



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-13-71
Meeting 13-19
August 14, 2013

AGENDA ITEM 5

AGENDA ITEM

Status Report and Staff Recommendations on the Future Implementation of the Slender False Brome (SFB) Integrated Pest Management Program and Reimbursement Plan

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

1. Approve incorporation of the SFB Program into the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) Integrated Pest Management Program including environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act.
2. Approve a refocus of the SFB Program in which the District will focus its funding and staff resources on District preserves and on private parcels from which SFB could potentially re-infest District preserves, while encouraging partners to control SFB on other properties.

SUMMARY

On December 14, 2005 (see R-05-122), the District's Board of Directors approved a ten year plan to eradicate SFB from the Thornewood Open Space Preserve and the surrounding Woodside neighborhoods. Four major tasks were approved under this work plan: 1) reclassification of SFB as a noxious weed by the state of California; 2) treatment and monitoring of SFB on District land; 3) treatment and monitoring of SFB on adjacent private lands; and 4) pursuit of grants for SFB control. Task 1 was completed in 2006. This progress report will focus on tasks 2 through 4. Treatment of SFB has largely been successful; however, the infestation area is larger than originally estimated, and eradication of SFB from the Santa Cruz Mountains is no longer feasible under current District funding and staffing levels. As a result, staff is recommending a refocus of the program to concentrate on District preserves and properties most likely to affect District preserves, while at the same time encouraging partners to control SFB on other properties.

DISCUSSION

Treatment and monitoring of SFB on District land

Since 2004, District staff and contractors have controlled SFB at Thornewood Open Space Preserve (OSP). In subsequent years, additional outbreaks of SFB were found at El Corte de Madera Creek OSP (ECdM), La Honda Creek OSP, and Saratoga Gap OSP (Figure 1). Due to the successful treatment and decreased density of SFB at ECdM, La Honda Creek, and Saratoga

Gap OSPs, staff and volunteers are now able to manually control these infestations. In 2012, several previously undetected new infestations were found at Thornewood OSP.

SFB was found on the former Gallaway property that was acquired by the District in 2012 as an addition to ECdM (see R-12-50). Because of the high density and large area covered with SFB, the Gallaway infestation was initially treated by staff with glyphosate. After this treatment was conducted, it was brought to the District's attention that a well on adjacent private property was located within 200 feet of the treatment area. The concerned neighbor requested the District test their well for possible glyphosate contamination. The neighboring well was found to be inactive; however, District staff did collect a water sample from a separate well in the neighborhood, and McCampbell Analytical, Inc. performed water quality testing. No glyphosate or metabolites were detected. District staff used this opportunity to build better neighbor relations and increase landowner awareness of the District's SFB management work. Moreover, District staff has restricted the use of chemical methods at this location.

District management efforts thus far have involved the removal of SFB from woodland areas but have not addressed treatment options for the removal of SFB from sensitive riparian habitats. Despite successful control of SFB within core areas of OSPs, a very dense infestation still exists along Dennis Martin Creek in Thornewood OSP.

On January 10, 2013, the District prepared a Subsequent Initial Study for the Slender False Brome Amended Integrated Pest Management Program to assess the environmental impacts of expanding the program area and treatment protocols to creekside areas. A Subsequent Negative Declaration was prepared and submitted for public review in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act on January 18, 2013. However, public comment expressed concern regarding the use of herbicides under the SFB Program. Therefore, staff is recommending that the SFB program be incorporated into the District-wide Integrated Pest Management Program, which is currently in progress and will entail a comprehensive review of potential environmental impacts of District pesticide use.

Treatment and monitoring of SFB on adjacent private lands

Increased efforts at detection have revealed SFB is more widespread throughout San Mateo County and the Santa Cruz Mountains than originally believed. In 2009 the total net area of land infested with SFB was estimated to be 100 acres (40 acres of District land and 60 acres of adjacent private lands). Since 2009, 92 property owners have had their land surveyed for SFB. Over the past four years, approximately 185 infested acres have been treated between one and four times, and a total of \$149,505 has been issued in reimbursements to those property owners (Figure 2).

