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## 60 seconds with ... **Ben Martens**

Swimmable Charles Coordinator for the Charles River Conservatory

**This Sunday the Charles River Swimming Club will hold its long awaited mile-long race along the Charles River in order to spread awareness for the cleanup program. Metro sat down with Ben Martens, coordinator for the Charles River Conservatory.**

**Do you think the Charles will ever break from the mantra of being dirty?**

"I think it has the potential. The Environmental Protection Agency ranked it a B++ meaning it

is swimmable and fishable most days out of the year. The key is public awareness and this race is going to be a part of that."

**Does the river still hold any of the same health concerns of the 1995 report, in which the EPA gave the Charles a "D" letter grade?**

"It does in the sediment which holds heavy metals such as mercury and lead, which is not good for anyone to be ingesting. Because the river is dammed at the Museum of Science the river never

gets flushed out, so its always going to be a problem. Racers will start in the river treading water so not to upset the river bottom."

**So would you let your kids swim in the river?**

"Oh sure definitely. [Renata von Tscharn-er] the president of the Charles River Conservancy, she's swam in the river and has brought her kids to swim too."

The swim starts at 8 a.m. Sunday at the Arthur Fielder Dock along The Esplanade.