FAQs on the City Splash Swim Cancellation

Why did you have to cancel?
City Splash was cancelled due to heavy rainfall in the days leading up to its scheduled date. Swimming in the Charles is only allowed with the issuance of a Special Event Permit from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Regulations from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority dictate that rainfall must stay under ½” of accumulation in the 48 hours leading up to a swim in the Charles because of its potential impact to water quality, and therefore the permit could not be issued. The cleanliness of the Charles has improved tremendously over the years, but we always want to err on the side of caution as we reintroduce river swimming. One of the things we love about our Charles River is that it is a natural body of water right in the heart of our city. But that comes with natural impacts and consequences.

Why is the event not rescheduled for another date?
Unfortunately, City Splash cannot be rescheduled for later this summer. Preparations for 4th of July celebrations on the Esplanade preclude other events from taking place for the next several weeks and the likelihood of cyanobacteria blooms, which can produce a harmful toxin, increase as water temperatures rise later in the summer.

Why do you hold the event if it is so susceptible to cancellation?
Since City Splash began in 2013, over 1,400 participants have enjoyed jumping in and swimming at this event. Our drive to return swimming to the Charles is fueled by the desire to celebrate how far we’ve come and that on many days, swimming is possible in the Charles.

Not being able to swim in the Charles on June 22nd is a great reminder of why we hold City Splash in the first place: to raise awareness of the important role the river plays in our city. By engaging directly with the Charles River, we are able to inspire more stewards of the river and its parks; the more connected people feel to these spaces, the more they will support investments for these resources’ continued health. We should be disappointed that we cannot swim June 22nd. We should also be disappointed that we can’t swim every day in the summer. And the CRC is working to change that.

What is the CRC doing about water quality issues?
While City Splash’s cancellation is not based on the EPA’s recent announcement that the Charles River’s grade dropped from an A- in 2017 to B in 2018, both are related to rainfall. Stormwater can wash pollutants into the river and negatively affect water quality. A “B” grade does still mean that the Charles is sometimes safe for swimming, and the CRC is working to make sure we can take advantage of these opportunities and to increase them.

The first step is to gain a better understanding of the local water quality conditions in the Charles. For the past two summers, the nonprofit has been working with Max Rome, PhD Candidate in Environmental Engineering at Northeastern University, to take daily samples at North Point Park, the best location identified for a swim park, according the CRC’s 2016 feasibility study. While the full results of his research have yet to be published, you can find an executive summary on our website. Rome’s research shows that North Point Park met swimming standards much of the summer. The study also highlights the challenge of algal blooms, which has led to another project between the CRC and Rome: the installation of a floating wetland. The ~700 square foot
floating wetland, to be installed by Spring of 2020 at North Point Park, will provide a platform to study the algal blooms and see how the river food chain might become more resistant to rapid algal growth.

Will I get a refund for my registration?
Yes, everyone will receive a refund for the City Splash Swim event. We are working with Eventbrite to have purchased tickets refunded. Please be aware that refunds make take several days to fully process.

Will you hold the event again next year? If so, can my registration be transferred to next year?
We look forward to planning City Splash next year to celebrate the EPA’s Charles River Initiative’s 25th anniversary! As with all Charles River swimming events, City Splash is subject to the issuance of a Special Event Permit from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Registrations cannot be transferred to next year’s event but will be refunded. To be the first to hear about our Swimming Initiative announcements and other CRC news make sure to follow us on social media (Twitter: @charlesrivercrc; Facebook: @charlesriverconservancy; Instagram: @charlesrivercrc) and sign up for our monthly enews list.

Will you still have dry-land activities like food trucks and games on June 22?
We are so disappointed to cancel City Splash this year, especially since it was being expanded with free, family-friendly dry-land activities. Since the event is focused and centered around swimming, the entire event will be cancelled. With that being said, don’t let the lack of structured activities keep you from heading the parks this weekend and enjoying the natural beauty they have to offer!

Can my friends and I jump into the river on our own this summer?
Swimming in the Charles is only allowed with the issuance of a Special Event Permit from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Look for other opportunities to cool off this summer: City of Boston and Massachusetts.

How else can I get involved with the Charles River Conservancy?

- **Become a supporter** by making a gift to the Conservancy, you help our work in the parks.
- If you would like to get your hands dirty, **volunteer** with us in the parks on maintenance and stewardship projects, like pruning trees and shrubs, planting flower bulbs, trash pickup, and painting benches or railings.
- If public policy and planning is your interest, support our advocacy efforts (announced on Facebook and in our e-news) by contacting public and elected officials about specific and current parkland issues.
- If you and your colleagues are interested in team building, getting outside, and working on a specific stewardship project in the parklands, encourage your company to become a business partner.

*Your involvement is critical to ensuring that the Charles River parklands are more active, attractive, and accessible for all. THANK YOU!*