

CHARLES RIVER CLEAN UP BOAT

Official newsletter

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**Donor Spotlight:
Cathleen Finn**

**"From Dirty
Water to a Clean
Charles"**

**Profile: Mitch
Lunin**



*Keeping the Charles
River Clean of
Floating Debris Since
2003*

SPOTLIGHT: CATHLEEN FINN

What does the Charles River signify to you?

The Charles River is a powerful symbol of Boston, connecting us to both the past, present, and future of the city. The River goes through so many of our communities in Eastern Massachusetts, it is a familiar and treasured friend. For many years I had the pleasure of my commute involving driving along the river, and I enjoyed seeing the change in seasons year round as depicted by the activity along the River. In one of my first jobs our building had windows overlooking the river near the Longfellow Bridge and I delighted in spotting the first Duck Boat of the season on the water each Spring. I love seeing the crew teams and sailboats on the river. The Charles River is an important figure in the lives of everyone in Greater Boston.

Why did you continue to be dedicated to the Clean Up Boat?

I love how focused the Clean Up Boat is on its mission. There is very little overhead involved since the dedicated Captains donate their time and skill to making the boat's operation so effective, and other volunteers who join for just one day a year feel they are making a real difference. I personally love the opportunity to get directly involved in cleaning up the river. So many of us are concerned about the environment and it is so healthy and rewarding to find a concrete way to help the environment while beautifying such an important feature of our city. When we take the boat into the Charles River Basin I see the ladders built into the granite walls that people in past generations used to access the river for recreational activities like swimming and boating. I'm inspired by the thought that one day we will make the river clean enough that we will be able to once again swim in the river too.



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When you tell
people that
you are
spending a day
taking
garbage out of
the river most
times they
look at you
strangely, but
once you try it
you find that it
is incredibly
satisfying.**

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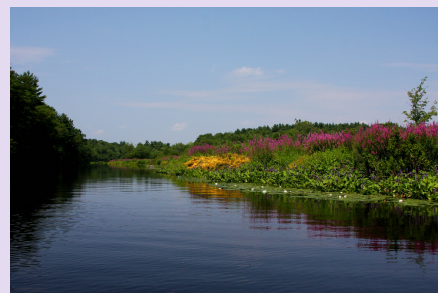
FROM DIRTY WATER TO A CLEAN CHARLES

The story behind the internationally-recognized cleanup of the Charles River is actually quite simple: A group of concerned citizens refused to accept the public notion that the Charles was beyond saving. It's a story we have in common with the Clean Up Boat.

In 1965, that group formed the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA), one year before the Standell's hit song, "Dirty Water." At that point, the river was used as a dumping ground for cars, furniture, industrial waste, and other trash; sewage releases were abundant; dams restricted river flow and degraded health; and stormwater brought excess nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen into aquatic ecosystems, endangering biodiversity. There were sections of the river that were so polluted, they were unable to support life.

Since then, the Charles River has earned two A- grades on water quality from the US EPA, a stunning success from its first D grade in 1995. CRWA is proud to have delivered one of the nation's cleanest urban rivers through its programs of science, advocacy, and law. But, for a river intertwined with 80 miles of bustling cities and towns, "clean" is not an endpoint, it's a verb—and it's still our unwavering mission. CRWA continues to make progress on initial issues and is prepared to tackle the new and unprecedented challenges that climate change brings.

To learn more about CRWA's projects, programs, and how you can get involved and support the vision of a "Clean Charles," please visit crwa.org.



[Visit Their
Website!](http://crwa.org)


CHARLES RIVER
WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION

CAPTAIN FEATURE

In 2002 I retired from dentistry after thirty-five years of practice and was looking for a new activity to pursue. I came across an article in the Globe Magazine about the Charles River Clean Up Boat. It looked like an interesting opportunity to get outside on a boat and clean the environment. The bonus for me would be cleaning up the river I had been fishing for years. I signed up for ten dates the first year, mostly with Tom McNichol, and we became friends. The next season he asked if I wanted to drive the boat while he scooped trash. Would anyone not want to drive a boat? After several more successful educational driving trips, during lunch he asked if I would be interested in becoming one of the four boat Captains for the next season.

I have been driving ever since. The experience has been extremely rewarding. The benefit to the environment is obvious. In addition, for me, I get to spend the day on the river observing a variety of wildlife not encountered in my backyard. One spring day I saw twelve Great Blue Herons and twenty Black-crowned Night Herons. Best of all, the volunteers are an interesting, knowledgeable, diverse group of people, many of whom have become friends, as we are all motivated to keep the Charles clean.

Without a doubt my greatest memory of this experience was meeting and working with Tom McNichol and our subsequent friendship. His infectious enthusiasm and broad knowledge will always be with me. He not only taught me a lot about boats, but how to read and interact with people. Tom evoked the best in everyone he met and applied this gift to making the Clean Up Boat such a success.



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Like everyone else, I cannot wait to safely get back to work! I hope we will launch this season, to resume maintaining the Charles and keep up the positive impact of improving the environment.

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THANK YOU!



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Thank you for your
continued support of our
mission!