

From: [Smith, Randy](#)
To: [Hecht, Marijke](#); [Osborne, Jeanne](#)
Cc: [Sutherland, Sue](#); [Smith, Randy](#); [Griffiths, Rob](#); [Reed, Katie](#); [Miriti, Maria](#); [Duffy, Lisa](#); [Hunt, Ryan](#); [Haab, Timothy](#)
Subject: Proposal to establish a certificate (category 1b and 2) in Environmental Education and Interpretation
Date: Friday, May 29, 2026 4:04:31 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Marijke and Jeanne,

The proposal from the School of Environment and Natural Resources to establish a certificate (category 1b and 2) in Environmental Education and Interpretation was approved by the Council on Academic Affairs at its meeting on May 28, 2026. Thank you for attending the meeting to respond to questions/comments.

No additional level of internal review/approval is necessary. This action will be included in the Council's next Annual Activities Report to the University Senate (July 2026).

The Office of the University Registrar will work with you on any implementation issues.

Please keep a copy of this message for your file on the proposal and I will do the same for the file in the Office of Academic Affairs.

If you have any questions please contact the Chair of the Council, Professor Sue Sutherland (.43), or me.

Randy



W. Randy Smith, Ph.D.

Vice Provost for Academic Programs

Office of Academic Affairs

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614-292-5881 Office

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Assisted by:

Katie Reed

Executive Assistant

(614) 292-5672

From: [Osborne, Jeanne](#)
To: [Smith, Randy](#)
Cc: [Reed, Katie](#); [Violet, Cynthia](#); [Fries, Sara](#); [Pintor, Lauren](#); [Walter, Cheryl](#); [Johnston, Renee](#); [Lewandowski, Monica](#)
Subject: Category 1B and 2 Certificate: "Environmental Education and Interpretation"
Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 10:55:05 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Certificate Environmental Education Interpretation Proposal final v2.pdf](#)

Dear Dr. Smith,

The College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Science (CFAES) is requesting Council on Academic Affairs approval of the attached proposal for a Category 1B and 2 Undergraduate Academic Certificate in 'Environmental Education and Interpretation', proposed by the School of Environment and Natural Sciences.

The proposed stand-alone certificate will provide students who have an interest in expanding their applied skills in communicating environmental concepts to stakeholders and learners an opportunity to gain a credential that demonstrates this.

Included with the proposal are statements of concurrence from academic units within the CFAES, the College of Education and Human Ecology, as well as interested units within the College of Arts and Sciences.

This Certificate Type 1B and 2 proposal was approved by the Academic Affairs Committee of the School of Environment and Natural Resources as well as the CFAES Committee on Academic Affairs.

Please let me know if any additional information is needed in support of this request.

Thank you,

Jeanne



Jeanne M. Osborne

Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
100E Agricultural Administration, 2120 Fyffe Rd.
Columbus, OH 43210
Tel: 614-292-1734
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'Unexpected kindness is the most powerful, least costly, and most underrated agent of human change' (Bob Kerrey)

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Attached is a proposal from the School of Environment and Natural Resources to establish an undergraduate certificate (Type 1b: Undergraduate Embedded Certificate and Type 2: Post-Bachelor Degree Stand-Alone) in Environmental Education and Interpretation (EE&I).

This certificate will have broad appeal to students across all majors within SENR who seek to develop applied skills in communicating complex environmental concepts in ways that inspire responsible stewardship of the natural world. We believe that this certificate will also attract students outside of CFAES as well as post-baccalaureate individuals who have diverse interests in the environment and are interested in careers within a range of education, outreach, and conservation settings.

This proposed certificate has been reviewed and approved by the SENR Academic Affairs Committee.

Thank you for your consideration.

Required Information

Name of Proposed Certificate: **Certificate in Environmental Education & Interpretation**
Certificate Type: Types 1b and 2

- 1b: Post-secondary undergraduate academic certificate: Embedded Certificate. Intended for post-high school diploma students who wish to earn an academic certificate by completing courses with undergraduate academic credit in this topic area.
- 2: Post-bachelor degree: Stand-Alone. Designed for post-bachelor degree students who wish to earn a post-baccalaureate credential to supplement their undergraduate degree program.

Delivery: In-person

Proposed Implementation Date: Autumn Semester 2026

Academic Unit Responsible: School of Environment and Natural Resources (SENR)

Rationale

Skills in environmental education and interpretation complement a wide range of academic, professional, and personal goals. Students completing the Environmental Education & Interpretation certificate will be able to design, implement, and evaluate environmental education and interpretation programs grounded in environmental literacy, place-based education, natural history knowledge, and learner-centered pedagogy. They will demonstrate skills in program planning, instructional strategies, assessment, and interpretive techniques for diverse audiences across the lifespan in formal, informal, and nonformal settings. Graduates will be able to apply inclusive, developmentally appropriate, and ethically responsible practices to foster engagement with and stewardship of the natural world.

