

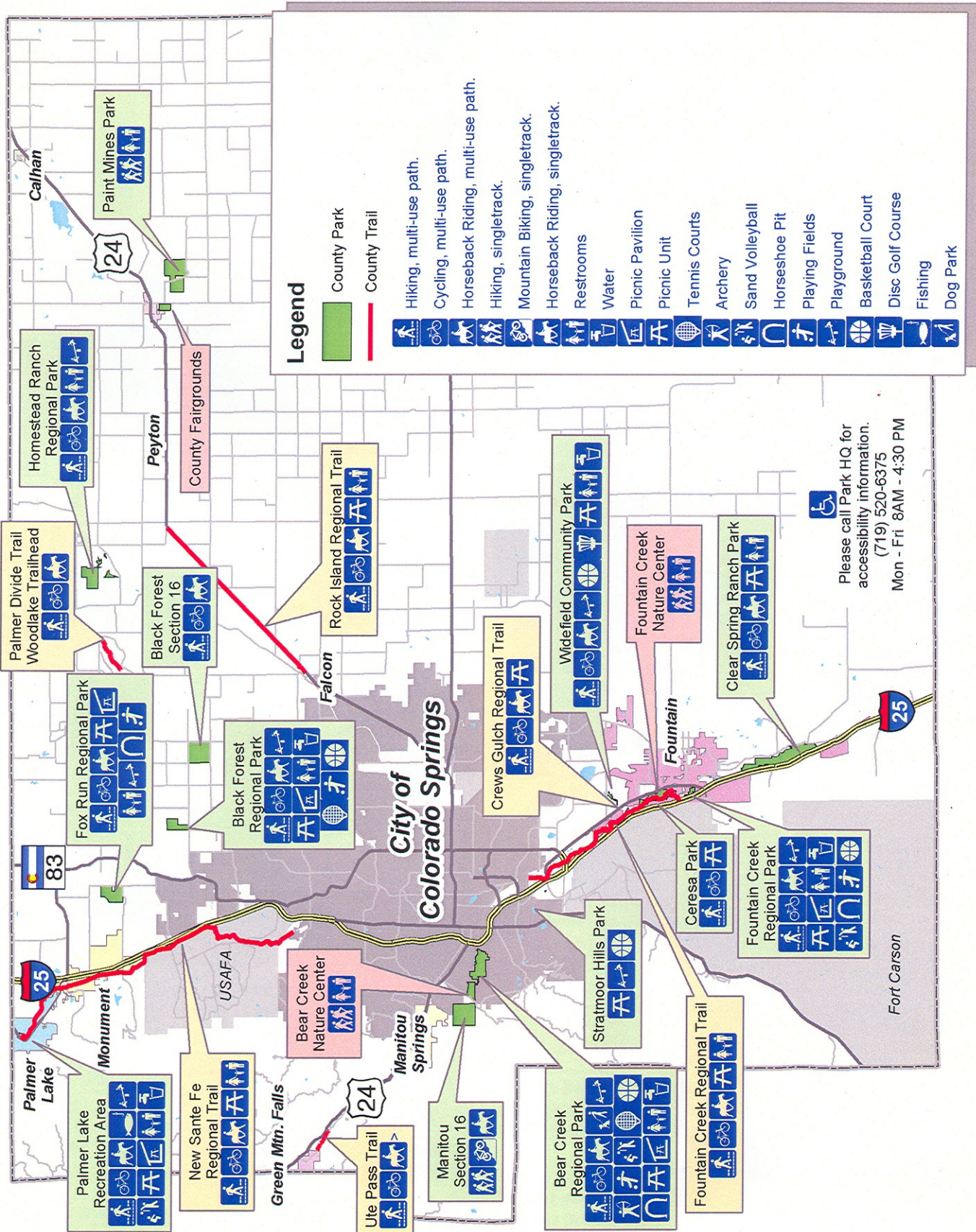
Family Outdoor Activities



Passport



COUNTY MAP & AMENITIES



This Passport belongs to: _____

Welcome Letter

Page 1

The Ten Essentials

Page 2

Parks to Explore

Pages 3-11

Trails to Hike

Page 12-13

Our Lists

Pages 14-17

Geocaching

Page 18

Outdoor Backyard Activities

Page 19

Park Information & Etiquette

Page 20

Resources to Investigate

Page 21

March, 2020

Dear Family,

We hope this Activity Passport will help your family stay connected to the outdoors during these challenging times.

