



Charles River Conservancy

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Hans Nedde

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# WELCOME!

Marking our organization's 25th anniversary year of protecting, restoring, and celebrating the Charles River and its parks, 2025 was a year of resilience, renewal, and growth. We took a fresh look at our long-term goals and are proud to share a refreshed strategic plan that builds on our vision, core values, and the "3 Cs" that guide our work: **Connect, Create, and Celebrate**. We connect organizations, people, and communities to each other and to the river; we create bold, impactful solutions that strengthen environmental health; and we celebrate the countless ways to inspire care, joy, and belonging along the water.

In addition to our signature volunteer and programming initiatives, we saw our mission come to life this year in exciting new ways, including:

- piloting a tree care program to foster the long-term health of young trees (p.9)
- receiving professional design awards in research for the Floating Wetland (p. 12)
- launching our Graffiti Artist-in-Residence program at the Lynch Family Skatepark (p. 16)

This year also marks a meaningful leadership transition. Following the conclusion of her most recent term of office, Lonsdale is pleased to be succeeded as board chair by long-time board member Gautam Sundaram. Lonsdale's steady guidance and passion for our mission have been instrumental in shaping who we are today and positioning us for the exciting next phase envisioned in our strategic plan. We are grateful that she will serve on the board for one more year to support the transition and to keep championing the Charles.

Speaking of our gratitude for those who support our work, we're so thankful to each of YOU—our donors, volunteers, partners, and friends—for your belief in our mission. **Your support sustains everything we do and keeps the Charles River vibrant, healthy, and welcoming for all.**

As you read through this report, we hope you'll take pride in every milestone we've reached together. Here's to connecting to our river today, tomorrow, and in the years ahead.

**Laura Jasinski**  
Executive Director

**Lonsdale Koester**  
Board Chair



Photo: Tucker Horan



German International School



Mike Mejia

# ABOUT US

We believe everyone deserves a core memory on the Charles.

## MISSION

The Charles River Conservancy works to amplify community voice and catalyze bold solutions, to make the Lower Charles River and its parks more vibrant, healthy and welcoming now and in the future. Our work aligns with 3 “C”s:

- **Connect** organizations, people and communities to each other and the river and its parks
- **Create** bold, impactful solutions that elevate and strengthen the river and its parks as an essential ecological foundation and cultural asset for Greater Boston
- **Celebrate** the river and its parks and the intersection of people and nature to inspire involvement

## VALUES



Leadership  
through  
Collaboration



Equity  
through  
Access



Connection  
through  
Discovery



Innovation  
through  
Experimentation



Progress  
through  
Possibility

## GOALS



### PEOPLE / **Community Resilience**

Cultivate public engagement and advocacy



### PLACES / **Climate Resilience**

Advance river and park health



### PROCESS / **Organizational Resilience**

Invest in our capacity and culture

## STRATEGIC PLAN

Coinciding with the Charles River Conservancy’s 25th anniversary, the organization completed a strategic plan refresh in 2025 designed to propel our mission into the next phase of impact and growth.

Read the Strategic Plan at [thecharles.org/strategicplan](https://thecharles.org/strategicplan)

Learn more at [thecharles.org/about](https://thecharles.org/about)



Artemisia Luk



Cejay Photography



# Restoration & Resilience Projects

We expanded our stewardship efforts with initiatives designed to strengthen local habitat. Rooted in long-term care and collaboration, these projects mark meaningful progress and lay the groundwork for continued restoration in the years ahead.

We also piloted tree care work in Cambridge. We identified 25 young trees along Memorial Drive, between the DeWolfe Boathouse and the Resch Boathouse, that showed signs of stress. A professional contractor conducted **airspading** (helps to mitigate soil compaction), **applied biochar to the roots** (helps to improve soil fertility and health, enhances water retention and carbon sequestration), and **refreshed mulch rings around the trees** (helps to retain moisture, contributes organic material to the soil and tree roots, helps to suppress weeds, and protects the critical root zone of the tree).

This year marks our fifth consecutive season of restoration at Hell’s Half Acre—an effort that has transformed the landscape from nearly complete invasive plant dominance to a thriving, recovering habitat. Since a 2017 plant inventory found that **invasive plants had a high coverage of 76-95% density in the road edge habitat, our sustained work** (which included targeted herbicide treatments by certified contractors and manual removal by volunteers) **has reduced that coverage to an estimated 15–20%**. These efforts paved the way for our exciting next step: establishing native plantings in previously treated areas.