Likely Sources of Demand and Student Enrollment

This certificate will appeal to a wide range of students within SENR. SENR students across Natural Resource Management (NRM), Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife (FFW), Environmental Science (ES), and Environmental Policy and Decision Making (EPDM) commonly express interest in building additional advanced skills and certifications in environmental education and interpretation. This certificate will expand the ability to pursue this training beyond the sub-specializations within the Natural Resources Management major curriculum, giving any OSU student (from majors both within and outside of SENR) a value-add opportunity to attach formal training in environmental education and interpretation to their program of study. Due to allowable overlap (50% with major, minor, or other certificate), SENR students (FFW, ES, NRM, and EPDM) will be able to complete the EE&I certificate with only three courses beyond what is required for their degree. SENR academic and career advisors work closely with students to help them understand how to enhance their academic plan of study with certificate and skill development opportunities. It is critical for SENR students to build their resumes through co-curricular opportunities alongside completion of their major program of study - this is a central aspect of both SENR career and academic advising. This certificate will be well-supported by the SENR advising staff who will be able to articulate its professional relevance to anyone seeking additional skill development that will better prepare them for a range of careers adjacent to environmental education, communication and outreach, interpretation, conservation, and visitor services.

The three required courses in the EE&I certificate core (ENR 3612, ENR 4611, and ENR 5420) are currently offered once per year. Demand for these courses is forecasted to remain steady since they can be used to satisfy requirements within multiple ENR major curricula. These three courses are also integrated into the requirements for the proposed SENR Parks and Recreation major, which is currently in the curricular review process.

We anticipate that this certificate will also appeal to students from majors within the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, College of Engineering, College of Education and Human Ecology, College of Public Health, and the John Glenn College of Public Affairs, among others. This certificate will be a valuable credential for students who desire to integrate environmental education and communication skills into many kinds of career paths, add depth to their own sense of environmental literacy and sense-of-place, and ultimately become responsible environmental stewards themselves.

Finally, we anticipate demand from post-baccalaureate students seeking to apply these skills within their chosen career field and/or to earn credit or continuing education units (CEUs) in this area for workforce development.

Certificate Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the academic certificate in Environmental Education and Interpretation, students will possess advanced skills in environmental communication, interpretation, and program planning. In addition to project-based work, students will also receive training in two nationally recognized environmental education programs: Project WET and Project WILD. The certificate curriculum will provide students with the tools they need to be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate understanding of the professional responsibilities associated with practicing environmental education & interpretation including high standards for instruction and professional conduct
- 2) Apply foundational principles of environmental education, interpretation & communication
- 3) Plan and deliver inclusive, developmentally appropriate education and interpretive programs for diverse audiences
- 4) Demonstrate understanding of evaluation tools for environmental education and interpretation program effectiveness
- 5) Apply assessment strategies to measure learning outcomes in environmental education and interpretive activities

As a result, students will be well-prepared for careers in both formal and nonformal educational settings.

Certificate Requirements

Credit hours required: 15 credit hours minimum; at least 6 credits at the 3000-level or above

Overlap with degree program: 50% maximum overlap with degree program (including major, minor, other certificate, or GE)

Grades required: a grade of C or better is required in all courses; a minimum of 2.0 cumulative point-hour ratio is required.

Relationship to Other Programs at the University

While there are several experiences available to Ohio State students who are interested in the environment, science communication, or education, there is not one cohesive, credentialed pathway that focuses on environmental education and interpretation. The Science and Environmental Communication certificate housed within the Ohio State University School of

Communication has some alignment with the environmental communication aspect of this certificate but does not cover program planning and environmental education with the same depth as this program of study. The purpose of the EE&I certificate and the training that it will provide is distinct from other programs at Ohio State. We continue to see steady employer demand for the skillset that students will acquire through this proposed certificate. Skills in environmental education and interpretation are valuable across various job sectors including metroparks, zoos, federal and state agencies such as the U.S. National Park Service and Ohio Department of Natural Resources, city governments, museums, nature centers, K-12 education, soil and water conservation districts, policy centers, and non-profit organizations. The certificate will complement diverse programs of study at Ohio State and draw students from multidisciplinary backgrounds who are seeking careers with community engagement, social media and design, education, outreach, communication, and/or interpretation components. To our knowledge, there are no similar undergraduate programs in Ohio that focus on environmental education and interpretation. There are undergraduate programs in environmental-related studies at multiple Ohio institutions; however, these programs do not focus on training students specifically in environmental education, program planning, communication, and interpretation. Launching an environmental education and interpretation certificate will enable SENR to lead efforts to train students in these skills which are highly sought after by employers throughout the state of Ohio.

Curricular Requirements for Completion

Required credit hours: 15

Required Courses (9 credits)

- ENR 3612 Introduction to Environmental Education & Communications (3 cr.)
- ENR 4611 Environmental Interpretation and Visitor Services (3 cr.)
- ENR 5420 Environmental Education in Action (3 cr.)

Selective Courses (Minimum of 6 credits; a minimum of 1 course from each category is required)

- Program planning and implementation
 - ENR 4680 Nature & the Lifespan (3 cr.)
 - COMLDR 3330 Program Development and Evaluation (3 cr.)
 - COMLDR 5330 Methods of Teaching in Nonformal Learning Environments (3 cr.)
 - KNPE 2307 Adventure-Based Learning (3 cr.)
 - ENR 5640 Program Planning (3 cr.)
 - AGRCOMM 5535 Data Visualization and Scientific Storytelling in CFAES (3 cr.)
- Taxonomy/Identification course:

- ENR 2360 Ecology and Conservation of Birds (Stone Lab) (2 cr.)
- ENR 3321 Biology & ID of Woody Forest Plants (3 cr.)
- ENR 4610 Natural History of Ohio (3 cr.)
- ENR 5260 Soil Landscapes: Morphology, Genesis, and Classification (3 cr.)
- ENR 5350.01 Taxonomy and Behavior of Aquatic Invertebrates (3 cr.)
- ENR 5350.02 Taxonomy and Behavior of Fishes (3 cr.)
- ENR 5364.01 Mammalian Wildlife Biology & Mgmt (3 cr.)
- ENR 5364.02 Avian Wildlife Biology & Mgmt (3 cr.)
- EARTHSC 2122: Climate and Life Over Billions of Years on Earth (4 cr.)
- ENTMLGY 3300: Insects of Ohio (2 cr.)