At this time the District's SFB program has reached maximum capacity for the number of acres that can be effectively administered in one season with the current staffing allocation.

Grants for SFB control

Since 2008, the District has received \$57,518 in grant funds or labor for the SFB program. Grant funds have been directed toward controlling SFB on private property and have been awarded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Noxious Weed Program. The California Conservation Corps (CCC) has provided labor to treat SFB on private property and District preserves.

In 2011, funding for the CDFA Noxious Weed Program was eliminated from the California state budget. Funds for SFB treatment provided through ARRA were one-time awards and not ongoing funding opportunities. In 2010-11, two grant applications were submitted to the NFWF but unfortunately were not selected for funding. The San Mateo County Resource Conservation District has received funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to address SFB infestations in the La Honda area, which is currently the only source of governmental funding for SFB control besides the District's funding.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This progress report is for informational purposes only and is not a project under CEQA. Future use of herbicides to address SFB is recommended to be incorporated into the District-wide Integrated Pest Management Program, which is currently in progress.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. Notices were also sent to persons requesting notice of resource management activities and to property owners and residents in the vicinity of Thornewood, El Corte de Madera, and La Honda Creek Open Space Preserves.

FISCAL IMPACT

When the District Board of Directors approved the 10-year plan for SFB in 2005, it was estimated that \$1.2 million dollars would be spent. Through FY2012-2013, the entire program is estimated to have cost the District \$523,000. District funds cover the SFB Coordinator salary (three-quarter time, contingent employee) and contribute to the reimbursement plan for SFB treatment on private lands. In 2012 the District funded 100% of the reimbursement for treatment on private lands (\$28,930), for a total of \$149,505 in reimbursements to private property owners over the last four years. Using the FY2012-2013 budget of \$49,800, the District will continue to fund treatment of District lands and re-treatment of private parcels already enrolled in the program. If funding allows for recruitment of new participants, efforts will focus on infested properties immediately adjacent to District lands.

NEXT STEPS

1. Treatment of SFB on District lands will continue until re-growth no longer occurs.
2. Treatment at creekside areas will continue to be deferred until the District-wide IPM program is completed.
3. Treatment and its potential environmental impacts will be further evaluated as part of the District-wide Integrated Pest Management Program.
4. Staff will continue to work with private property owners immediately adjacent to District lands and with those whose parcels have SFB that could potentially re-infest District lands.
5. Staff will continue to encourage and develop partnerships with other agencies to address SFB infestations within San Mateo County that do not pose a threat to District lands.
6. Staff will continue to pursue grant funding for SFB management.
7. The District's Slender False Brome Coordinator has recently accepted a position as Volunteer Program Lead with the Public Affairs Department. Treatment of SFB for the 2013 summer treatment season will continue with the assistance of existing staff in the Natural Resources Department. Staff will return to the Board with recommendations on how to continue staffing the SFB Program in the future.

Attachments:

Figure 1: Slender False Brome Project Area

Figure 2: Slender False Brome Treatment on Private Lands

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Created By: egartside Path: G:\Projects\va_Districtwide\SlenderFalseBrome\Maps\BoardReport\Maps\2013\Fig_1_ProjArea.mxd