There’s new life ahead for our restoration efforts—stay tuned for more updates!

# STEWARDSHIP & VOLUNTEERS

In 2025, our stewardship programs brought together volunteers, partners, and staff to improve the ecological health and beauty of the urban Charles River. From bagging litter and painting benches to tackling invasive species and restoring habitat, this work ensures the Charles remains a thriving and welcoming space for both wildlife and visitors year-round.

## Earth Day

In April we celebrated our 26th Annual Earth Day Charles River Cleanup—a cornerstone of our stewardship efforts and one of the region’s largest volunteer events in partnership with the Charles River Watershed Association, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, the Esplanade Association, and the Waltham Land Trust, along with support from DCR and Senator Brownsberger’s office. Despite rainy conditions, 733 registered volunteers showed up in force and collected more than 500 bags of litter over two days, enough to fill a 30-yard dumpster. Thanks to all who helped with our deep “Spring cleaning” in the parks!

Learn more at [thecharles.org/volunteer/earthday](https://thecharles.org/volunteer/earthday)



**“My favorite memory from the Earth Day Cleanup: Just being together and taking care of a beautiful green space.**  
— cleanup volunteer



## STEWARDSHIP & VOLUNTEERS

# Group Volunteer Events

We built community all season long through our signature Conservancy Volunteer program, bringing together companies, schools, and local organizations to care for the Charles River parks in Boston, Cambridge, and Watertown. These hands-on events provided an opportunity for teams to get outside, learn about river and park ecology, and contribute to the ongoing maintenance and restoration of Boston's urban park system.

Participants not only built stronger connections with the Charles River parks and with one another, but also made an impact through their contribution of community service and environmental action. Cheers to volunteers for rolling up their sleeves and getting their hands dirty to remove litter, beautify park features, and restore habitats with us! We thank our corporate and for-profit partners whose sponsorship contributes to supplies, plants, and stewardship program management.

Learn more at [thecharles.org/volunteer](https://thecharles.org/volunteer)

**"One of the reasons I chose to volunteer with CRC is because of how organized the whole process was. As an event organizer, this helped to make my experience so much better!"**

— 2025 volunteer

### BY THE NUMBERS

Over  
**5,000**  
volunteer hours

Over  
**2,000**  
community volunteers

Over  
**700**  
bags of litter removed

Over  
**800**  
bags of invasive plant  
and vegetation  
material removed



## CREW

The Charles River Environmental Watch (CREW) program involves a dedicated team of volunteers who commit to caring for the river's parks and habitats throughout the entire season. These long-term roles invite CREW members to observe, record, and serve as the CRC's "eyes and ears" on a regular basis.

**CREW Stewards** adopted specific park sections, carrying out regular litter cleanups, removing invasive plants, and reporting on conditions. This ongoing attention helps ensure that each area receives consistent care and that maintenance needs are quickly addressed.

**CREW Vegetation Monitors** supported biodiversity and restoration efforts by gathering valuable data on plant growth and habitat conditions. Their observations inform the Charles River Vegetation Management Plan, guiding how we protect and restore native species along the river.

We're grateful for this remarkable group of volunteers whose work keeps the river and parks thriving. We welcome all who are interested in joining our CREW to get in touch!

Learn more at [thecharles.org/charles-river-environmental-watch](https://thecharles.org/charles-river-environmental-watch)

### BY THE NUMBERS

**11**  
stewards

nearly  
**80**  
hours served

**18**  
vegetation  
monitors

**442**  
plant  
observations





# FLOATING WETLAND

Now celebrating its sixth season, the Charles River Floating Wetland continues to stand out as a living example of how nature-based solutions can inspire resilience in our cities. The iconic little green island has drawn attention far and wide as a powerful tool for community engagement, ecological education, and urban design.

With continued research, strong partnerships, and growing public enthusiasm, we are positioned to build on the pilot's success and kick off our floating wetland expansion process.

## Award-Winning Innovation

The Floating Wetland earned two major recognitions for its groundbreaking design and research impact. The project received both the 2025 ASLA Professional Honor Award in Research from the American Society of Landscape Architects and the 2025 BSLA Design Award in Research from the Boston Society of Landscape Architects. These achievements were made possible through the dedication and partnership of the CRC team, Sasaki, the Hideo Sasaki Foundation, and Max Rome of Northeastern University.

*From the ASLA Awards Jury:* "This project was fascinating to review. To see the progress of this project from concept to prototype to implementation was great."