This curricular structure is endorsed by the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), and the EE&I certificate is in the process of being submitted for NAAEE Higher Education Accreditation which requires two years of assessment and is subsequently good for seven years. NAAEE certification will distinguish our graduates as qualified professionals with the skillset needed to deliver effective environmental programs.

Possible Concurrence

- Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership
- School of Communication
- College of Education and Human Ecology

Minimum Requirements for Admittance

All Ohio State undergraduate students in good academic standing may pursue this certificate program. No prerequisite coursework is required to begin taking courses toward the certificate core.

Post-baccalaureate individuals who are interested in earning the EE&I certificate should reach out to the EE&I certificate coordinator. Enrollment procedures will differ depending on the individual's current and/or past affiliation with Ohio State. A formal application through Extended Education within the Office of Undergraduate Education may be required.

Administrative Program

The certificate will be housed in SENR. Students must meet with the EE&I Certificate Coordinator within SENR to declare. The EE&I Certificate Coordinator will provide advising support for all students enrolled in the certificate program.

Program Faculty Review

The Environmental Education and Interpretation (EE&I) Oversight Committee will provide curricular and administrative oversight. The EE&I Oversight Committee will be composed of four faculty members within the School of Environment and Natural Resources.

A staff member on the SENR undergraduate academic team will serve as the EE&I Certificate Coordinator/advising contact.

Assessment

- 1) Students are required to complete all courses in this certificate program with a minimum grade of C or above. Courses for which a C- is earned will not apply to this program of study.
- 2) All students in ENR 3612 will participate in an Environmental Education & Communications Final Project Showcase. This is not only a celebration of work created by the students but also an annual opportunity for members of the EE&I Oversight Committee to review and assess student learning.
- 3) All students in ENR 5420 will complete a learning portfolio composed of multiple self-reflections and synthetic papers. A random selection of 5-10 portfolios will be reviewed annually by the EE&O Oversight Committee.
- 4) The EE&I certificate coordinator will maintain an alumni database to track career outcomes. A survey will be administered to program alumni within one year of graduation that will assist with compiling data on career outcomes and readiness. A focus group will be held annually in ENR 5420 (which students typically will take during fall of their final year of study) as an additional method of gathering information and student reflections on their EE&I coursework and experience with the certificate program overall.

Appendix A – Advising Sheet

The Ohio State University

College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences | School of Environment and Natural Resources

Environmental Education and Interpretation Certificate, Type 1b or 2

Advising Contact:

Cheryl Walter, SENR Undergraduate Academic Advising Manager, walter.266@osu.edu, 614-292-2265

Faculty Contact:

Dr. Marijke Hecht, Assistant Professor of Environmental Education, SENR, hecht.102@osu.edu, 614-292-2265

Students completing the Environmental Education & Interpretation certificate will be able to design, implement, and evaluate environmental education and interpretation programs grounded in environmental literacy, place-based education, natural history knowledge, and learner-centered pedagogy. They will demonstrate skills in program planning, instructional strategies, assessment, and interpretive techniques for diverse audiences in formal, informal, and nonformal settings. Graduates will be able to apply inclusive, developmentally appropriate, and ethically responsible practices to foster engagement with and stewardship of the natural world.

The EE&I certificate requires a minimum of 15 credit hours from core courses in environmental education, interpretation, and visitor services combined with elective coursework based on student academic and professional development goals.

Pre-requisites: None

Core courses: Students are required to take each of the following:

ENR 3612 Introduction to Environmental Education & Communications (3 cr.)

ENR 4611 Environmental Interpretation and Visitor Services (3 cr.)

ENR 5420 Environmental Education in Action (3 cr.)

Selective courses: Students must complete a minimum of 6 hours of elective coursework; Students must complete 1 course from each category.

Program planning and implementation (must choose one)

ENR 4680 Nature & the Lifespan (3 cr.)
 COMLDR 3330 Program Development and Evaluation (3 cr.)
 COMLDR 5330 Methods of Teaching in Nonformal Learning Environments (3 cr.)
 KNPE 2307 Adventure-Based Learning (3 cr.)
 ENR 5640 Program Planning (3 cr.)
 AGRCOMM 5535 Data Visualization and Scientific Storytelling in CFAES (3 cr.)

Taxonomy/Identification (Must choose one)

ENR 2360 Ecology and Conservation of Birds (Stone Lab) (2 cr.)
 ENR 3321 Biology & ID of Woody Forest Plants (3 cr.)
 ENR 4610 Natural History of Ohio (3 cr.)
 ENR 5260 Soil Landscapes: Morphology, Genesis, and Classification (3 cr.)
 ENR 5350.01 Taxonomy and Behavior of Aquatic Invertebrates (3 cr.)
 ENR 5350.02 Taxonomy and Behavior of Fishes (3 cr.)
 ENR 5364.01 Mammalian Wildlife Biology & Mgmt (3 cr.)
 ENR 5364.02 Avian Wildlife Biology & Mgmt (3 cr.)
 EARTHSC 2122: Climate and Life Over Billions of Years on Earth (4 cr.)
 ENTMLGY 3300: Insects of Ohio (2 cr.)