Time in nature will help ease the stress and lift our moods. Please follow community restrictions on movement outside the home and physical distancing from others. The activities here will help your family have fun and get physical exercise and fresh air which are necessary for being healthy.

We hope you enjoy this Activity Passport.

Naturally yours,

The Bear Creek & Fountain Creek Nature Center Staff,



Your resource for connecting children to the outdoors!

The Ten Essentials for Hiking



Before you start on your first outdoor adventure, be sure to carry these ten essentials in your backpack to help you in case of an emergency. Be sure to tell someone or leave a note in your house telling where you have gone. There are variations in what experts call The Ten Essentials. These are the ones we think are the most important in Colorado.

1. Water
2. First aid supplies
3. Extra food
4. Extra clothing (including rain gear)
5. Map & compass or GPS unit with extra batteries
6. Pocket knife or multi-tool
7. Waterproof matches/fire starter
8. Emergency shelter
9. Flashlight or head lamp
10. Sunglasses/sunscreen

Other items to consider:

1. Insect repellent
2. Whistle or signaling device
3. Cell phone

Bear Creek Regional Park

Bear Creek Nature Center
245 Bear Creek Rd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80906
719-520-6387

Latitude: 38.82748
Longitude: -104.876423

Bear Creek East

21st St & West Rio Grande Ave.
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Latitude: 38.8247036
Longitude: -104.859287

Bear Creek Terrace

21st St. & Argus Rd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Latitude: 38.8203718
Longitude: -104.8593886

Draw or list your discoveries here

Fun Fact:

Did you know that a Pauper's Cemetery is located at the corner of 21st Street & Lower Gold Camp Road?

Game to Play

Find a pile of leaves. Tell the children that you will turn your back while they hide in the leaves. After 5-10 minutes the adults will return as "monsters" sniffing for creatures to "eat." "Monsters" look for wiggles and giggles, so the children are encouraged to stay as still as possible. Being covered with leaves, dirt, insects, and spiders will help connect children to the earth. Have fun with it!*



Things to look for:

- Mule deer
- Acorns
- Smooth rock
- Black bear
- Spotted towhee
- Scat



Things to do:



- Visit Bear Creek Nature Center trails.
- Hike Songbird Trail or Creekbottom Trail.
- Take a photo of a mammal.
- Make a leaf rubbing.
- Put your hands in the creek.

Black Forest Regional Park

4800 Shoup Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80908
Latitude: 39.0128095
Longitude: -104.7381297

Draw or list your discoveries here



Things to look for:

- Squirrel nests
- Evidence of a forest fire
- A lightning struck tree
- Pine cone



Things to do:



- Look under a rock or a log.
- Lie on your back and look at the clouds.
- Follow an ant.

Fun Fact:

Gently rolling terrain makes this site a prime location for cross-country skiing and mountain biking.

Game to Play

Play the old favorite game of "Hike and Seek." Define your boundaries for the game using natural objects like the "Ponderosa Pine Tree" and the "large rock." Seeking sharpens our senses, while hiding builds suspense and helps us remain still in anticipation of being found. End the game before the children tire of it and go on to another activity.

Clear Spring Ranch Park

From I-25 Exit 123;
east to parking lot
Fountain, CO 80817

Draw or list your discoveries here

Fun Fact:

This 970-acre park features grasslands, foothills, and riparian ecosystems along Fountain Creek.

Game to Play

Pair off in partners to do a "Blind Walk." Use a bandana or scarf for blindfolds. One partner agrees to be blindfolded while the other agrees to be a gentle leader. The sighted leader leads his partner around the park, carefully telling her when to step over the log or walk around a tree, handing her objects to feel and smell. Then switch roles. Stimulates imagination and heightens the senses.**



Things to look for:

- Animal tracks by the creek
- Bluebird nesting box
- Red-tailed hawk
- Feather
- Prairie Dog



Things to do:



- Pretend you are an owl flying through the woods.
- Use a cricket for a thermometer. Count the number of chirps per minute, subtract 40, divide by 4 and add 50. This should roughly equal degrees F.

El Paso County Fairgrounds

366 10th St.,
Calhan, CO 80808 719-520-7880
Latitude: 39.030262
Longitude: -104.2955379

Draw or list your discoveries here

Fun Fact:

The El Paso County Fair began in 1905 as a "potato & bean bake" in Calhan's schoolyard to celebrate a successful potato harvest.

