

Chapter 12:

Portland Bill to Rufus Castle

Coastal Access: Lyme Regis to Rufus Castle - Natural England's Proposals

Part 11.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Portland Bill (grid reference: SY 6814 6868)
End Point:	Rufus Castle (grid reference: SY 6978 7119)
Relevant Maps:	12a and 12b

Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

The Trail:

- 12.1.1 Follows the South West Coast Path, except as detailed below.
- 12.1.2 Takes a different route on Southwell Road, following the road verge to point A near the Cheyne Weares car park and picnic area (LRR-12-S020) then crossing access land to the hairpin bend (LRR-12-S025) at point B on map 12b.
- 12.1.3 Meets the approved route of the England Coast Path at Rufus Castle, leading round the north east of Portland and onward to Weymouth and eventually Lulworth Cove. The previously approved route would not be affected by our proposals.
- 12.1.4 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation, geological or heritage interest (see map C of the Overview):
 - Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Isle of Portland Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- 12.1.5 We have assessed the potential impacts of access along the proposed route (and over the associated spreading room described below) on the features for which the affected land is designated and on any which are protected in their own right. The levels and patterns of public access along this length of coast would be unlikely to change significantly as a result of our proposals and we have therefore concluded that our proposals would not be likely to have any significant impact on these features.

See part 5 of the Overview for more details about the assessment process described above, and refer to our published Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal for more information about the conclusions of the assessment process.

Accessibility:

- 12.1.6 Generally, there are few artificial barriers to access along the proposed route. However, there are places where it may not be entirely suitable for people with reduced mobility because:
- the trail would follow a constrained and uneven bare stone path through historic quarry workings; or
 - the route has stone or timber steps necessary to ascend/descend steep slopes on the approach to Rufus Castle and by Cheyne Weares car park (see LRR-12-S022 to LRR-12-S025, map 12b).

See part 5a of the Overview 'Recreational issues' for more information.

Where we have proposed exercising our discretion:

- 12.1.7 Landward boundary of the coastal margin: We have used our discretion on some sections of the route to map the landward extent of the coastal margin to an adjacent physical boundary such as a fence line, pavement or track to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. Doing so would not result in the inclusion of any significant additional areas as coastal margin landward of the trail - the coastal margin landward of the trail shown on maps 12a and 12b is section 15 land and, as such, would become part of the coastal margin by default (see the Glossary in the Overview for an explanation of section 15 land).
- 12.1.8 Restrictions and/or exclusions: The new access rights would be subject to the excepted land types summarised in Annex C of the Overview, and the national restrictions on activities listed in Annex D. This would be so throughout the coastal margin, but these restrictions would not apply to the existing public rights of way. We have not used our discretion to propose any additional restrictions or exclusions on this part of the coast.
- 12.1.9 Voluntary restrictions on climbing are already in place to discourage access on parts of the Portland cliffs at times when birds are nesting. We do not propose any additional measures to protect cliff-nesting birds, but there would be scope to introduce statutory directions at a later stage if this proved necessary.

See part 3 of the Overview 'Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps', for an explanation of the default extent of the coastal margin and how we may use our discretion to adjust the margin, either to add land or to provide clarity. See also Annex C of the Overview 'Excepted land categories'.

Establishment and ongoing management of the trail

- 12.1.10 Some physical establishment of the trail would be necessary, in accordance with the general approach described in part 6 the Overview. In addition:
- on route sections LRR-12-S022 to LRR-12-S025, we will install new steps because there are steep slopes (see map 12b);
 - on route section LRR-12-S023, we propose to install a new stone slab (clapper) bridge to span a deep crevice in the underlying rock (see map 12b).
- 12.1.11 Ongoing management and maintenance would be necessary in accordance with the general approach described in part 7 of the Overview. The overall need for this is likely to be greater than on some other parts of the stretch, recognising that it will be necessary for the route to roll back from time to time in response to coastal processes, as described below.

See parts 6 'Physical establishment of the trail' and 7 'Maintenance of the trail' of the Overview for more information.

Future Change:

- 12.1.12 The route of the trail on this length of coast would be able to change without further approval from the Secretary of State in response to coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes, or encroachment by the sea. This would happen in accordance with the criteria and procedures for 'roll back' set out in part 8 of the Overview. See tables 12.2.1 and 12.2.3 below for details of the sections likely to be affected in the foreseeable future.
- 12.1.13 There is an area of land owned by Portland Stonefirms Ltd known as the 'Coastal Strip' which extends along the east of Portland Bill Road from Southwell to the Portland Bill Observatory. This area is not currently quarried, but the owner's intention is that it will be worked in the future in a north to south direction, subject to commercial viability and the necessary consents being in place. If this does happen, we will hold discussions with the operator and Dorset County Council to agree how best to manage public access on this part of the coast while the work takes place. Our current understanding is that extraction works would be unlikely to affect access along the proposed route in any permanent way. However there may be a need to exclude the public from sections of the route and associated coastal margin at times when quarrying activities such as blasting are taking place. In these circumstances a temporary route avoiding the affected area would be put in place.
- 12.1.14 At the time of preparing the report, we do not foresee any other need for future changes to the access provisions proposed for the length of coast described in this chapter. .