Overlap with degree program: A student is permitted to overlap up to 50% of the credit hours with other degree requirements (major, minor, or other certificates).

Grades required:

- A minimum grade of C is required for the course to apply toward the certificate
- A minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA for all certificate coursework
- Course work graded pass/non-pass cannot count in the certificate
- No more than 3 credit-hours of course work graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory may count toward the certificate
- No more than 3 credit hours of xx93 coursework may count toward the certificate

Certificate approval:

The certificate can be certified in the Buckeye Degree Planner audit system by the student's assigned academic advisor. If the certificate is not complete on the audit, the student must meet with the EE&I Certificate Coordinator for approval.

Appendix B: Sample Program for Completion in Two Years

Year 1	
Autumn	Spring
• ENR 3612 – Introduction to Environmental Education and Communications (3 cr.)	• ENR 4611 – Environmental Interpretation and Visitor Services (3 cr.) • Elective (3 cr.)
Year 2	
Autumn	Spring
• ENR 5420 – Environmental Education in Action (3 cr.)	• Elective (3 cr.)

Appendix C: Course List

Core Courses

ENR 3612 Introduction to Environmental Education & Communications (3 cr.) This course introduces best practices for environmental education and communications, including approaches for direct instruction in formal (e.g., K-12 schools) and informal settings (e.g., parks and museums), as well as indirect communications with a general audience (e.g., blog posts, social media). We will also focus on strategies for addressing complex and/or controversial environmental topics. Prereq: Not open to students with credit for 3611.

ENR 4611 Environmental Interpretation and Visitor Services (3 cr.) Principles and practice in communicating with visitors in leisure and non-formal education settings. Prereq: Not open to students with credit for 410.

ENR 5420 Environmental Education in Action (3 cr.) Explores best practices for hands-on environmental education. Explores theory and methods for developing environmental education activities that improve landscapes while also meeting academic education standards. Prereq: 3611, or 3612; or Grad standing; or permission of instructor for undergraduate students outside of ENR.

Program Planning and Implementation

ENR 4680 Nature & the Lifespan (3 cr.) Examination of human-nature interactions across the life span; theoretical foundations; benefits to health, well-being, and ecosystems; and application.

COMLDR 3330 Program Development and Evaluation (3 cr.) Introductory skills necessary to develop, deliver, and evaluate educational programs. Students will examine the principles, methods, and models of program development and evaluation.

COMLDR 5330 Methods of Teaching in Nonformal Learning Environments (3 cr.) Examining the teaching and learning process with emphasis on planning and delivering agricultural instruction for agribusiness, extension, and non-formal learning environments.

KNPE 2307 Adventure-Based Learning (3 cr.) Acquisition of performance skills including philosophy, facilitation techniques, and safety of adventure-based learning activities and their roles in different settings.

ENR 5640 Program Planning (3 cr.) Inventory and evaluation of natural resources for program planning with consideration of goals, objectives and actions, budgeting, and planning documents. Prereq: 3600. Prereq or concur: 3200 and 3700; or Grad standing.

AGRCOMM 5535 Data Visualization and Scientific Storytelling in CFAES (3 cr.) Introduction to design principles and skills needed to clearly and effectively report research results and technical information in both academic and nonacademic communication contexts in food, agricultural, and environmental sciences. Prereq: Honors, Sr, or Grad standing; or permission of instructor.

Taxonomy/Identification

ENR 2360 Ecology and Conservation of Birds (Stone Lab) (2 cr.) Introduction to the ecology and conservation of birds, with special emphasis on field ornithology and student research projects. Course integrates many concepts to build understanding of how research and management can support bird conservation.

ENR 3321 Biology & ID of Woody Forest Plants (3 cr.) Field identification of trees, shrubs, and vines in temperate forest ecosystems; basic biological principles of morphology, reproduction, growth, genetics, and taxonomy of major woody species. Prereq: Not open to students with credit for 221.

ENR 4610 Natural History of Ohio (3 cr.) Field course emphasizing inter-relationship among physical and biological factors in various ecological settings; field techniques and identification skills used for research paper. Prereq: Not open to students with credit for 510.

ENR 5260 Soil Landscapes: Morphology, Genesis, and Classification (3 cr.) Course in soil genesis, classification and mapping. Prereq: 3000 and 3001; or Grad standing; or permission of instructor. Not open to students with credit for 650.

ENR 5350.01 Taxonomy and Behavior of Aquatic Invertebrates (3 cr.) Taxonomy and behavior of the major groups of aquatic invertebrates, with an emphasis on North American freshwater macroinvertebrates. 1-2 required field trips. Prereq: Not open to students with credit for Entmlgy 5350.01. Cross-listed in Entmlgy.

ENR 5350.02 Taxonomy and Behavior of Fishes (3 cr.) Taxonomy and behavior of the major groups of fishes, with an emphasis on North American freshwater fishes.

ENR 5364.01 Mammalian Wildlife Biology & Mgmt (3 cr.) Identification, ecology, and population management of North American mammals. 1-2 Sat field trips required. Prereq: 3300 (319) or equiv, or Grad standing, or permission of instructor. Not open to students with credit for 624.

ENR 5364.02 Avian Wildlife Biology & Mgmt (3 cr.) Identification, ecology, and population management of North American birds. 1-2 Sat field trips required. Prereq: 3300 (319) or equiv, or Grad standing, or permission of instructor. Not open to students with credit for 624.

