

CHARLES RIVER SWIMMERS MAKE A SPLASH!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Boston, MA - June 6, 2011 - The Annual Charles River Swim Race was held Saturday, June 4th at the Department of Conservation and Recreation's River Dock on the Esplanade. The one mile race, with over 80 participants this year, celebrates more than two decades of work to restore the water quality of the Charles River. Organized by the Charles River Swimming Club and supported by the Charles River Conservancy, the race began at the Esplanade and made a one-mile loop around the lower basin. Fred Laskey, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority started the race and Bill Walsh-Rogalski, Counsel for Special Projects, announced the US EPA's annual grade for the river following the race. The DCR's Director of Public-Private Partnerships gave out the awards.

The US EPA began the Clean Charles Initiative in 1995 with the goal of making the Charles swimmable by 2005. More than \$500 million has been spent to date on infrastructure improvements by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authorities and cities and town along the Charles that have significantly reduced the amount of pollution entering the Charles River. Inspired by the EPA's goal of making the Charles swimmable by 2005, the Charles River Conservancy began the Swimmable Charles Initiative in 2003. Under the leadership of Representative Alice Wolf, the Massachusetts legislature established the Charles River Water Quality Commission to study the feasibility of returning swimming to the river. The Conservancy provides significant support for the Commission in the form of staff and grants to carry out the feasibility study. The Conservancy recently received a \$15,000 grant from the Boston Foundation and \$5,000 from the RBC Blue Waters Project to continue its work on behalf of the Commission. The Boston Foundation has been a strong supporter of the Conservancy, including a previous \$150,000 three-year grant for the Swimmable Charles Initiative. The Blue Waters Project is part of RBC Bank's 10-year commitment to protecting fresh water resources around the world.

The funding from The Boston Foundation and RBC will allow the Conservancy to conduct a second summer of daily *E. coli* testing and weekly cyanobacteria testing at potential swimming sites. Data from the water quality-monitoring program will be used by the Commission to help determine the most suitable location for public swimming. The Commission is made up of five state senators and representatives (Senators Mark Pacheco, Sonia Chang-Diaz, and Richard Ross, and Representatives Anne Gobi and Marty Walz), and representatives from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Charles River Watershed Association, and water quality experts from the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Harvard School of Public Health.

Additional funding for the Conservancy's work to return public swimming to the Charles River has been provided by the Cabot Family Charitable Trust and the Massachusetts Environmental Trust.

For more information about the race, visit www.charlesriverswimmingclub.org and for more information about the Charles River Conservancy's initiative, visit www.thecharles.org.

The Boston Foundation, Greater Boston's community foundation, is one of the oldest and largest community foundations in the nation, with assets of \$733 million. In Fiscal Year 2010, the

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