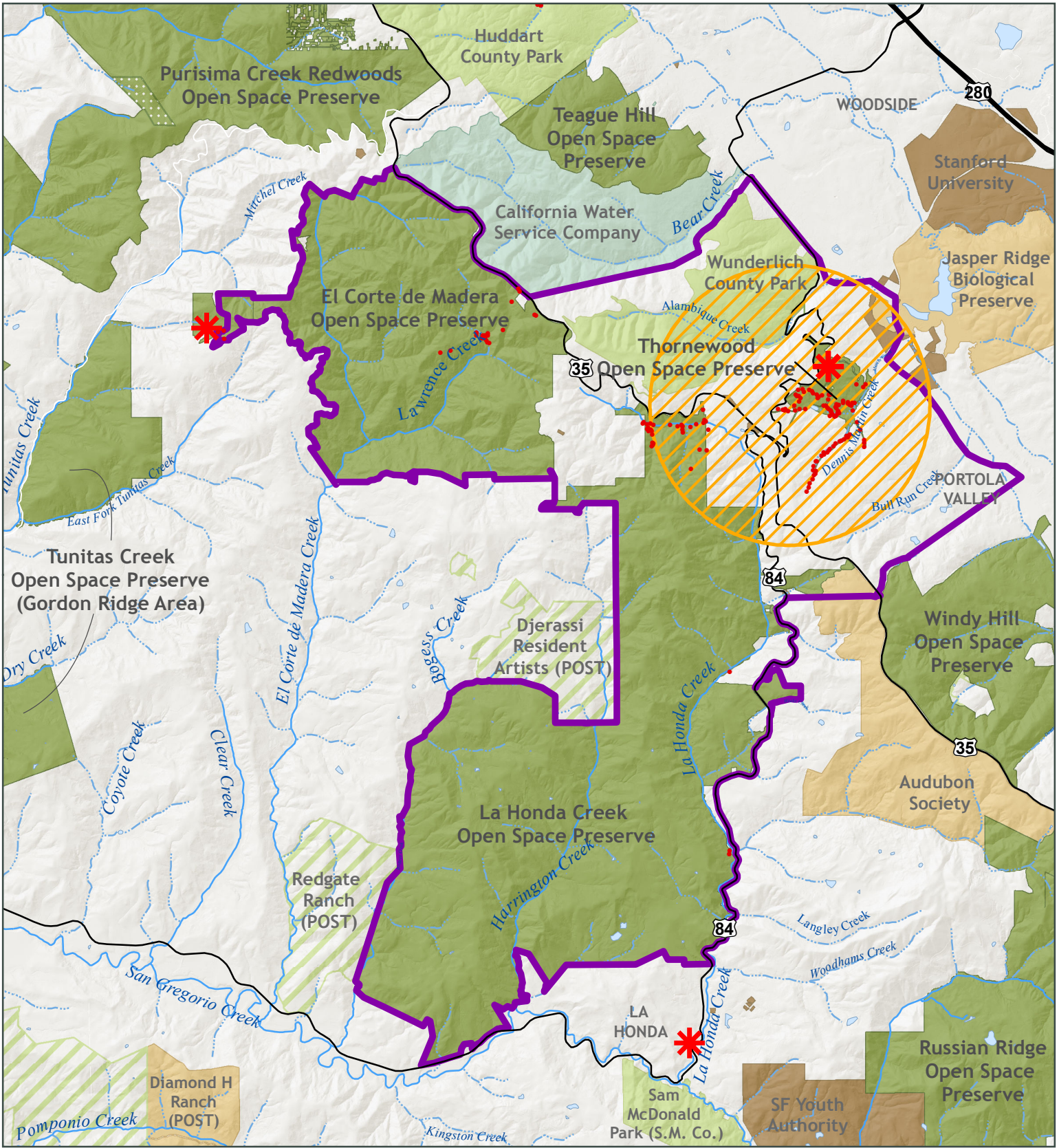












Figure 1: Slender False Brome Project Area

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|--|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
|  | 2009: Original Project Area |  | MROSD Preserves |
|  | Central Infestation Area |  | Land Trust |
|  | SFB Locations |  | Watershed Land |
|  | New SFB Locations |  | Other Public Agency |
| | |  | Private Property |
| | |  | MROSD Easement over Private |

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(MROSD)



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While the District strives to use the best available digital data, this data does not represent a legal survey and is merely a graphic illustration of geographic features.