EARTHSC 2122: Climate and Life Over Billions of Years on Earth (4 cr.) Origin and evolution of Earth, including its physical, chemical and biological components; principles of geologic inference and their application to interpreting Earth. Prereq: Not open to students with credit for 1122. GE nat sci phys course.

ENTMLGY 3300: Insects of Ohio (2 cr.) This lecture and field course focuses on the basic biology and diversity of insects and related arthropods of Ohio. We will study anatomy, physiology, behavior, and evolutionary processes associated with insects, and learn how these principles contribute to the diversity of insects in Ohio. Students will also learn how to identify insects during field-based collection and ID sessions. Prereq: Not open to students with credit for 4001.

Appendix D: Response to Departmental Curriculum Suggestions

From the Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology (EEOB)

Suggestion: To add “EEOB 5610, Translating Evolution” to the electives category under *Program Planning and Implementation*

Our response: This seems too specialized for the boundaries of this certificate. There is a significant amount of science concepts that environmental educators and interpreters may need to address, but we don’t need to have them cover all of these for this certificate.

Suggestion: To add the following EEOB courses to the electives category under *Taxonomy/Identification*: “EEOB 2210 Biodiversity of Ohio – Plants,” “EEOB 2220 Biodiversity of Ohio – Birds,” “EEOB 4220 Focused Study of Ecology and Evolution – Mammals.”

Our response: These topics all appear to be covered by our existing options.

From the Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership

Suggestion: To add the following two courses to the electives category under *Program Planning and Implementation*

“AGRCOMM 5535 – Data Visualization and Scientific Storytelling in CFAES,” – This course seems to me to be an excellent fit for an environmental interpreter who may want to develop print or digital materials to support their narrative presentations. Dr. Annie Specht does a tremendous job of balancing practical application of digital tools for making data visually palatable but also helping students find applications of communication theory in their areas of interest/expertise. While some students approach the class with an interest in data visualization for scientific purposes, many also have an interest in helping lay audiences better understand scientific data. Dr. Specht does a great job of helping students from either of these perspectives to advance their skill set.

“COMLDR 3330 – Program Development and Evaluation,” – I know you have your own program development course and logically would prefer students take it, but in the event that students have schedule conflicts, etc. I hope you would consider Dr. Scott Scheer’s program development course to be an appropriate substitute when needed. Scott doesn’t have a particular area of contextual focus in this class beyond nonformal education settings. We think this could serve your students’ needs well if needed.

Our response: We agree for the reasons outlined in the request that both courses should be added to the elective options.

From the School of Earth Sciences

Request: The list of Taxonomy/Identification courses for Environmental Education is somewhat narrow if this is indeed intended to prepare students for environmental education jobs in places like the metroparks, National Park Service and/or ODNR. Many of those educational positions overlap significantly with the geosphere. Therefore, we request adding “EARTHSC 2122: Climate and Life Over Billions of Years on Earth” to the list of electives. This course is offered most Autumn and Spring semesters. This change may also enhance the appeal of the certificate to SES majors as well.

Our response: We agree for the reasons outlined in the request that this is a very good addition to the elective options.

Appendix E: Assessment Rubric

	Baseline	Advanced	Mastery
ELO 1: Demonstrate understanding of the professional responsibilities associated with practicing environmental education & interpretation including high standards for instruction and professional conduct	Demonstrates basic understanding of standards for instruction and professional conduct including facilitating learner critical thinking and action skills and supporting reflexive and reflective practices	Applies standards in most contexts; shows clear understanding and ability to facilitate learner critical thinking and action skills and support of reflexive and reflective practices.	Integrates standards seamlessly; consistently demonstrates understanding and ability to facilitate learner critical thinking and action skills and support of reflexive and reflective practices; demonstrates excellence in applying professional responsibilities
	Baseline	Advanced	Mastery
ELO 2: Apply foundational principles of environmental education, interpretation & communication	Demonstrates basic understanding of environmental education concepts; may apply principles inconsistently; communication may lack clarity or audience focus.	Applies principles accurately in most contexts; shows clear understanding of interpretation techniques; communication is organized and audience appropriate.	Integrates principles seamlessly; adapts interpretation and communication strategies creatively for diverse contexts; demonstrates leadership in applying best practices
	Baseline	Advanced	Mastery
ELO 3: Plan and deliver inclusive, developmentally appropriate education and interpretive programs for diverse audiences	Plans programs that meet basic requirements but may lack inclusivity or developmental appropriateness; delivery is functional but limited in engagement.	Designs programs that consider audience diversity and developmental needs; delivery is engaging and uses inclusive strategies effectively.	Creates innovative, inclusive programs tailored to varied audiences; delivery is dynamic, interactive, and demonstrates cultural competence and accessibility.

	Baseline	Advanced	Mastery
ELO 4: Demonstrate understanding of evaluation tools for environmental education and interpretation program effectiveness	Identifies basic evaluation tools and mostly applies them superficially; may have limited ability to interpret results for program improvement.	Selects appropriate evaluation tools and applies them correctly; interprets data to make informed recommendations for program enhancement.	Demonstrates expertise in evaluation design and implementation; synthesizes data to provide actionable insights and innovative improvements.
	Baseline	Advanced	Mastery
ELO 5: Apply assessment strategies to measure learning outcomes in environmental education and interpretive activities	Uses simple assessment strategies with superficial alignment to learning outcomes; feedback is general and may lack depth.	Applies varied assessment strategies aligned with learning objectives; provides constructive feedback and uses results to adjust instruction.	Designs comprehensive assessment plans; integrates comprehensive assessments; uses data to refine programs and demonstrate impact.

