

green  
town

# GreenTown Rockford

November 12 | Embassy Suites Rockford Riverfront



## GreenTown Rockford

### Preserving Land and Water for Future Generations

How do we preserve land for future generations in the Rockford region?

How do we ensure that sustainable farming and regenerative agriculture practices enable people, water and land to remain healthy?

In this session, we will explore efforts underway to preserve land—and what's needed to move forward.

- Dennis Anthony, Winnebago Soil and Water Conservation District
- Joni Denker, Rockford Park District
- Mike Groves, Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
- Kerry Leigh, Natural Land Institute
- Josh Sage, Boone County Conservation District





## GreenTown Rockford

Preserving Land and Water for Future Generations

### Resources

Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District:

<https://winnebagoswcd.org/swcd/>

Rockford Park District: <https://rockfordparkdistrict.org/natural-areas>

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County: <https://winnebagoforest.org/>

Natural Land Institute (NLI): <https://www.naturalland.org/>

Boone County Conservation District: <https://www.bccddil.org/>

Region 1 Planning Council Greenways Plan and Map:

<http://r1planning.org/greenways-plan>

Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership: <https://tinyurl.com/2c39xx45>

NLI Working Lands Initiative, Integrating Conservation with Agriculture:

<https://www.naturalland.org/working-lands-initiative/>

Conservation @ Home/Work:

<https://www.naturalland.org/conservationatprograms/>

Save Bell Bowl Prairie: <https://www.savebellbowlprairie.org/>

Chicago Wilderness Action Plan for Nature Summary:

[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.chicagowilderness.org/resource/resmgr/Publications/Climate\\_Action\\_Plan\\_for\\_Natu.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.chicagowilderness.org/resource/resmgr/Publications/Climate_Action_Plan_for_Natu.pdf)

Chicago Wilderness Action Plan for Nature Toolkit:

[https://www.fieldmuseum.org/sites/default/files/CAPN\\_action\\_strategies\\_0.pdf](https://www.fieldmuseum.org/sites/default/files/CAPN_action_strategies_0.pdf)



# Conservation Reserve Program

## 10 to 30-year contracts

### Land Restoration & Carbon Sequestration Practices

- Over 7,000 Total Acres Enrolled
- 3,300 Acres in wetland restoration
- 325 Acres (over 65 miles) filter strips
- 200 Acres Riparian/Pasture
- 300 Acres Pollinator/Prairie strips
- Remaining Acres in other practices
  - Warm season grass/forb plantings in large blocks, field borders
  - Cool season grass/legume plantings
  - Tree/shrub plantings

In addition - Almost 2000 acres are enrolled in the Wetland Reserve Program – a perpetual easement program