**This project would seem to have a widespread opportunity for implementation everywhere.**

Clarity of intent and impact, excellent engagement in design, implementation and monitoring, great post installation impact gathering, and good results. Longevity and scaling are of interest. One of the best projects because it includes 3 years of post-installation research."

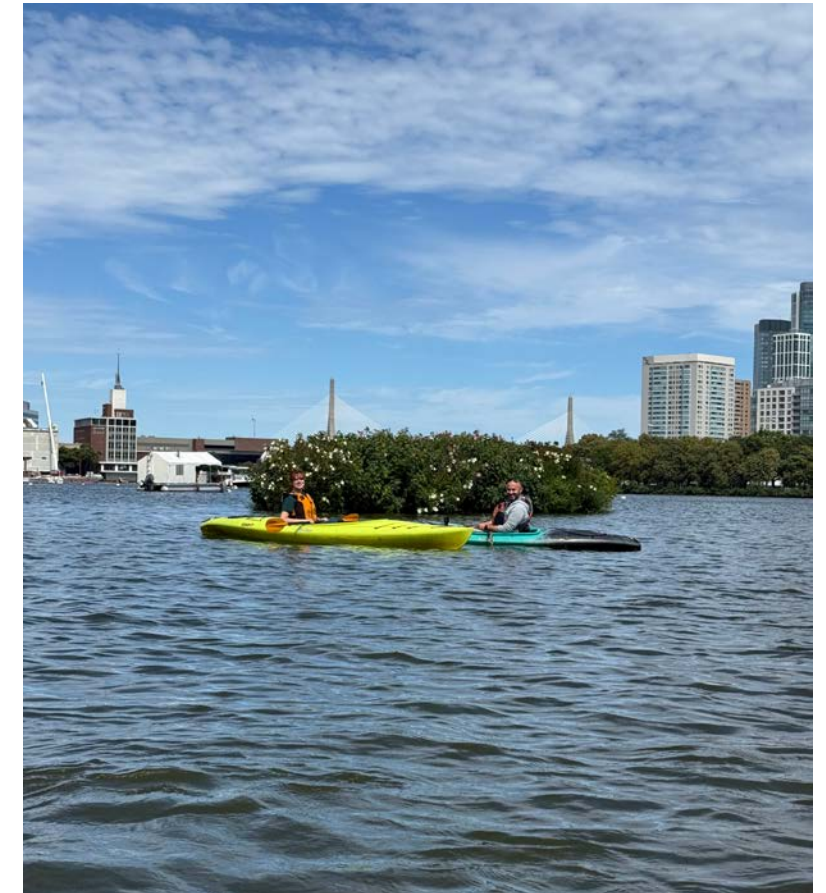
*Pictured: Sasaki Principal Tao Zhang with 2025 ASLA Award.*



## Spotlight Features

This year the Floating Wetland was featured on CBS Boston WBZ-TV's Climate Watch series, where meteorologist Jacob Wycoff met with the CRC team to showcase the wetland's purpose and impact.

We also partnered with videographer Rebecca Kopycinski to produce *Floating Wetland: Our Journey, Our Vision*. This mini-doc captures how the project is shaping the Charles River's future—pioneering new approaches to urban resilience and envisioning a network of floating green islands that bring people and nature closer together.



## FLOATING WETLAND Youth Programs

CRC teamed up with Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the East End House to lead hands-on river education programs that combined classroom learning with on-water experiences. Youth participants paddled out to the wetland, connecting first-hand with the science, design, and purpose behind this floating ecosystem.

2025 was our fifth successful year deploying "build-your-own wetland" STEAM education kits across classrooms in Cambridge Public Schools, Boston Public Schools, and other educational partners, providing students with a direct connection between their curriculum and their river! To date, this educational tool has reached over 1200 students.



Nathan Gauthier

### BY THE NUMBERS

# 73

total participants in youth summer programs

# 193

students designed and built their own floating wetland

# 40

STEAM kits delivered to educators

**"I loved kayaking on the Charles and seeing the floating wetland. It was cool to see how it bloomed between the first and second research cohort."**

— Save the Harbor/Save the Bay Youth Jobs & Leadership Program participant

## Community Engagement

The Charles River Floating Wetland continued to inspire curiosity, creativity, and collaboration for learners of all ages. From classrooms to conferences, our hands-on programs nurtured environmental curiosity, showcased the benefits of green infrastructure, and advanced our shared vision of a resilient river.