From: [Washburn, Shannon](#)
To: [Lower, Brian](#)
Cc: [Pintor, Lauren](#); [Johnston, Renee](#); [Fries, Sara](#); [Haab, Timothy](#)
Subject: RE: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation
Date: Friday, January 23, 2026 1:55:08 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Thank you Brian,

We offer both our concurrence with your proposal, and the following two courses as suggestions for your consideration as electives in the certificate curriculum:

AGRCOMM 5535 – Data Visualization and Scientific Storytelling in CFAES – this course seems to me to be an excellent fit for an environmental interpreter who may want to develop print or digital materials to support their narrative presentations. Dr. Annie Specht does a tremendous job of balancing practical application of digital tools for making data visually palatable, but also helping students find applications of communication theory in their areas of interest/expertise. While some students approach the class with an interest in data visualization for scientific purposes, many also have an interest in helping lay audiences better understand scientific data. Dr. Specht does a great job of helping students from either of these perspectives to advance their skill set.

COMLDR 3330 – Program Development and Evaluation – I know you have your own program development course and logically would prefer students take it, but in the event that students have schedule conflicts, etc. I hope you would consider Dr. Scott Scheer's program development course to be an appropriate substitute when needed. Scott doesn't have a particular area of contextual focus in this class beyond nonformal education settings. We think this could serve your student's needs well if needed.

Thank you for considering.

Shannon



Shannon G. Washburn, PhD

Chair, Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership
Sanford G. Price and Isabelle P. Barbee Chair in Teaching, Advising, and Learning
 Professor, Agricultural Education

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From: Lower, Brian <lower.30@osu.edu>

Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 4:02 AM

To: Washburn, Shannon <washburn.130@osu.edu>

Cc: Pintor, Lauren <pintor.6@osu.edu>; Johnston, Renee <johnston.230@osu.edu>; Fries, Sara <fries.71@osu.edu>; Haab, Timothy <haab.1@osu.edu>

Subject: Re: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Hi Shannon,

Thank you for sharing the proposal with your faculty. I'm glad that you see meaningful opportunities for connection between our two units around this certificate program.

We would welcome any recommendations from ACEL faculty that you think would strengthen the program.

Best regards,
Brian

From: Washburn, Shannon <washburn.130@osu.edu>

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 2:19 PM

To: Lower, Brian <lower.30@osu.edu>

Cc: Pintor, Lauren <pintor.6@osu.edu>; Johnston, Renee <johnston.230@osu.edu>; Fries, Sara <fries.71@osu.edu>; Haab, Timothy <haab.1@osu.edu>

Subject: RE: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Brian,

Thanks for reaching out. I worked closely with a good friend (Ted Cable) at K-State who was an Environmental Interpretation guru and I had the opportunity to serve on a couple of his students' graduate committees in this area. Based on that experience, I think there are many opportunities for connection between our two units on this program. I'm happy to see that you've listed COMLDR 5330 as an elective in your program. I think we may have one or two other pertinent courses for your consideration. Are you open to a couple of suggestions for your elective list?

I'll share your proposal with my faculty and get back to you by Feb 3.

Thanks,

Shannon



Shannon G. Washburn, PhD

Chair, Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership
Sanford G. Price and Isabelle P. Barbee Chair in Teaching, Advising, and Learning
 Professor, Agricultural Education

College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

200 Agricultural Administration Building, 2120 Fyffe Rd., Columbus, OH 43210

614 -292 -6909 Office / 614 -292 -7007 Fax

washburn.130@osu.edu / acel.osu.edu

From: Lower, Brian <lower.30@osu.edu>

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 12:43 PM

To: Washburn, Shannon <washburn.130@osu.edu>

Cc: Pintor, Lauren <pintor.6@osu.edu>; Johnston, Renee <johnston.230@osu.edu>; Fries, Sara <fries.71@osu.edu>; Haab, Timothy <haab.1@osu.edu>

Subject: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Dear Dr. Washburn,

I'm emailing you on behalf of SENR's Academic Affairs Committee. SENR is requesting concurrence for a new Type 1B Undergraduate Embedded Certificate in Environmental Education and Interpretation. This certificate will provide students the opportunity to develop applied skills in communication of environmental concepts to inspire stewardship of our natural world. We believe that it will appeal to students who are interested in careers in education, outreach, and conservation settings.

I would appreciate it if you would forward the attached certificate proposal to the appropriate faculty within your department. We would appreciate feedback by Tuesday, February 3, 2026.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Best regards,

Brian



Brian H. Lower, Ph.D.

Professor

The Ohio State University

College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

School of Environment and Natural Resources

210 Kottman Hall

2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210

614-292-2265

Lower.30@osu.edu / <https://senr.osu.edu/our-people/brian-h-lower> / Honorific: Dr.

From: [Osborne, Jeanne](#)
To: [Fries, Sara](#)
Subject: FW: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation
Date: Thursday, January 22, 2026 8:52:42 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image001.png](#)

Dear Sara,

First concurrence for the certificate.

Take care,
 Jeanne

From: Andrews, Adam <andrews.171@osu.edu>
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 9:34 AM
To: Osborne, Jeanne <osborne.2@osu.edu>
Cc: Sabel, Jaime <sabel.12@osu.edu>; Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Dr. Osborne,

I write on behalf of the Center for Life Sciences Education with our concurrence for your proposed Type 1B Undergraduate Embedded Certificate in Environmental Education and Interpretation.

