

Press Releases

Crescent Park Beach in East Providence to Reopen as a Swimmable Beach

Crescent Park Beach in East Providence is set to become a licensed, swimmable beach again in the coming years after more than a century of non-use, announced Governor Dan McKee and Mayor Bob DaSilva today.

Local, state, and federal officials are targeting May 2026 as the reopening of the beach for swimming, after the implementation of a program of water quality testing by the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), the construction of restrooms at the site, and the hiring of lifeguards. Funding for this work secured by RIDOH from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"This is a great day for East Providence, and for all of Rhode Island," said Governor Dan McKee. "Crescent Park is a place where people come to sit by the water, enjoy concerts, and be with family and friends. In the near future, people will be able to swim here too. Accessible by the East Bay Bike Path and public transit, this beach will be a destination for people in the city and beyond."

"Our administration is always looking at opportunities to bring more amenities to our residents and community," Mayor Bob DaSilva said. "Having a licensed, swimmable beach here at the historic Crescent Park will be wonderful for our residents both young and old to visit and enjoy for generations come."

Crescent Park is the site of the former Crescent Park Amusement Park, which operated from 1886 to 1979. One of the waterfront park's main features were bathhouses that ran hundreds of feet along the length of Crescent Park, the wooden pilings of which are still visible at low tide. These bathhouses were affordable and offered everyone an opportunity to swim at Crescent Park Beach. While the amusement park was in place until 1979, people have been advised to not swim at the beach due to urban water runoff and industrial discharge.

Several water quality improvement projects have been implemented over the last decade by government agencies, community groups, and environmental non-profits, such as Save the Bay, the Narragansett Bay Commission, and the Nature Conservancy. These projects have included putting more stringent regulations in place, promoting sustainable agricultural practices to reduce nutrient runoff, and implementing habitat restoration projects to enhance the bay's resilience. RIDOH and Save the Bay have been monitoring water quality at Crescent Park Beach since 2017, to measure the impact of these improvements. With the water now safe for swimming, the beach water will become part of RIDOH's statewide beach monitoring program. Samples will be collected twice a week at Crescent Park Beach and analyzed at RIDOH's State Health Laboratories.

"On a hot day, it's nice to be able to take a dip and cool off at the beach and that requires clean, safe water conditions. I've worked over the years to deliver federal funds to improve water quality, amenities, and sustainability here at Crescent Park Beach. For generations, this

beach has been closed to swimmers because the water quality simply wasn't up to snuff for swimming. The investments we've made and the partnerships we've built with nonprofits like Save The Bay, The Nature Conservancy, and many others have really helped turn the tide on contaminants and runoff and restored the Bay and beach environment to a cleaner, greener state. Healthy beaches are good for public health and the health of our economy. I will continue working to help Rhode Island tap into clean water funding and look forward to returning here for the official opening to welcome swimmers back into the water," said Senator Reed.

"Thanks to Senator Reed's leadership creating SNEP and federal investments through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we're making Crescent Park Beach swimmable once again," said Senator Whitehouse. "This federal funding will help improve local water quality in our Narragansett Bay and provide infrastructure upgrades to help make the beach a summer destination for families to enjoy."

"Rhode Island is blessed with over 400 miles of coastline, including Crescent Park Beach and Bullock Point in East Providence," said Congressman Amo. "However, for nearly a century, local residents have been unable to safely swim at these beaches due to long-standing water quality issues. I'm thrilled that today's redesignation of Crescent Park as a swimmable beach was made possible by the Environmental Protection Agency's Southern New England Program. It stands as a testament to the hard work and partnership between federal, state, and municipal officials who strive to expand ocean access for all Rhode Islanders."

"EPA's Southeast New England Program (SNEP) is excited to work with the Rhode Island Department of Health and the City of East Providence to provide a swimmable beach at Crescent Park," said SNEP Outreach Coordinator Christina Madonia. "Improved health of Narragansett Bay allows this opportunity to recenter life around the Providence River again and reconnect this community and extended communities with the water, the beach, and the enjoyments they bring."

"RIDOH's Beach Water Monitoring Program and the State Health Laboratories work hard throughout the year to ensure that the beach water Rhode Islanders swim in is healthy and safe," said Director of Health Jerry Larkin, MD. "We're thankful to the EPA for their partnership and support, and are thrilled to expand our work into Crescent Park in East Providence in the years to come."

RIDOH will begin water quality monitoring at the beach this season. Restroom construction will likely begin later in 2024 or in 2025, with the opening for swimming expected in May 2026.

This project is being supported by EPA's SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience (SOAR) Fund. In this first year of the grant program, EPA selected five grantees across Rhode Island and Southeast Massachusetts, representing \$1.275M in direct investment. As part of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, these investments are intended to advance climate resilience in disadvantaged communities at the local level.

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Related links

- [Information about the funding](#)
- **Department or agency:** Department of Health
- **Online:** <http://www.health.ri.gov>
- **Release date:** 05-24-2024