See parts 5e 'Coastal processes' and 8 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.

Part 12.2: Commentary on the maps

See Part 3 of Overview for guidance on reading and understanding the tables below

12.2.1 Section details: Maps 12a and 12b: Portland Bill to Rufus Castle

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 12.2.2: Other options considered.

Column 5 – ‘Yes – normal’ means roll-back approach is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future.

Column 5 – ‘Yes – see table 12.2.3’ means refer to that table below about our likely approach to roll-back on this part of the route

1	2	3	4	5	6a	6b	7
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of this section	Current surface of this section	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 8 of Overview)	Landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary discretion	Proposed exclusions or restrictions
12a	LRR-12-S001	Public footpath	Stone: aggregate	Yes – see table 12.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S002 and LRR-12-S003	Public footpath	Grass	Yes – see table 12.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S004	Public footpath	Stone: aggregate	Yes – see table 12.2.3	Landward extent of existing access land	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S005 to LRR-12-S007	Public footpath	Grass	Yes – see table 12.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S008 and LRR-12-S009	Public footpath	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S010	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S011	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S012 to LRR-12-S014	Public footpath	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S015	Public footpath	Stone: bedrock	Yes - normal	Landward extent of existing access land	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S016	Public footpath	Stone: bedrock	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
12b	LRR-12-S017	Public footpath	Stone: bedrock	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S018	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	Yes - normal	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LRR-12-S019*	Public highway	Grass	Yes - normal	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LRR-12-S020*	Other existing walked route	Stone: aggregate	Yes – normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S021* to LRR-12-S025*	Other existing walked route	Stone: bedrock	Yes – normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S026*	Public footpath	Stone: bedrock	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S027	Public footpath	Steps: stone	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S028 to LRR-12-S030	Public footpath	Stone: bedrock	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S031	Public footpath	Steps: stone	Yes - normal	Landward extent of existing access land	Not used	None
	LRR-12-S032	Public footpath	Stone: bedrock	Yes - normal	Landward extent of existing access land	Not used	None
LRR-12-S033	Public footpath	Steps: stone	Yes - normal	Landward extent of existing access land	Not used	None	
LRR-12-S034	Public footpath	Stone: bedrock	Yes - normal	Landward extent of existing access land	Not used	None	
LRR-12-S035	Public footpath	Tarmac	Yes - normal	Landward extent of existing access land	Not used	None	

12.2.2 Other options considered: Maps 12a and 12b, Portland Bill to Rufus Castle

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
12b	LRR-12-S019 to LRR-12-S026	We considered following the existing route of the South West Coast Path which runs alongside Southwell Road and an adjoining track (between the points marked A and B on map 12b)	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it is closer to the sea with better sea views; ■ it avoids a section of roadside walking alongside Southwell Road

12.2.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Maps 12a: Portland Bill to Rufus Castle

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Feature or site potentially affected	How we will manage roll-back in relation to this feature or site
12a	LRR-12-S001 to LRR-12-S007	Beach huts at Portland Bill	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the buildings, curtilage and gardens, we will choose a route landward of them. In reaching this judgement we will have full regard to the need to seek a fair balance between the interests of potentially affected owners and occupiers and those of the public.

Part 12.3: Chapter 12 - Formal proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 12a to 12b.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

Formal proposals – Portland Bill to Rufus Castle

Proposed route of the trail

- 12.3.1 In relation to route sections LRR-12-S001 to LRR-12-S035 the initial proposed route, as determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 12a and 12b as the proposed route of the trail.
- 12.3.2 If at any time any part of the route described in the previous paragraph needs to change in order to remain viable, as a result of coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes or encroachment by the sea, the new route will be determined by Natural England in accordance with the criteria and procedures described under the title 'Roll-back' in part 8 of the Overview and section 4.10 of the Scheme. If this happens, the new route will become the approved route for that section for the purposes of the Order which determines where coastal access rights apply.

Landward boundary of coastal margin

- 12.3.3 Adjacent to route sections LRR-12-S018 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the pavement edge of the public footway shown as the trail on map 12b.
- 12.3.4 Adjacent to route section LRR-12-S019 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the edge of the tarmac road which is landward of the grass verge on the public highway shown as the trail on map 12b.

PROPOSALS

- Trail using existing public right of way or highway
- Trail using other existing walked route
- Trail shown on other maps

Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix:

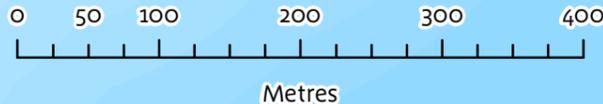
FP - Public footpath

Explanatory note: coastal margin

Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly to the landward side of the proposed route of the trail. The coastal margin may include some areas where coastal access rights do not apply, either seaward or landward of the proposed route of the trail: the Overview explains more about this. The landward boundary of the coastal margin may in due course move inland, if the trail rolls back under proposals in this report to respond to coastal change.

