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CHARLES RIVER CONSERVANCY HOSTS CITY SPLASH 2026:
RARE OPPORTUNITY TO SWIM IN THE CHARLES RIVER AND MAKE ONE-OF-A-KIND SUMMER MEMORIES ON THE BOSTON ESPLANADE

For one day each summer, the public has the rare chance to swim in the Charles River surrounded by the Boston and Cambridge skyline views and a sense of possibility.





Artemisia Luk

CAMBRIDGE, MA - June 25, 2026: The Charles River Conservancy (CRC), in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), is excited to announce that City Splash 2026 will be held on Saturday, July 18, 2026 from 12pm-4pm. The state-sanctioned swim is held in a demarcated deep-water area off the Fiedler Dock on the DCR Esplanade in Boston. Back for its 8th iteration in 2026, City Splash remains a beloved summer event that provides the opportunity to experience the joy of swimming in the Charles River, one of the cleanest urban rivers in the United States.

“City Splash is more than an annual summer event—it’s a powerful reminder of what’s possible,” said CRC Executive Director Laura Jasinski. “Each year, thousands of people come together to celebrate the progress we’ve made in cleaning up the Charles and to imagine a future where swimming here isn’t the exception, but the norm. That momentum is real, and it’s growing. But until then, for one special day in July, that vision becomes reality."

Swimmer registration opened to the public on June 11, 2026 at https://thecharles.org/city-splash. Adults (18+) can sign up for one of the eight 25-minute swim slots of the day. Registration is free but required for all swimmers. Participants are encouraged to register early, as swim slots are capped to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all attendees.

Due to important safety considerations, swimming in the Charles River is only allowed if a permit is obtained from DCR. A Special Use Permit is obtained for City Splash. The CRC supports the vision for a swimmable river, but does not encourage swimming in the Charles River outside of permitted events.

"City Splash is a powerful reminder of what our public spaces make possible," said DCR Commissioner Nicole LaChapelle. "For one day, people can experience the Charles River in a way that creates joy, connection, and lasting memories. DCR is proud to partner with the Charles River Conservancy to expand access to the river, foster a sense of belonging, and celebrate the progress that continues to bring us closer to a future where even more people can safely enjoy the Charles."

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set a goal to make the Charles River both fishable and swimmable with its Clean Charles River Initiative in 1995. It was 30 years ago that Governor Weld took a leap into the river moments after he signed the Rivers Protection Bill on Aug. 7, 1996. Fast forward to today, and the EPA's "report cards" on the Charles River's health has gone from a D (1995) to a vastly improved A/B range.

Event Details

Date: Saturday, July 18, 2026 (rain date: Sunday, July 19, 2026)
Location: Fiedler Field, Charles River Esplanade Boston, MA 02114
Time: 12-4pm EDT

- **On-land activities free and open to public throughout event (for all ages)**
- Swimming in 25-minute pre-registered slots (for adults 18+ and older)

To celebrate the Charles River Conservancy's 8th annual swim in 2026, this year we will have an expanded vendor village, a variety of food trucks, and plenty of fun activities for all ages in the park. All are welcome to swing by at any time for a glorious summer afternoon on the Esplanade.

Food Trucks: Fresh Food Generation, Papi's Stuffed Sopapillas

Vendor Village: Big Little Pies, Lumière René Candles, More Than Words, Nüssli 118º, Slushy Lady, Subtlynx, Swim Freedom, TheTéSpa, Tree Yoga Studio

In partnership with DCR, Community Boating, Inc., YMCA of Greater Boston, and the Esplanade Association.

For more information on City Splash: https://thecharles.org/city-splash

Downloadable images: Media Use - City Splash

About the Charles River Conservancy

Founded in 2000, the mission of the Charles River Conservancy (CRC) is 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. In partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and other stakeholders, we connect communities to the river and its parks, create impactful solutions, and celebrate the intersection of people and nature. Because everyone deserves a core memory on the Charles, we provide programming that connects people to the river, projects that enhance the river's wellbeing as a natural urban space, and advocacy that centers community participation. Our work to steward and activate the Charles River Reservation spans 10 miles of riverfront in Boston, Cambridge, and Watertown, MA. This vital network of open space is within walking distance of more than 300,000 urban residents and visited by 1 million+ people. Learn more: https://thecharles.org

About the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. The agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the well-being of all. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit http://www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@mass.gov.