The CLSE does not offer any competing curriculum and currently do not offer any courses that would be especially beneficial to suggest as electives.

I wish you success with the approval process.

Regards,
 Adam



Adam L. Andrews
 Assistant Director for Curriculum & Instruction

College of Arts and Sciences | Center for Life Sciences Education

240D Jennings Hall, 1735 Neil Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210
 (614) 247-6345 Office / (614) 292-4390 Fax
andrews.171@osu.edu clse.osu.edu

From: Osborne, Jeanne <osborne.2@osu.edu>

Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 1:26 PM

To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>

Cc: Fries, Sara <fries.71@osu.edu>; Pintor, Lauren <pintor.6@osu.edu>; Walter, Cheryl <walter.266@osu.edu>

Subject: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Dear Dr. Martin and Dr. Vankeerbergen

The School of Environment and Natural Resources in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences is requesting concurrence for a new Type 1B Undergraduate Embedded Certificate in Environmental Education and Interpretation. This certificate will provide students the opportunity to develop applied skills in communication of environmental concepts to inspire stewardship of our natural world. We believe that it will appeal to students who are interested in careers in education, outreach, and conservation settings.

I would appreciate it if you would forward the attached certificate proposal to the appropriate units within your college, including the School of Communication. Considering the upcoming MLK holiday, we would appreciate feedback by Tuesday, February 3, 2026.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Take care,

Jeanne



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Jeanne M. Osborne

Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
100E Agricultural Administration, 2120 Fyffe Rd.
Columbus, OH 43210
Tel: 614-292-1734
Fax: 614-292-1218
e-mail: Osborne.2@osu.edu

'Unexpected kindness is the most powerful, least costly, and most underrated agent of human change' (Bob Kerrey)

From: [Osborne, Jeanne](#)
To: [Fries, Sara](#); [Pintor, Lauren](#); [Walter, Cheryl](#)
Subject: FW: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation
Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 8:32:45 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

One final concurrence and suggestion.

Take care,

Jeanne

From: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 9:25 AM
To: Osborne, Jeanne <osborne.2@osu.edu>
Cc: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Hi Jeanne

I believe the deadline has passed for concurrence. We have only heard positive responses to the concurrence request. Earth Sciences did make the following request:

We do have one request: The three required courses make sense. But in terms of electives, the list of Taxonomy/Identification courses for Environmental Education is somewhat narrow if this is indeed intended to prepare students for environmental education jobs in places like the metroparks, National Park Service and/or ODNR. Many of those educational positions overlap significantly with the geosphere. Therefore, we request adding ***EARTHSC 2122: Climate and Life Over Billions of Years on Earth*** to the list of electives. This course is offered most Autumn and Spring semesters. This change may also enhance the appeal of the certificate to SES majors as well.



Andrew W. Martin

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education
 Professor of Sociology
 114 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall
 Columbus, OH 43210
 614-247-6641 Office
martin.1026@osu.edu

From: Osborne, Jeanne <osborne.2@osu.edu>

Sent: Monday, January 26, 2026 1:28 PM

To: Freudenstein, John <freudenstein.1@osu.edu>; Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>

Subject: RE: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Thank you! I will pass this along to the School.

Take care,

Jeanne



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Jeanne M. Osborne

Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs

College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

100E Agricultural Administration, 2120 Fyffe Rd.

Columbus, OH 43210

Tel: 614-292-1734

Fax: 614-292-1218

e-mail: Osborne.2@osu.edu

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From: Freudenstein, John <freudenstein.1@osu.edu>

Sent: Monday, January 26, 2026 1:23 PM

To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Osborne, Jeanne <osborne.2@osu.edu>

Subject: RE: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Dear Jeanne and Andrew:

EEOB provides concurrence on this certificate but requests that some of our courses be allowed to fulfill the selective course requirements. These include:

Program planning and implementation:

EEOB 5610 Translating Evolution

Taxonomy/identification courses:

EEOB 2210 Biodiversity of Ohio – Plants
 EEOB 2220 Biodiversity of Ohio - Birds
 EEOB 4220 Focused Study of Ecology and Evolution - Mammals

Kind regards,

John



John V. Freudenstein, PhD

Professor

Vice Chair for Undergraduate Studies

Director of the Herbarium (OS)

Dept. of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology

1315 Kinnear Road

Columbus, OH 43212

614-688-0363

freudenstein.1@osu.edu eeob.osu.edu

From: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>

Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 2:58 PM

To: _ASC SBS UG Directors <ASC-SBS-UG-Directors@osu.edu>; _ASC SBS-Chairs <ASC-SBS-Chairs@osu.edu>; _ASC NMS UG Directors <ASC-NMS-UG-Directors@osu.edu>; _ASC NMS Chairs Directors <ASC-nms-chairs-directors@osu.edu>

Cc: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>

Subject: FW: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Hi everyone

See attached a new certificate on environmental education and interpretation from FAES. OAA rules stipulate that any new curriculum receive concurrence from NMS and SBS units. And while it probably is distinct from curriculum in our college, it may be of interest to the School of Communication.

I would ask that you have a response to the concurrence request no later than Monday, February 2nd (no response by that day indicates concurrence).