LEAP Lab: Floating Wetlands at MIT Open Space: Young scientists explored river ecology through hands-on design challenges, building their own mini wetlands before taking a guided walk to visit the real deal.



Cambridge Community Learning Center: Adult learners studying for their high school equivalency diplomas built wetland models and explored topics like algal blooms and river ecosystems, linking environmental science with real-world relevance.



STEAM It Up in Cambridge: Students and families engaged with CRC's floating wetland activity, learning how green infrastructure supports water quality and biodiversity while sparking creative curiosity in science and design.



Sindayiganza Photography

Inspiring Leaders: The CRC presented hands-on science engagement at the Stone Living Lab Conference in Boston and the floating wetland took the stage at the Garden Club of America National Affairs and Legislation Conference in Washington, D.C. as a model for advancing climate adaptation and community resilience.

Learn more at [thecharles.org/floating-wetlands](https://thecharles.org/floating-wetlands)



Tucker Horan

# LYNCH FAMILY SKATEPARK

2025 was a year of firsts at the skatepark, underscoring our commitment to serving the diverse community of skaters, street artists, and local creatives. From the launch of a brand-new Graffiti Artist-in-Residence Program to the formation of the Skatepark Advisory Group, every milestone this year reaffirmed Lynch Family Skatepark’s role as a space where everyone can move, make, and belong.

## Graffiti Artist-in-Residence Program

After we posted the Call for Art in our first-ever Graffiti Artist-in-Residence Program, we selected artist collective AOA Supply for our 2025 season. As part of CRC’s broader Public Art for Spatial Justice initiative, this annual residency was created to embed creativity directly into the park’s landscape—giving local artists a platform to reflect, represent, and uplift Boston’s unique street culture.

Our Artist-in-Residence Kickoff Celebration “Flipping the Script”, presented in partnership with Save the Harbor’s Beats on the Beach Program, transformed the park into a celebration of creativity. All were invited to paint, skate, and “imagine” the start of this new chapter, enjoying live DJ sets, local vendors, and spray-paint workshops with the Artists-in-Residence.



