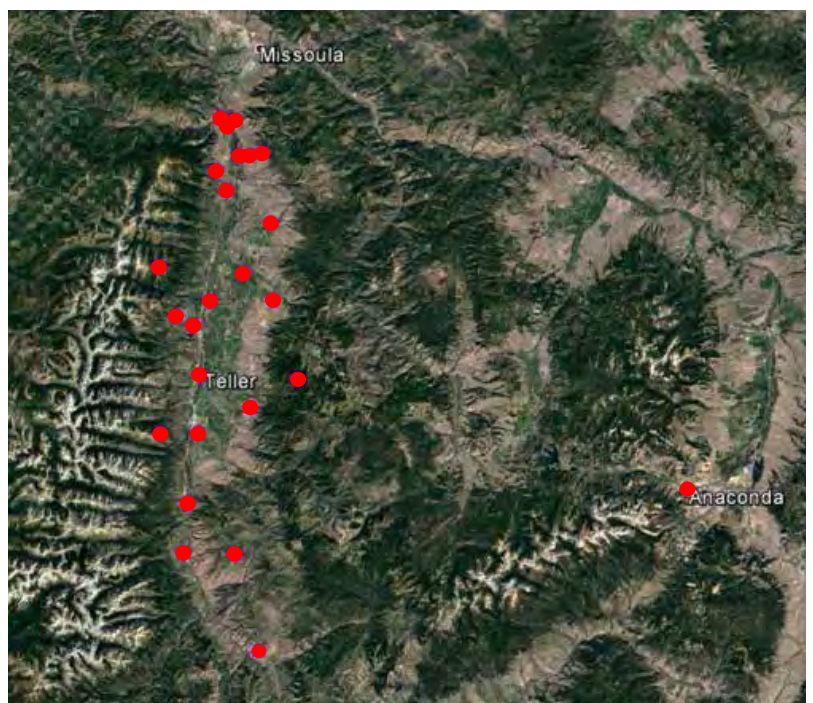
To capture and catalog the calls, we record every night during fall migration. We then process the audio files using Vesper, a customized software, to “clip” the flight calls out of the recordings. After the calls are clipped out, we can look at them in Vesper as a spectrogram and, in many cases, tell which species made the call. This visual technique turns a recorded “tseep” call into a Yellow Warbler, a long buzzy note into a Lazuli Bunting, or a distinctive “heee” into a Swainson’s Thrush.

We have also installed our recording equipment up, down, and across the Bitterroot Valley on both private and public lands. Our “acoustic array” of over 20 microphones will help us determine how, when, and what species migrate through the Bitterroot Valley and learn more about variables that affect migration (e.g., weather, urban light pollution, and elevation). Over time and many sites, these data also have the potential to track changes in migration pathways and species populations.

Preliminary results from the night of August 25th show that a minimum of 233 individual birds flew within range of the microphone at Teller. Compared to our other monitoring sites, Teller ranked third in NFCs, slightly behind two other sites also near the Bitterroot River. The top five species recorded at Teller that night include Wilson’s warbler (71), Savannah Sparrow (37), Swainson’s Thrush (26), and Chipping Sparrow (19). In the coming months, we will continue to process the terabytes of data we have collected and share the results in a future newsletter. Stay tuned!



*Microphone and mast we installed at Teller. The microphone element is housed in the white bucket.*



*Bitterroot Valley Acoustic Array. Each red dot represents a site with a microphone and recorder.*



## YOUTH TURKEY HUNT AT TELLER

Teller Wildlife Refuge and the Missoula Valley Longspurs, the local chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), partnered in May for their first youth turkey hunt on Teller. This year's hunter was 12-year-old Noah Tan from Stevensville, Montana. Noah had plenty of experience hunting deer, elk, squirrel, and trapping, but he had never hunted turkeys.

Noah, his Dad (John Tan), and Randy Tanner, who mentored the hunt, learned firsthand that turkey hunting can be a challenging and humbling experience. A steady rain had passed through the night before the hunt and likely dampened the turkey activity. Late in the morning, the team spotted two gobblers on an adjoining property but were unable to call them onto Teller. At the end of the hunt, Noah assured his Dad and Randy, "I'm going to try it again!"

Even when you don't go home with a bird, you never go home empty handed. Making memories with family, friends and mentors is what hunting is all about. The National Wild Turkey Federation thanks Teller for its continued support of youth conservation education and providing opportunities for tomorrow's hunters.

The National Wild Turkey Federation and Teller Wildlife Refuge plan to join forces again next year to host a youth hunt. Applications for that hunt were taken at the 2017 Youth Conservation & Education Expo in May. For more information on the National Wild Turkey Federation, visit [www.nwtf.org](http://www.nwtf.org). To find more information about the local chapter, visit them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/MissoulaValleyLongspurs/>.

## BITTERROOT BARN WEDDING

AT TELLER WILDLIFE REFUGE



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Our wedding package includes use of the historic Slack Barn and **acres of surrounding** grounds for **an** entire weekend, along with lodging for 14 people at our heritage homes.

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Also included in the package:

- Park-like grounds with volleyball, horseshoes and croquet
- Tables and chairs for 200
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**TELLER  
TRACKS**

Sign up for the Teller Tracks e-newsletter!  
E-mail Lauren at [lauren@tellerwildlife.org](mailto:lauren@tellerwildlife.org)



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- Yes! Please send me more information about bequests to Teller Wildlife Refuge.
- I have already included Teller Wildlife Refuge in my estate plans. Please include me as a Stewardship Society member.
- I would like to speak with someone about making a gift. Please call or email me.

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