Best
Andrew



Andrew W. Martin

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education
Professor of Sociology
114 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall
Columbus, OH 43210
614-247-6641 Office
martin.1026@osu.edu

From: Osborne, Jeanne <osborne.2@osu.edu>
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 1:26 PM
To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Cc: Fries, Sara <fries.71@osu.edu>; Pintor, Lauren <pintor.6@osu.edu>; Walter, Cheryl <walter.266@osu.edu>
Subject: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Dear Dr. Martin and Dr. Vankeerbergen

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I would appreciate it if you would forward the attached certificate proposal to the appropriate units within your college, including the School of Communication. Considering the upcoming MLK holiday, we would appreciate feedback by Tuesday, February 3, 2026.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Take care,

Jeanne



Jeanne M. Osborne

Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
100E Agricultural Administration, 2120 Fyffe Rd.
Columbus, OH 43210
Tel: 614-292-1734
Fax: 614-292-1218
e-mail: Osborne.2@osu.edu

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From: [Osborne, Jeanne](#)
To: [Fries, Sara](#); [Pintor, Lauren](#)
Subject: FW: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation
Date: Monday, January 26, 2026 12:28:45 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image001.png](#)

Dear Sara and Lauren,

Concurrence with a request to include courses in the electives for this certificate.

Jeanne

From: Freudenstein, John <freudenstein.1@osu.edu>
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2026 1:23 PM
To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Osborne, Jeanne <osborne.2@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

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Kind regards,

John



John V. Freudenstein, PhD

Professor
 Vice Chair for Undergraduate Studies
 Director of the Herbarium (OS)
 Dept. of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology
 1315 Kinnear Road
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From: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>
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To: _ASC SBS UG Directors <ASC-SBS-UG-Directors@osu.edu>; _ASC SBS-Chairs <ASC-SBS-Chairs@osu.edu>; _ASC NMS UG Directors <ASC-NMS-UG-Directors@osu.edu>; _ASC NMS Chairs Directors <ASC-nms-chairs-directors@osu.edu>
Cc: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Subject: FW: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

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I would ask that you have a response to the concurrence request no later than Monday, February 2nd (no response by that day indicates concurrence).

Best

Andrew



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Andrew W. Martin

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 Professor of Sociology
 114 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall
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martin.1026@osu.edu

From: Osborne, Jeanne <osborne.2@osu.edu>
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 1:26 PM
To: Martin, Andrew <martin.1026@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette

<vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>

Cc: Fries, Sara <fries.71@osu.edu>; Pintor, Lauren <pintor.6@osu.edu>; Walter, Cheryl
<walter.266@osu.edu>

Subject: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

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Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Take care,

Jeanne



Jeanne M. Osborne

Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
100E Agricultural Administration, 2120 Fyffe Rd.
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Tel: 614-292-1734
Fax: 614-292-1218
e-mail: Osborne.2@osu.edu

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From: [Snyder, Anastasia](#)
To: [Osborne, Jeanne](#)
Cc: [Fries, Sara](#); [Pintor, Lauren](#); [Walter, Cheryl](#)
Subject: Re: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation
Date: Monday, February 2, 2026 11:14:25 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[Outlook-rkxqvyh3.png](#)

Hi Jeanne,

I hope you're staying warm!

I apologize, I thought I'd gotten back to you about this. EHE reviewed this and has no concerns so we provide concurrence. Good luck with the new certificate.

Tasha



Anastasia R. Snyder
 Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
 College of Education and Human Ecology
 The Ohio State University
snyder.893@osu.edu
 Office: 614-688-4169 / Cell: 614-256-8959

From: Osborne, Jeanne <osborne.2@osu.edu>
Sent: Monday, February 2, 2026 12:12 PM
To: Snyder, Anastasia <snyder.893@osu.edu>
Cc: Fries, Sara <fries.71@osu.edu>; Pintor, Lauren <pintor.6@osu.edu>; Walter, Cheryl <walter.266@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Dear Tasha,

I am not finding any response to this request for concurrence and I just wanted to make sure that there isn't a need to adjust the request for response by tomorrow. Last week was very interesting from a weather point of view, and I think all our calendars have gotten away from us!

Take care,

Jeanne

From: Snyder, Anastasia <snyder.893@osu.edu>
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 1:49 PM
To: Osborne, Jeanne <osborne.2@osu.edu>
Cc: Fries, Sara <fries.71@osu.edu>; Pintor, Lauren <pintor.6@osu.edu>; Walter, Cheryl <walter.266@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Thank you, Jeanne. I will forward this to the appropriate program to review for concurrence.

Tasha



Anastasia R. Snyder
 Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
 College of Education and Human Ecology
 The Ohio State University
 snyder.893@osu.edu
 Office: 614-688-4169 / Cell: 614-256-8959

From: Osborne, Jeanne <osborne.2@osu.edu>
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 1:27 PM
To: Snyder, Anastasia <snyder.893@osu.edu>
Cc: Fries, Sara <fries.71@osu.edu>; Pintor, Lauren <pintor.6@osu.edu>; Walter, Cheryl <walter.266@osu.edu>
Subject: Concurrence Request: Type 1B Embedded Undergraduate Certificate: Environmental Education and Interpretation

Dear Dr. Snyder,

The School of Environment and Natural Resources in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences is requesting concurrence for a new Type 1B Undergraduate Embedded Certificate in Environmental Education and Interpretation. This certificate will provide students the opportunity to develop applied skills in communication of environmental concepts to inspire stewardship of our natural world. We believe that it will appeal to students

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Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Take care,

Jeanne



Jeanne M. Osborne

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