Cejay Photography

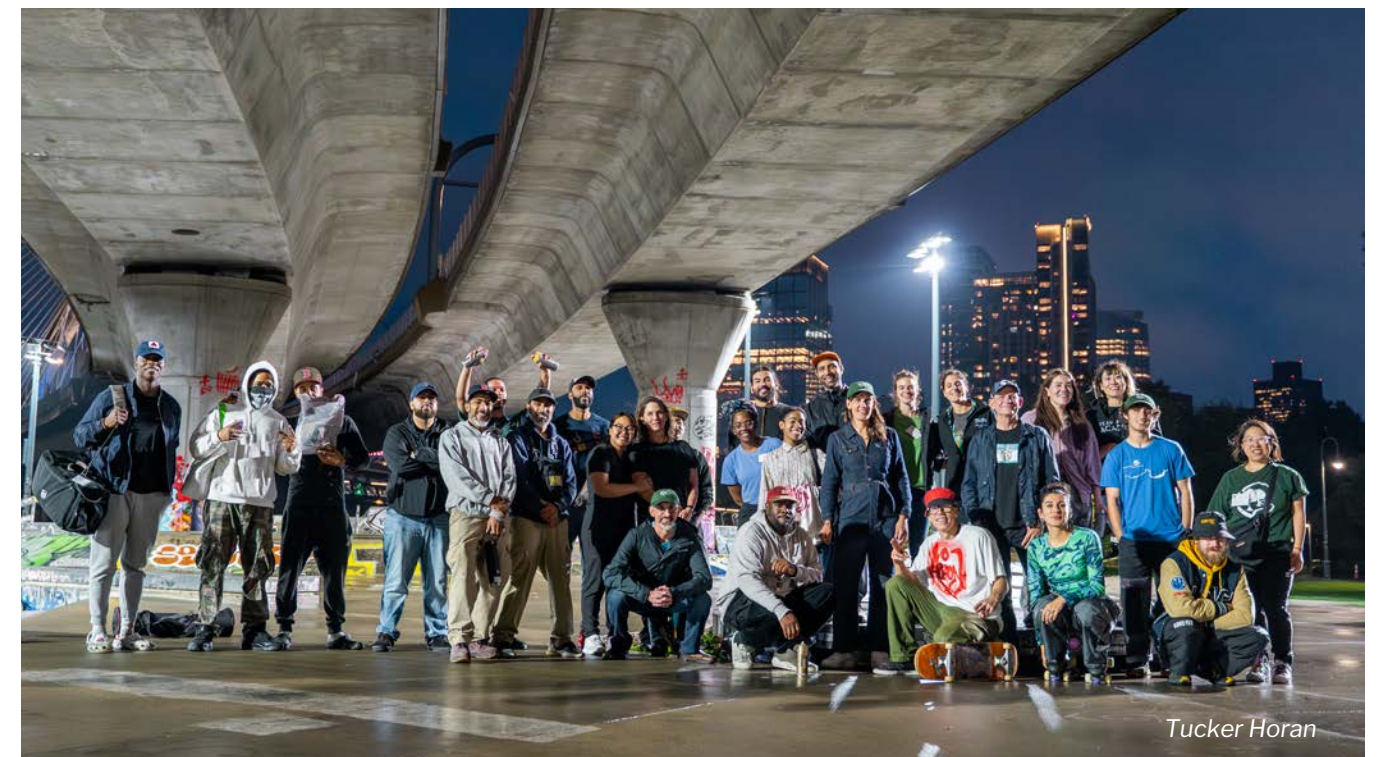


Over the summer, along with many local and visiting artists, AOA Supply transformed the skatepark’s pillars, walls, and vertical spaces into vibrant expressions of culture and identity. With DCR and DOT’s year-round permit supporting designated free walls, the Lynch Family Skatepark now stands as one of the few public spaces in the region where artists can paint freely year round—safely, legally, and in alignment with shared community guidelines.

We closed our first season’s success with “Tagged Out,” a free, all-ages community celebration that brought artists and skaters together once more. With live painting by AOA Supply, roller skating clinics by Tati Candela, music from A Trike Called Funk, and hands-on art activities, the park community came together in collaboration and connection.



Cejay Photography



Tucker Horan



Cejjay Photography

## Founding Skatepark Advisory Group

The success of this inaugural Graffiti Artist-in-Residence season wouldn't have been possible without our new Skatepark Advisory Group—a handpicked assembly of skaters, artists, and arts administrators who brought both lived and professional experience to the table. This group of individuals were selected to help shape community guidelines, inform artist selection, and ensure program decisions reflected authentic voices from the skatepark community.

We believe that public spaces are most powerful when those who use them help define them. From the ground up, our public art initiative at Lynch has been shaped by those who know the park best.

## Media Spotlights

This year, we enhanced Lynch Family Skatepark community outreach on Instagram by launching the #ArtistSceneSpotlight series, our collaborative editorial feature celebrating local street artists alongside our popular #SkateSceneSpotlight. These recurring spotlights are designed to showcase the faces, stories, and energy behind Boston's creative scenes. DM us @CharlesRiverConservancy if you'd like to nominate someone!

In yet another first, Lynch Family Skatepark made its official debut across DCR's social media channels. We encourage following @MassDCR so you don't miss out on the fun.

Learn more at [thecharles.org/our-work/lynch-family-skatepark](https://thecharles.org/our-work/lynch-family-skatepark)



@tavlrskates



@sup4ultr4



**“I want it to be understood that this is a skatepark. If there's a particular area you want to paint, cool. Talk to the skaters. Communication over everything.”**

—AOA Supply artist Lee “SOEMS” Beard

From Boston Globe, “A Cambridge skatepark has a message for graffiti artists: Come spray paint here”, May 13, 2025



# ADVOCACY

The Charles River Conservancy’s advocacy efforts remained a driving force for progress anchored in collaboration, resilience, and a deep commitment to the river’s health and equitable waterfront access.

Despite dramatic federal cuts, including the clawback of a \$327 million Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grant awarded to the Allston Multimodal Project and a blindsiding rescission (and whiplash reversal) of AmeriCorps/TerraCorps funding, our strong roots in coalition-building and public process never wavered.

We championed vital investments like the Environmental Bond Bill (Mass Ready Act), advocated for pedestrian/cyclist safety and parkland enhancements for DCR projects like Memorial Drive Greenway Improvements Phase III, and pressed for ambitious climate adaptation and biodiversity action consistent with state goals.

Through community engagement, public comment, and legislative participation, we elevated the voices of those who rely on the river most.