Shallow water ponds & wetland restoration



Prairie Strips & Pollinator plantings



Riparian Buffers along creeks and rivers



Filter Strips along creeks and channels



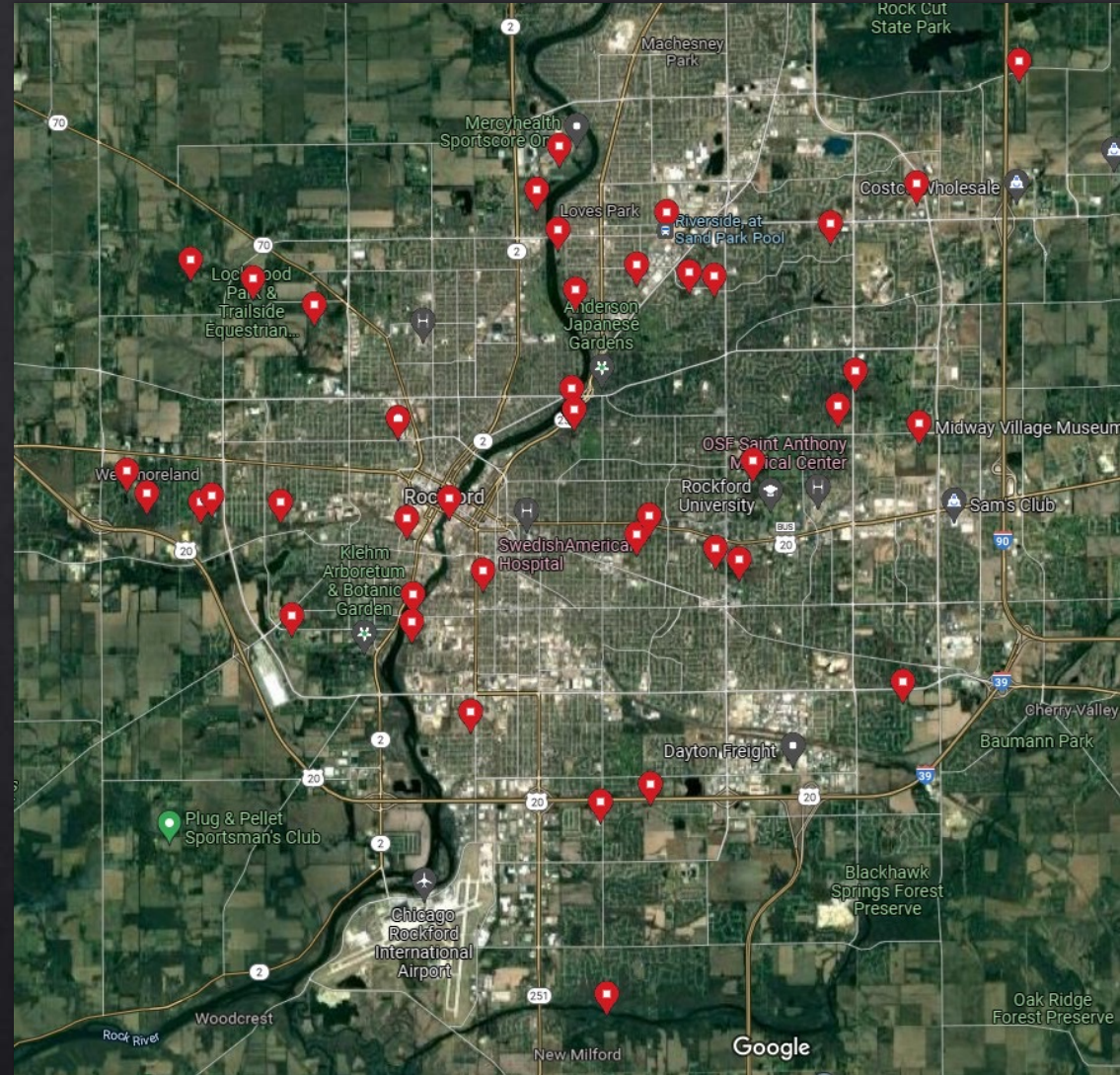
# USDA - Climate-Smart Agriculture & Forestry Programs

