

Project History

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HISTORY

+ POOL was conceived in 2010 by four friends: Archie Lee Coates IV and Jeff Franklin of the design firm PlayLab; and Dong-Ping Wong and Oana Stanescu of the architecture firm Family. It started as a simple idea: instead of trying to clean the entire river, what if you started by just cleaning a small piece of it? And what if you could change how New Yorkers see their rivers, just by giving them a chance to swim in it? With this thought in mind, four designers proposed + POOL --- a floating plus-shaped pool in the inner harbor of the NYC waterfront, designed to filter the very river that it floats in through its walls, cleaning more than 600,000 gallons of water every single day. No chemicals, no additives, just natural river water.

+ POOL was the first capital project to launch through Kickstarter, the leading crowdsourcing funding platform. The team raised over \$40,000 in seven days and tested its first layer of filtration at Brooklyn Bridge Park in summer 2011 with Kickstarter funds. The research was used to approach city officials for the first time with the idea, which was incredibly well received.

A second Kickstarter campaign in 2013 raised more than \$300,000, and funded a scaled version of + POOL's filtration system in the Hudson River that was tested for 6 months in summer 2014. The designers at Playlab and Family worked with Brooklyn-based naval architects at Persak & Wurmfeld, fabricators at Olollo, filtration textiles and system specialists at Mackworth, the marine science field station River Project, scientists at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and engineers at Arup to launch the "Float Lab" in the Hudson River to test filtration membranes in real-river conditions. The data collected and research developed by the full team gave the designers a cohesive understanding of material combinations that would support a full-scale pool in New York's inner harbor. The in-depth tests in real river conditions proved + POOL technology is possible and can filter river water to pool quality standards without using chemicals. Through a partnership with Google, the designers made this data publicly accessible through a newly designed online dashboard (<http://dashboard.pluspool.org>).

In 2015, after the successful testing of Float Lab, the creators of + POOL decided to incorporate as a 501c3 to fund the final design, development and construction of + POOL and ensure its operations moving forward remained community focused. As a 501c3, Friends of + POOL develops educational, recreational and cultural public programming for underserved communities and will work to educate the larger public on the importance of clean water.

By incorporating as a nonprofit, + POOL became a new model and a case study for the production of civic architecture. To date, nearly all Kickstarter and crowd-funded projects launch individuals into for-profit businesses, with a select few launching specific charitable projects for existing nonprofits. + POOL is therefore an example of how capital projects can be initiated and built by first galvanising a public that believes in making our cities better.

MISSION

Friends of + POOL supports the development, operation and maintenance of + POOL, the first water-filtrating, floating pool. It also promotes, encourages and supports the preservation, restoration, conservation, maintenance and use of pools, rivers, oceans, lakes and other bodies of water for recreational, scientific and educational purposes; promotes, encourages and supports water treatment systems and educational programs focused on water stewardship; and educates the public about the importance of clean water.