Carly Sherman

## Nature for Massachusetts

We joined the Nature for Massachusetts coalition to champion long-term, reliable funding for land and water conservation across the Commonwealth. Partnering with environmental leaders and community advocates, we collectively advanced An Act Providing Nature for All and the Protect Water and Nature Ballot Initiative—a two-pronged approach (through legislation or

voters) to increase the chances of achieving the desired outcome. If either of these campaigns succeed in 2026, we’ll secure \$100 million annually—without raising taxes—to protect and restore critical ecosystems, expand equitable access to parks and green spaces, and strengthen Massachusetts’ progress toward its climate resilience and biodiversity goals.



Nature for Massachusetts

## Lobby for the Rivers Day

We partnered with fellow members of the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance at the State House for its annual Lobby for the Rivers Day, which unites advocates from across the Commonwealth to speak up for the health of Massachusetts’ waterways. Working together, we championed the Drought Bill, the Nature for All Bill, and the bill to codify the Division of Ecological Restoration within the Department of Fish and Game. As a diverse group spanning seasoned lobbyists to passionate constituents, we shared stories, strengthened connections, and spoke directly with legislators about why protecting rivers and wetlands matter more than ever.

Learn more at [thecharles.org/our-work/advocacy](https://thecharles.org/our-work/advocacy)



Massachusetts Rivers Alliance



# THE RIVER BANK

The River Bank, our annual fund, supports our mission to make the Charles River and its parks active, attractive, and accessible to all. None of the accomplishments you read about in our annual report would be possible without our supporters.

The River Bank not only ensures the CRC's financial stability and growth that is needed to continue impactful work along the river, it also connects supporters to our work in a way that is meaningful to all, such as:

### \$100-\$499

Inspiring the next generation of river stewards by sharing educational resources like floating wetland activity kits to science classrooms

### \$500-\$999

Improving the river's health with activities that keep trash out of the river, like park stewardship by our CRC volunteers

We engage with and thank donors at all levels, providing walking and kayak tours, volunteer days, and recognition through our social media, e-newsletter spotlights, and our Annual Report publications.

Thank you to each and every one of our supporters for your continued involvement and investment in the future of the Charles River.

Learn more at [thecharles.org/theriverbank](https://thecharles.org/theriverbank)

Photo by Aaron John Bourque

## Stewardship Society

### \$1,000-\$2,499

Creating unique outdoor experiences, including our annual City Splash community swim

### \$2,500-\$4,999

Supporting biodiversity and healthy ecosystems, such as management of harmful invasive plant species

### \$5,000-\$9,999

Envisioning an accessible riverfront through our advocacy on projects like the Nature for Massachusetts campaign

### \$10,000-\$24,999

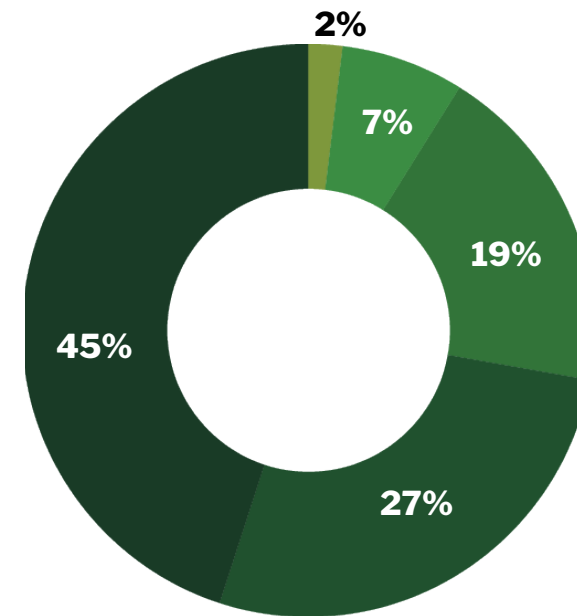
Supporting arts and culture in our public parks with partnership-building and community engagement

### \$25,000+

Enhancing the river's resilience, including planning and design for an expanded floating wetland installation

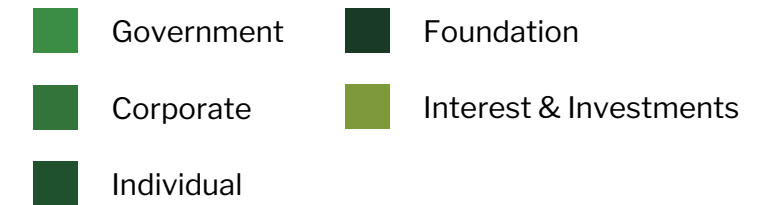
# FINANCIALS

The CRC's fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30. In FY2025, which ended on September 30, 2025, the CRC had **\$1,056,299** in Revenue and **\$1,001,696** in Expenses.