Game to Play

Participate in a free contest during the County Fair. Check the daily schedule.



Things to look for:

- Cow
- Favorite exhibit
- Corndog
- Ferris Wheel
- Tractor



Things to do:



- Visit the El Paso County Fair in July.
- Pick your favorite entry, animal, plant or activity and post it on Facebook.

Fountain Creek Regional Park

Fountain Creek Nature Center
320 Pepper Grass Lane
Fountain, CO 80817
719-520-6745

Latitude: 38.71309105320368
Longitude: -104.71689462661743

Fountain Creek Regional Park
2010 Duckwood Road
Fountain, CO 80817

Willow Springs Ponds
430 Willow Springs Rd.
Fountain, Co 80817

Draw or list your discoveries here



Things to look for:

- Beaver dam & lodge
- Bullfrog
- Beaver chew
- Canada Goose
- Red-winged blackbird
- Turtle
- Mallard
- Great Blue Heron



Things to do:



- Visit Fountain Creek Nature Center nature trail.
- Smell the milkweed flowers.
- Sit by a pond and listen.
- Go fishing at Willow Springs Ponds.

Fun Fact:

Fountain Creek is a unsung hero in our community . Without its water resources, our cities of Fountain and Colorado Springs would not exist!

Game to Play

“River Walk.” Imagine that each of you are individual drops of water in the clouds dropped onto a steep mountainside. The drops are “bonded” to each other (link arms) to form a rivulet that eventually grows into a stream. The leader begins moving rapidly in a straight line towing the line of “drops” behind simulating the movement of a creek. Slow down, meander and form little “oxbow” ponds. Imagine the life cycle of a water drop.

Fox Run Regional Park

2110 Stella Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80921
Latitude:: 39.05700057123676
Longitude: -104.79027986526489



Draw or list your discoveries here

Things to look for:

- Pygmy Nuthatch
- Crawdad
- Dragonfly
- Abert's squirrel
- Road apple
- Carp fish
- Steller's Jay



Things to do:



- Sniff the bark of a pine tree.
- Walk around a pond.
- Hike the "What's in a Name" trail.
- Make something from fallen pine needles.

Fun Fact:

Fox Run Regional Park was once a Fox Farm.

Game to Play

"Meet a Tree." Blindfold your partner and take her to a tree. Ask her to get acquainted with the tree by hugging it, feeling it with her fingers, knees, cheek, and forehead, smelling it. Then lead her away from the tree, remove the blindfold, and see if she can find "her" tree.

What once was a forest now becomes a lot of individuals. **

Homestead Ranch Regional Park

16444 Gollihar Road
Peyton, CO 80831
Latitude: 39.0693041
Longitude: -104.5154509

Draw or list your discoveries here



Things to look for:

- Mountain Bluebird
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Indian paintbrush
- Red-tailed hawk
- Bird nest
- Piece of fur



Things to do:



- Slide down the slide.
- Walk backwards on a trail.
- What do you see from the top of the cliffs?
- Jump like a rabbit.

Fun Fact:

Rattlesnake Butte, a prominent landmark in eastern El Paso County is located here. Views of the Front range and the Sangre de Cristo Mtns. are breathtaking.

Game to Play

“Camera Game” Divide into pairs. One person is the photographer, one the camera. The photographer guides the camera (who keeps his eyes closed) on a search for beautiful & interesting pictures. When he sees something he likes, he points the camera’s lens (eyes) at it by gently moving the head, taps the shutter button (shoulder) and shoots the picture. The camera lens stays open for a few seconds until the shoulder is tapped again. Do this several times then switch roles. Afterwards, sit and talk about each person’s favorite picture.**

Paint Mines Interpretive Park

29950 Paint Mine Road
Calhan, CO 80808
Latitude: 39.020317324230604
Longitude: -104.27422285079956

Draw or list your discoveries here

Fun Fact:

The mines have evidence of human life as far back as 9,000 years ago. Colorful clays were used by American Indians for making pottery and ceremonial paints.

a

Game to Play

“Micro Hike” Use a shoelace or string to make a circle on the ground. “Hikers” explore on their bellies the smallest of natural details inside their circle. Do you see a blade of grass, a spotted insect, an eight eyed spider, a piece of animal scat? If you were the size of an ant, would you like to live in your “micro habitat?” Great for noticing the objects that are often overlooked!**



Things to look for:

- Pronghorn
- Deer
- Red fox
- Rock wren
- Ferruginous hawk
- Hoodoos



Things to do:



- Count the number of colors you see.
- Name the colors.
- Touch a hoodoo.
- Imagine that you have come to harvest colors for painting. For what do you use paint?