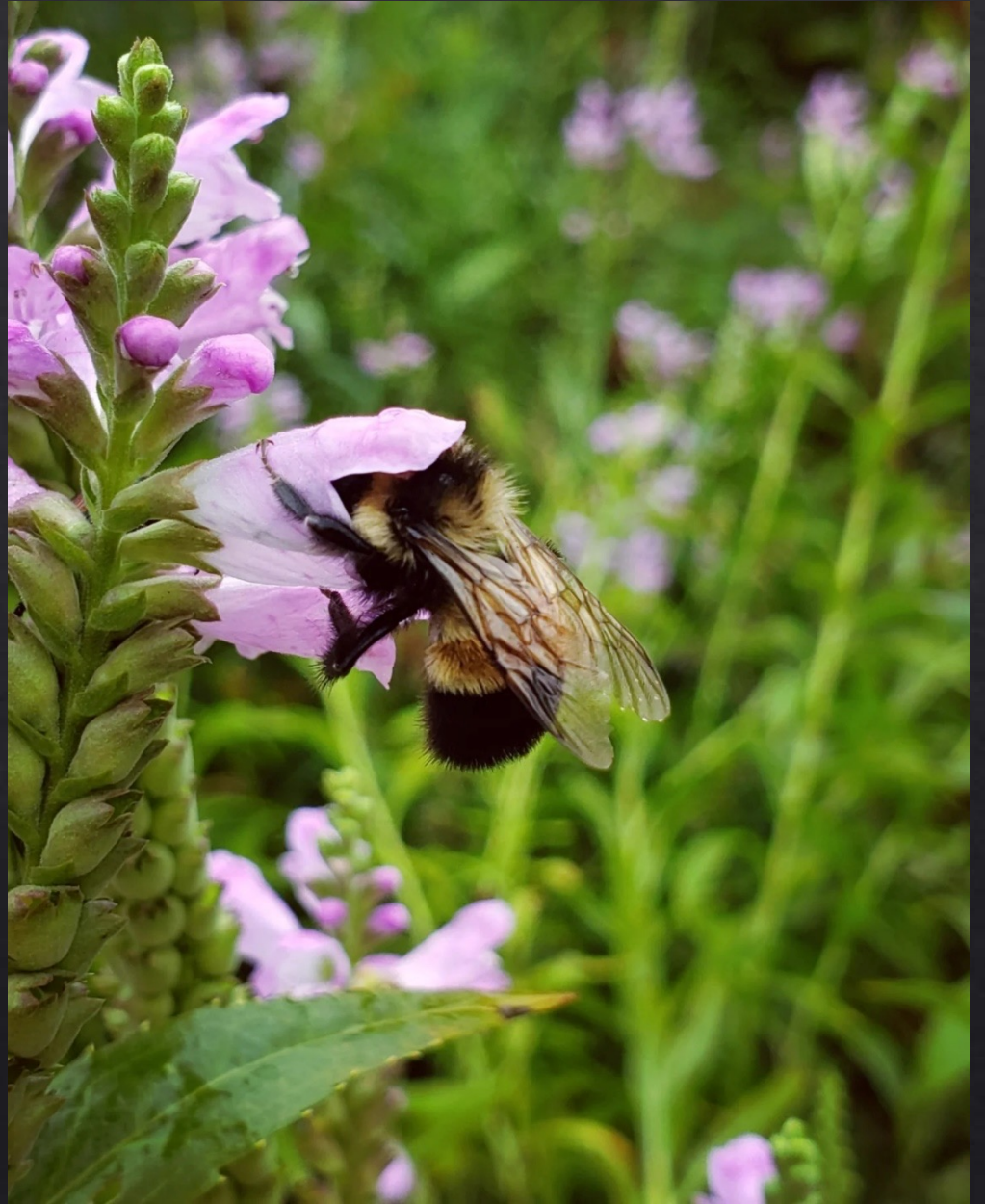
- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program**
  - Wetland Reserve Program
  - Ag Land Easement Program
- **Conservation Stewardship Program**
  - Working Lands Program that provides incentives for adopting management practices on cropland and other farmland including transitioning to no-till, cover crops, nutrient management, pesticide management, etc.
- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**
  - Working Lands Program that provides financial assistance for erosion control management, cover crops, organic farming, high tunnel (hoop houses), forestry management and implementation, nutrient management, prescribed grazing, etc.
- **State Cost-Share program**
  - Cover crops, rain gardens, nutrient management, grassed waterways, etc.



# Rockford Park District Natural Areas

- 1,500+ acres at 42 different sites
- Prairies, woodlands, savannas, wetlands, recreations, native gardens
- Searls Park Prairie Nature Preserve
- Newly added Sand Park Prairie
  - 300+ acres to 1/4 acre
  - Highly fragmented
- Internal policies and partnerships