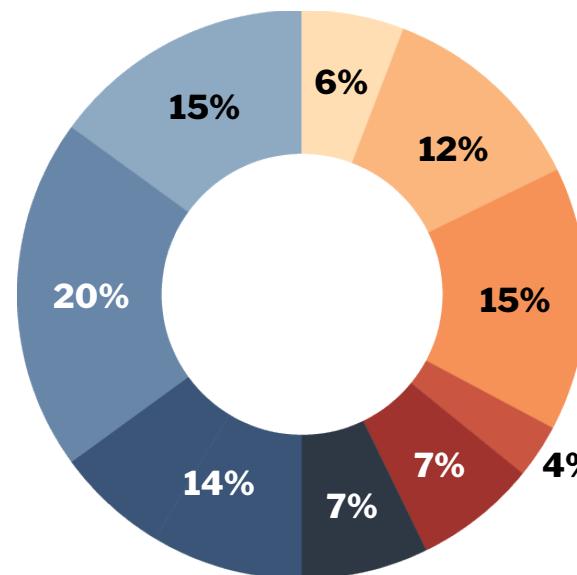
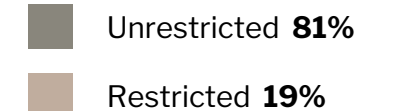


## Revenue

### Sources



### Type of Support



## Expenses



For a copy of our complete Fiscal Year 2025 financials, visit [thecharles.org/about/public-documents](https://thecharles.org/about/public-documents)



Aaron John Bourque

# DONORS

*Fiscal Year 2025 (October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025)*  
*The Charles River Conservancy thanks and recognizes the donors who make our work along the Charles and in the parks possible.*

**\$25,000 or More**

Anonymous (2)  
 Barr Foundation  
 Cambridge Redevelopment Authority Forward Fund  
 City of Cambridge Community Preservation Act Funds  
 Cultural Vision 30 Year Endowment Fund  
 Carol and Paul Fremont-Smith  
 Liberty Mutual Foundation  
 The McKenzie Family Charitable Trust  
 Mystic and Charles Regional Coastal Interventions Analysis, funded by Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program  
 New England Foundation for the Arts  
 Roaring Brook Family Foundation  
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Marathon Sports  
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 Dr. Richard Miner and Ms. Corinne Nagy  
 Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research  
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**\$2,500 to \$4,999**

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 The RMR Group  
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 Vicinity Energy  
 Watertown Community Foundation

**\$10,000 to \$24,999**

Anonymous  
 Alpine Rewards  
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 Charles River Parklands Stewardship Fund at The Boston Foundation  
 The Hamilton Company Charitable Foundation  
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**\$5,000 to \$9,999**

AbbVie Cambridge Crossing  
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 Athletic Brewing  
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 Harvard Business School  
 J.C. Kellogg Foundation Fund  
 Lonsdale and Torin Koester  
 Lawrence and Lillian Solomon Foundation

**\$1,000 to \$2,499**

Anonymous (4)  
 360PR+  
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 Alchemy Foundation

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 William Rawn Associates, Architects  
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 WuXi AppTec

**\$500 to \$999**

Anonymous (5)  
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 Elizabeth Barringer and John Clark  
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 Reinier and Nancy Beeuwkes  
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 Buckingham, Browne, and Nichols  
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 Elizabeth Coxe and David Forney  
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 Jane Hilburt-Davis  
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 International School of Boston  
 Brian James  
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 Jeffrey Moore  
 Jenny Morrison and Dick Marks  
 Geraldine Pangaro  
 Pine Manor Institute of Student Success at Boston College  
 Polar Beverages  
 Harold I. Pratt  
 Raytheon Corporation  
 Lisa Robinson and Robert Hansel  
 Miguel Rosales and John Corey  
 Ann Roseman and Bob Huhn  
 Ellen Sarkisian  
 David Siegel & Erika Geetter  
 Gerry Swislow  
 Takeda  
 Richard Urell  
 Vertex Pharmaceuticals  
 Stephen and Mary Weeks

**\$100 to \$499**

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 Claire and Jay Baldwin  
 Shelley Barnett  
 David Barrett  
 Martha Bauer  
 Sophie Beal  
 Jay Bergeron  
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 Ann E Berman  
 Boston College Residence Hall Association  
 Cliff & Connie Bouvier  
 Alexandra Bowers and James Liu  
 Brandeis University  
 Anne and Cameron Brandt  
 Brian & Jennie  
 Hailey Broderick  
 C. Anthony Broh and Jennifer L. Hochschild