Rainbow Falls

Serpentine Drive, Manitou Springs

Latitude: 38.867835

Longitude: : -104.924514

Draw or list your discoveries here



Things to look for:

- One camouflaged animal or insect
- Colors in the waterfalls
- Bugs on the water
- Quartz mineral



Things to do:



- Pick up 5 pieces of litter and place in trash can.
- Draw a picture of the waterfall.
- Read the new interpretive signs about the natural and social history of the falls.

Fun Fact:

Did you know these falls were a popular place to picnic along the old Midland Railroad in the early 1900's?

Game to Play

With an adult's supervision, create a twig boat and float it down Fountain Creek. Maybe you could have a boat race!

Trails

New Santa Fe Regional Trail & Palmer Divide Regional Trail

Palmer Lake Trailhead

Baptist Road Trailhead

USAFA Trailheads

Draw or list your discoveries here



Things to look for:

- Insects in leaf litter
- Insect homes
- Look for trails made by jets
- Elephant Rock
- Monument Rock
- Vole trails under the grass



Things to do:



- Name some of the ways the sun affects nature.
- Predict the weather by watching the clouds.
- Find three different types of rocks.
- Smell a wildflower.

Fun Fact:

This 14 mile portion of trail follows the abandoned Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.

Game to Play

“Predator & Prey” This is a version of “Red Light, Green Light.” One person becomes the “Predator” and the rest of the group is “Prey.” The “Predator” trots ahead on the trail with the “Prey” quietly following behind. When “Predator” counts 1-2-3 and turns around, she gets to “eat” anyone who is moving. If the “Prey” are frozen they cannot be eaten. If they are moving they are “eaten” & go to the back of the group. The first “Prey” animal to touch the “Predator” without being “eaten” becomes the “Predator.” Active and fun!

Trails

Rock Island Regional Trail

"Falcon Trailhead"

7305 McGlaughlin Rd.

Falcon, CO 80808

Draw or list your discoveries here

Fun Fact!

This trail is on a segment of the former Chicago & Rock Island Line with excellent views of Pikes Peak, Rampart Range, Rattlesnake Buttes, Spanish Peaks, & Wet Mountains.

Game to Play

"Head Hondo" Everyone sits cross legged in a circle. One person is chosen as "it" and leaves the circle temporarily and hides her eyes. Another person is chosen as "Head Hondo" and begins a series of movements that others in the circle follow (tap knees, snap fingers, pat head, clap hands, etc.) without looking directly at the "Head Hondo." "It" comes back inside the circle, watches closely to try to identify who is changing the motions, who is the "Head Hondo." Great for improving peripheral vision!*



Things to look for:

- Wildflowers
- Three different types of grasses
- Western Meadowlark



Things to do:



- Watch a sunset.
- Ride a bicycle.
- Draw a silhouette of the mountains on paper or in the dirt.

Page 14

Drawings of our Birds

Our Mammal List

[illegible]

Drawings of our Mammals

Page 18

Drawings of our Plants & Trees

Our Bug List

[illegible]

Drawings of our Bugs

Letterboxing & Geocaching

A Brief History

Letterboxing

This hobby got its start in 1854 in the moors of Dartmore, Devon, England when a wanderer placed his calling card in a jar by a pool of water. The message he wrote on the card was that anyone who found his card was to leave theirs also. Word spread of this activity and other letterboxes sprang up. Modern letterboxing got its boost when in 1998 the *Smithsonian* magazine published an article about this pastime. It has now expanded around the globe. Instead of calling cards, participants use either hand carved or rubber stamps. Go to www.letterboxing.org to get started.