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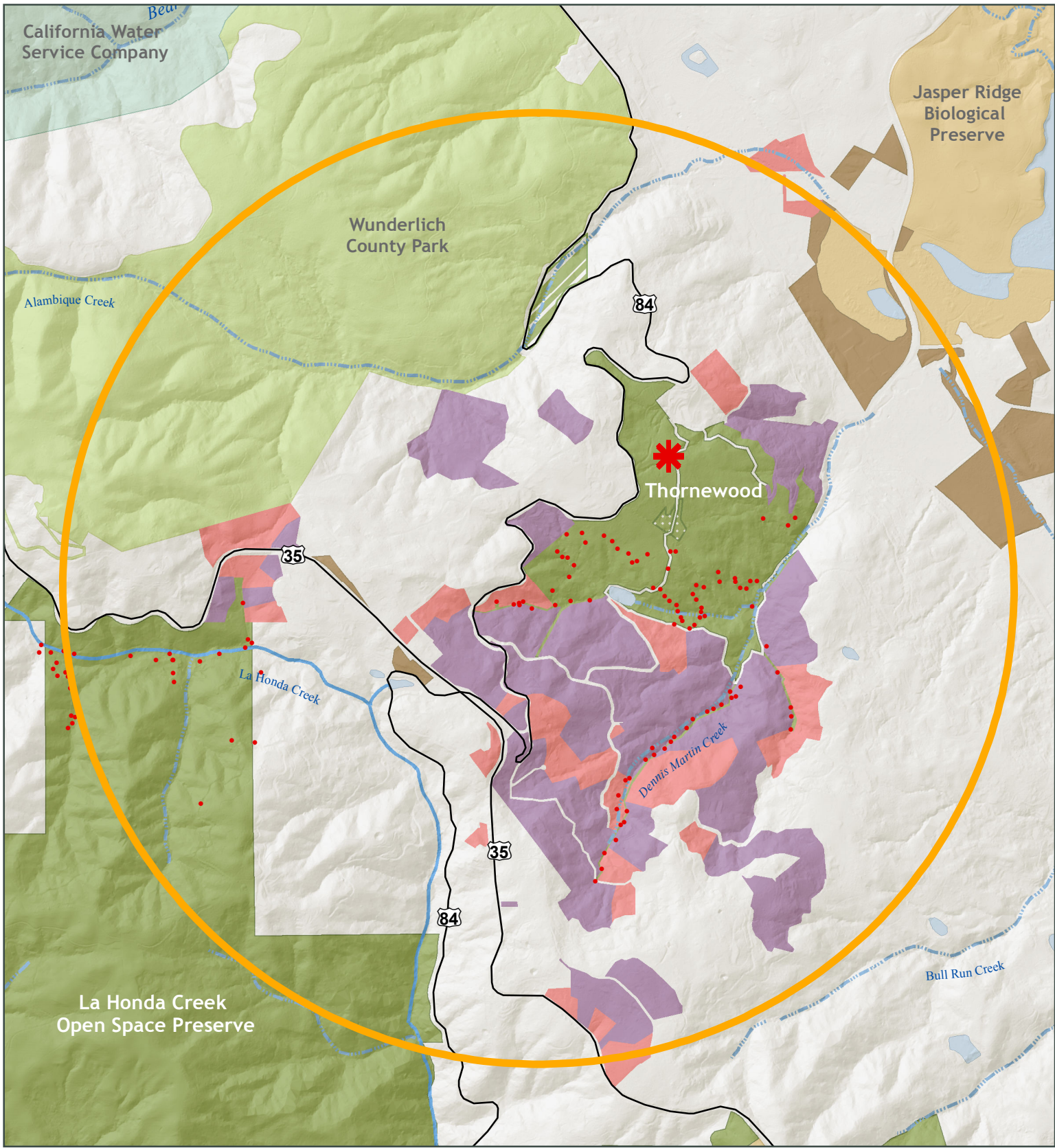


Figure 2: SFB Treatment Area; Private Parcels

-  Central Infestation Area
-  Parcels Treated 2012
-  SFB Present (Untreated)
-  SFB Locations
-  New SFB Locations
-  MROSD Preserves
-  Land Trust
-  Watershed Land
-  Other Public Agency
-  Private Property
-  MROSD Easement over Private Land

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