Brookline Garden Club  
 Susan Bush  
 William Byrn and Linda Chadwick  
 Sara and Tim Cabot  
 Cambridge Boat Club  
 Carol and Bruce Caswell  
 Joanne Censullo  
 Richard Cheek  
 Toby & Nancy Clarke  
 Larry Cohen & Susan Worst  
 Oliver and Cecily Colburn  
 Susan and William Coney  
 Sally R. Coughlin  
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 Philip Crutchfield  
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 Dan Hogan  
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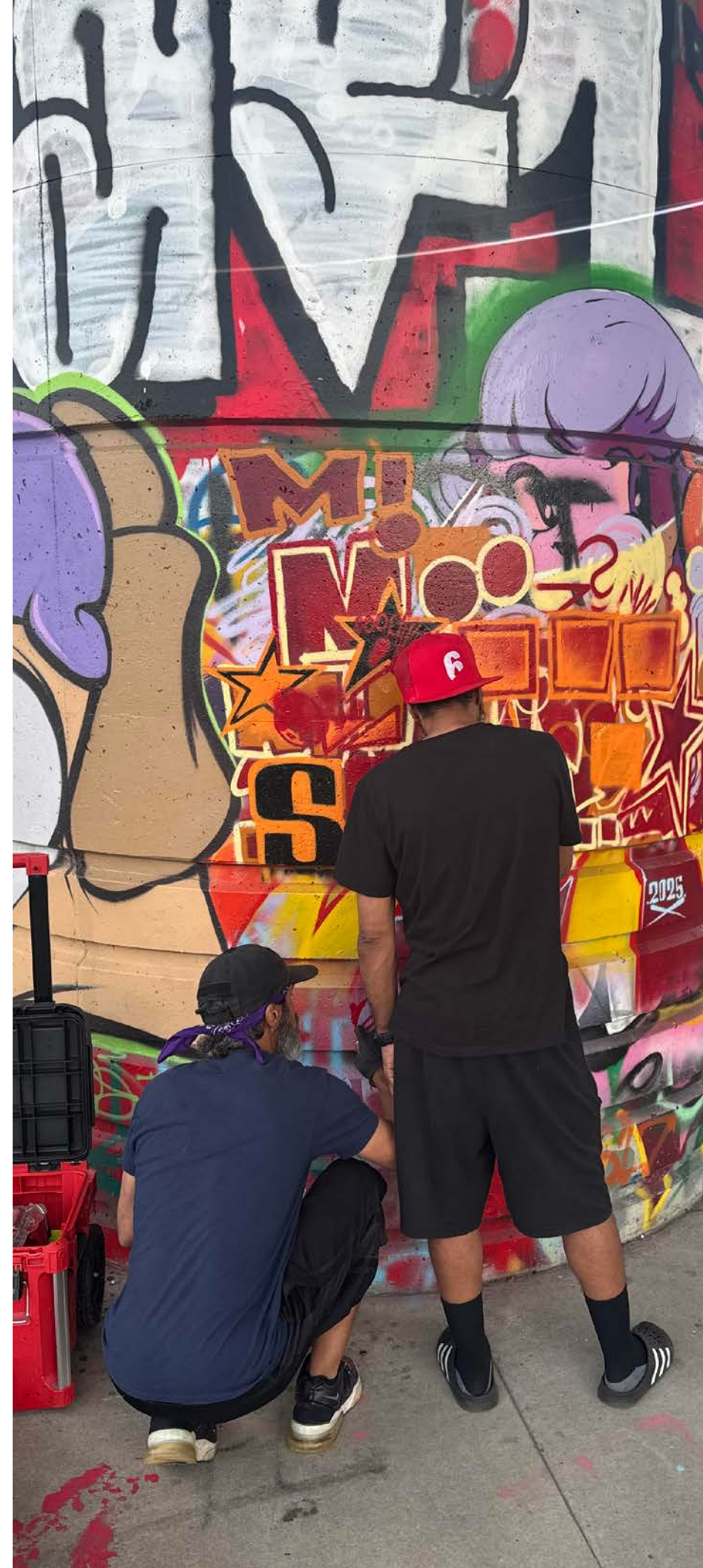
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*Back cover photo by Michael L. Hayes*

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