Geocaching

“Cache” is from the French verb “cacher” meaning to conceal or hide. Geocaching is an outdoor, global activity of treasure hiding and hunting. Global Positioning System was developed by the US Department of Defense for military use. On May 2, 2000 “selective availability” was cancelled, and the 24 satellites circling the globe instantly improved the accuracy of Global Positioning System technology for the general population. A GPS advocate wanted to test its accuracy, so he hid a treasure in the woods and posted the coordinates on the internet. Within days the experiment became a hobby and expanded exponentially. As you set out on your treasure hunt, the general rule is take something and leave something in the caches that you find. Go to www.geocaching.com to learn more, register and begin finding geocaches in the parks!



What you need:



Letterboxing:

- Personal stamp
- Ink pad
- Log book
- Compass
- Pen
- Clues

Geocaching:

- GPS unit
- Day pack for carrying water, food, extra clothing
- Trade items
- Pen
- Notebook

Outdoor Backyard Activities



No special equipment needed!



1. Plant a garden
2. Draw with sidewalk chalk.
3. Bowl with milk bottles.
4. Paint with water.
5. Count the number of bugs you find.
6. Make mud pies.
7. Play in the dirt.
8. Play in the sprinkler.
9. Blow bubbles.
10. Wash the family car or a toy car on the grass.
11. Play "Hide and Seek."
12. Play your own variations of "tag" and "chase."
13. Play "Follow the Leader."
14. Play "Animal Charades."
15. Act out your favorite animal.
16. Play with ice cubes as they melt.
17. Have a pine cone pitch into empty buckets.
18. Camp out in your backyard.
19. Watch the clouds and see how many different animal shapes you see.
20. Build a fort or tent with blankets & sheets.
21. Put out a blanket and look up at the night sky.
22. Count the number of natural colors in your backyard.
23. Climb a tree.
24. Make texture rubbings from trees, grasses, plants, etc.
25. Bury yourself in a pile of leaves.

Have fun!

Park Information & Etiquette

- Only pedestrians are allowed on nature center trails and trails around Aspen and Spruce Lakes at Fox Run and the Willow Springs Ponds at Fountain Creek.
- Alcohol and glass containers or bottles are not permitted.
- Motorized vehicles are permitted only on designated roads and parking areas.
- Dogs on leashes, horses and bicycles are allowed only on regional and park trails.
- Park hours are 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. unless otherwise posted.
- Open fires are not permitted; please use existing grills.
- Please no collecting.
- Sales and solicitations in parks are not permitted without prior approval.

Pavilion Users

Picnic pavilions located in Bear Creek, Black Forest, Fountain Creek, Fox Run, and Homestead Ranch Regional Parks are available for reservation. Call 719-520-6375.

Field Users

Athletic/Play Field are located in Bear Creek, Black Forest, Fountain Creek, Homestead Ranch, and Fox Run Regional Parks. Organized athletic leagues must schedule practice, games and tournaments with the Parks Headquarters.

Dog Park Users

Dog parks at Bear Creek, Fox Run, and Fountain Creek allow dogs off the leash. Owners must be able to control their dogs by voice command.

El Paso County Community Services Administration Office

2002 Creek Crossing, Colorado Springs, CO 80906 719.520.6375

Bear Creek Nature Center

245 Bear Creek Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80906 719.520.6387

Fountain Creek Nature Center

320 Pepper Grass Lane, Fountain, CO 80817 719.520.6745

El Paso County Fairgrounds

366 10th St., Calhan, CO 80808 719.520.7880

Web Resources

www.elpasocountyparks.com (El Paso County Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services)

www.trailsandopenspaces.org (Trails & Open Space Coalition)

www.springsgov.com (Colorado Springs, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services)

www.parks.state.co.us/parks/cheyenne mountain (Cheyenne Mountain State Park)

www.nps.gov (National Park Service)

www.childrenandnature.org (Children & Nature Network)

www.beoutthere.org (National Wildlife Federation)

<http://family-fun.kaboose.com/outdoor-activities.html>

Literary Resources & Recommended Field Guides

Some of the games in this Activity Passport were borrowed from the following sources:

Last Child in the Woods, Richard Louv

*****Sharing Nature with Children***, Joseph Bharat Cornell

****Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature***, Young, Haas, & McGown

Peterson Field Guide Series, Houghton Mifflin Company

The Sibley Guide to Birds, David Allen Sibley

Kaufman Field Guides, Houghton Mifflin Company

El Paso County Parks, Recreation & Community Services
Bear Creek & Fountain Creek Nature Centers
719.520.6387 719.520.6745
www.elpasocountynaturecenters.com

Helping make El Paso County a great place to live and play!

