



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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The Charles River, which flows 80 miles from Hopkinton to Boston Harbor, is one of New England's crown jewels. One of the busiest recreational rivers in the world, the lower Charles is lined with boat houses, jogging paths, sports fields and performance facilities that are used by hundreds of thousands of city dwellers each year. Still, the river suffers from pollution problems, particularly after heavy rains which wash bacterial contaminants into the river from sewer overflows, illegal sewer connections and storm water runoff.



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EPA-New England has launched an ambitious effort to restore the river so that it is fishable and swimmable by Earth Day 2005. The project relies on the cooperation and commitment of numerous federal, state and local agencies as well as strong participation from citizens, nonprofit groups and private institutions.

Using sound science, cutting-edge technologies and, when necessary, strong enforcement, EPA and its partners are making remarkable progress tackling storm overflows, illicit sewer connections and other pollution sources to the river. The result: much cleaner water!

On April 21, 2004, EPA graded the river's water quality as a "B-", down from a solid "B" the year before but a dramatic improvement from the "D" we gave the river eight years ago. For more information on the report card event read the [press release](#).

Storm water pollution continues to be a major impediment to restoring the river. "We've been highly successful in closing off the pipes and separating the sewer lines responsible for much of the river's pollution," said Bill Walsh-Rogalski, who is leading EPA's efforts on the Clean Charles 2005 project. "Now it is time to turn our attention to storm water runoff and the challenge of getting every homeowner, every car owner, every dog owner and every small business owner to play an individual role in reducing the flow of contaminants into the river."

In February 2003, the Charles River was selected as one of only 10 sites in the country for piloting EPA's new water quality trading program. Using a \$106,000 grant from the EPA, The Charles River Watershed Association is pursuing a first-of-its-kind project in which increased instream flows in the river would be used as a trading tool for addressing the river's water quality problems.

The project is in response to increased development in the Charles River