Other information

- Sea below mean low water
- Other access rights and routes**
- Public footpaths
- Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land
- Existing access land
- Trail infrastructure**
- Existing footbridge in satisfactory condition
- New steps required



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This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.

SY

PROPOSALS

- Trail using existing public right of way or highway
- Trail using other existing walked route
- Trail shown on other maps

Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix:

FP - Public footpath

FW - Public footway

RD - Public road

Other routes considered see table 12.2.2 for details

(A) (B)

Other information

Sea below mean low water

Other access rights and routes

Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land

Existing access land

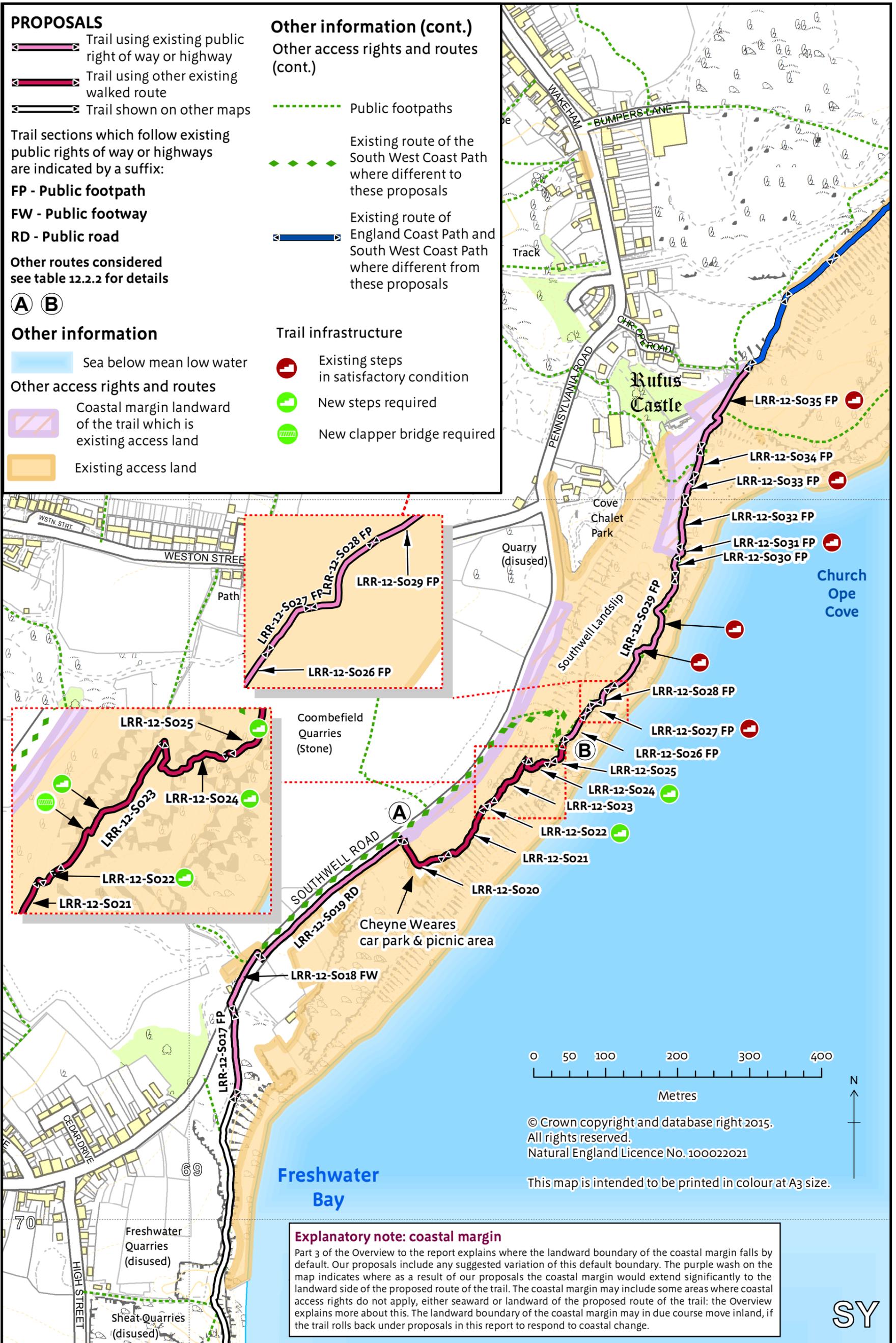
Other information (cont.)

Other access rights and routes (cont.)

- Public footpaths
- Existing route of the South West Coast Path where different to these proposals
- Existing route of England Coast Path and South West Coast Path where different from these proposals

Trail infrastructure

- Existing steps in satisfactory condition
- New steps required
- New clapper bridge required



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