

The Charles River Conservancy - 10 Years of Commitment

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For 10 years, the Charles River Conservancy has been providing advocacy, stewardship, and renewal for the 400 acres of the urban, state-owned Charles River Parklands from Boston Harbor to the Watertown Dam. By forming effective partnerships with public agencies, private corporations, and other nonprofits, the Conservancy promotes broader community use, involvement, and sense of ownership in ensuring these urban Parklands realize their full potential. In partnership with the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the work of the Conservancy includes improvement of the landscape, ecological sustainability, and accessibility of the Parklands; education and outreach about the Charles River Basin; advocacy before government bodies; and promotion of physical activities that advance healthy living. Current Conservancy programs include:

- **15,000 volunteers**, including over **350 corporations and organizations**, have engaged in the hands-on work of landscaping, pruning trees, stabilizing embankments, painting fences, removing debris, and more. This volunteer time equals \$1 million worth of labor invested in the health, safety, and beauty of the Parklands.
- **Tireless park advocacy**: increasing DCR's budget; preserving the parkway character of Storrow and Memorial Drives; improving bridge rehabilitations and the related pathways overhaul; strengthening bike and pedestrian access; and calling for more bridge underpasses.
- **\$2.5 million raised** for a world-class skate park – construction in partnership with the DCR is due to begin in 2010 and an endowment fund for its maintenance has been secured.
- **150 participants** in the Charles River Masters Swim Races we co-sponsored, and the Conservancy is staffing the legislature's special commission to study possible swimming locations in the river.
- **Hundreds of families and individuals** enjoying free Sunday Parklands Games—playing badminton, bocce, croquet, tetherball, and more on the riverbanks next to the car-free Memorial Drive.
- **Over 150 television and radio shows**, with regular programs on CCTV and BNN about the Charles River Parklands and its protagonists. Many 2009 shows are now on YouTube.
- **6 RiverSing celebrations** since 2004, produced in collaboration with Revels, bringing over 20,000 people out to the parklands on the autumnal Equinox, and 4 bridges permanently illuminated.
- **“Inventing the Charles River”**: an award-winning book, by Karl Haglund, co-published with The MIT Press, telling the amazing history of the river's urban landscape.