**forest**  
**preserves**  
of winnebago county



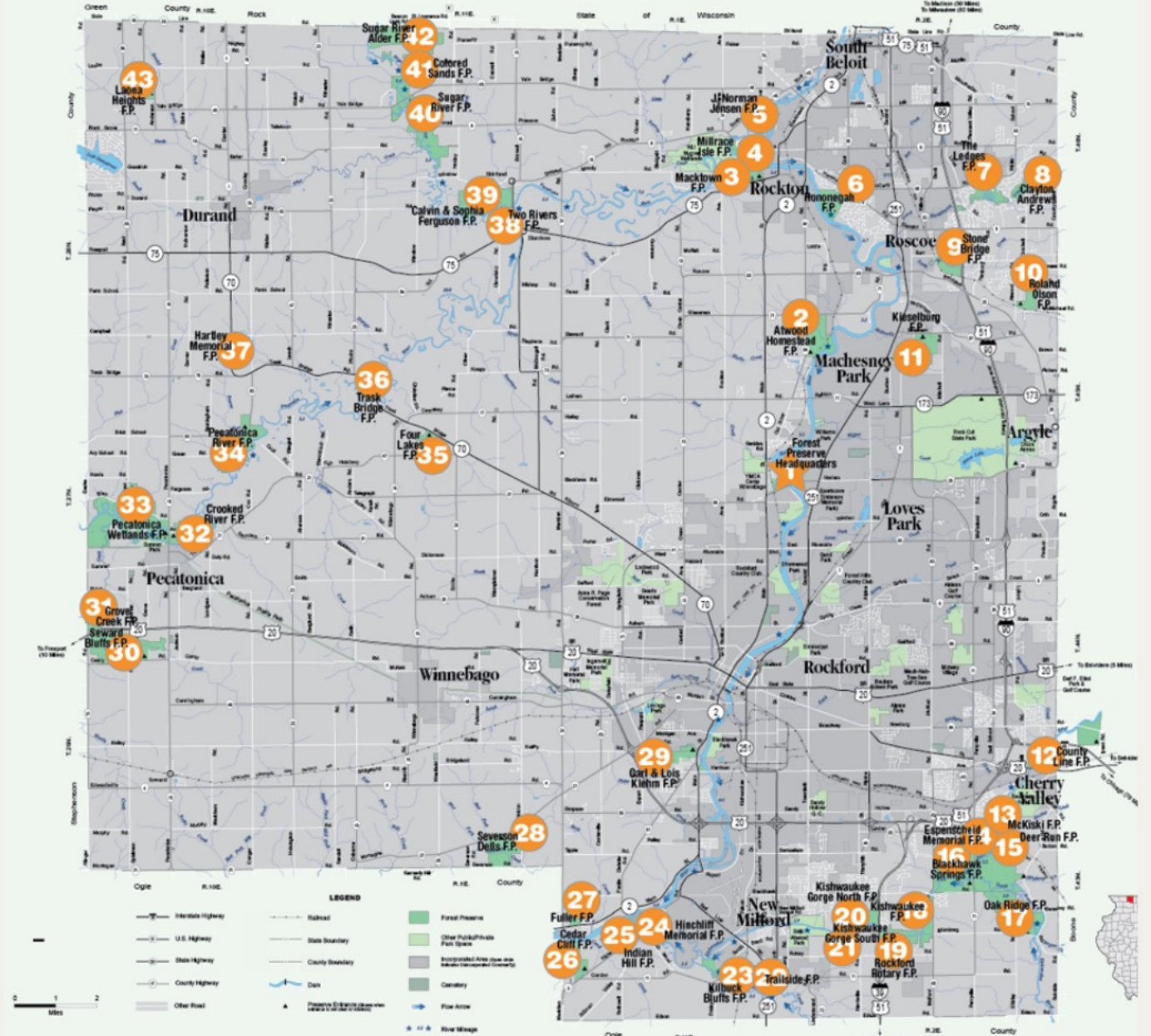


# District Map

44 Forest Preserves  
11,541 acres to explore!



## Forest Preserves of Winnebago County



# ENJOY....

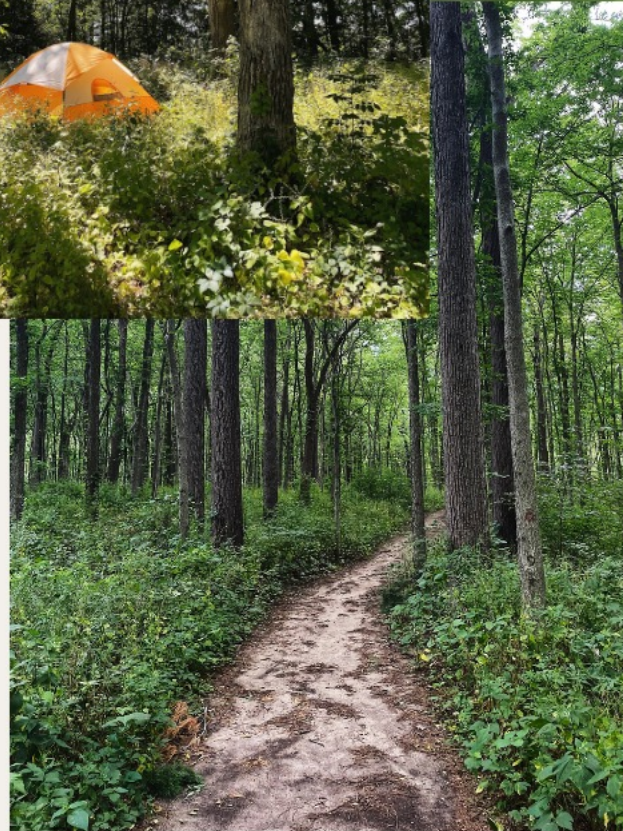
HIKING

GOLF

SHELTERHOUSE RESERVATIONS

CAMPING

EQUESTRIAN TRAILS



# 2,500 acres of restoration work





**NATURAL  
LAND  
INSTITUTE**  
Conserving Land  
in Northern Illinois

**PROTECTING NATURAL LAND FOR PEOPLE, PLANTS AND ANIMALS**

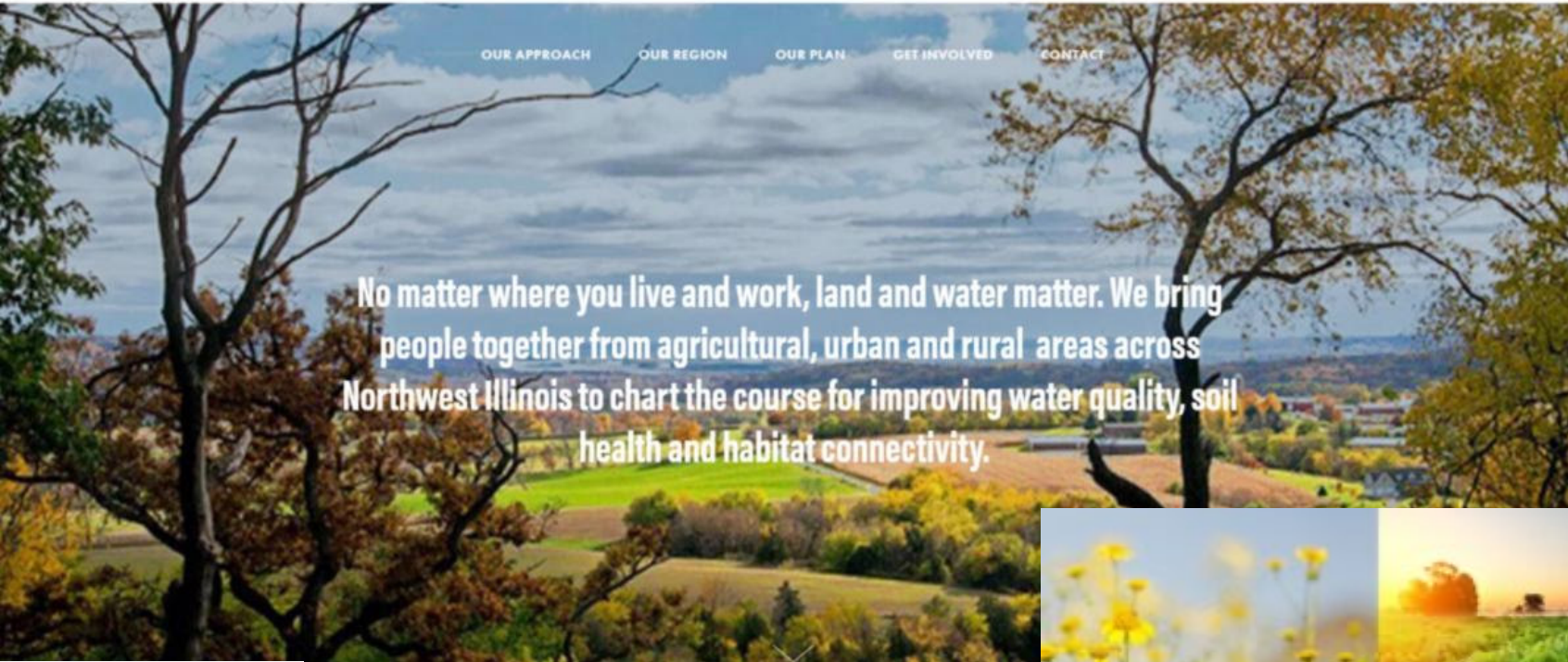


# HEALTHY LAND & WATER

A PLAN FOR NORTHWEST ILLINOIS

OUR APPROACH OUR REGION OUR PLAN GET INVOLVED CONTACT

No matter where you live and work, land and water matter. We bring people together from agricultural, urban and rural areas across Northwest Illinois to chart the course for improving water quality, soil health and habitat connectivity.



[www.healthylandandwater.org](http://www.healthylandandwater.org)

[www.naturalland.org](http://www.naturalland.org)



**NATURAL  
LAND  
INSTITUTE**  
Conserving Land  
in Northern Illinois

**LAND & WATER PROTECTION PROGRAMS: ACQUISITIONS, EASEMENTS, WORKING LANDS**







# Natural Land Institute's mission is to create an enduring legacy of natural land in northern Illinois for people, plants and animals.



Protecting natural land since 1958.

## Connect With Us

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Natural Land Institute



Natural Land Institute



@NLI1958



Natural Land Institute



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**FOUNDED NOVEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>, 1964**



**Our Mission:**  
To Preserve and  
Manage Natural  
Areas and Open  
Space for Ecological,  
Educational and  
Recreational Benefits  
for Present and  
Future Generations



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