

GOVERNOR HOCHUL MAKES HISTORIC ADVANCE TO BRING STATE-WIDE SWIMMING ACCESS TO NATURAL WATER BODIES USING + POOL TECHNOLOGY



+ POOL receives \$16 million to pilot and scale its water-filtering, floating pool design across New York State

+ POOL to install a version of the plus-shaped pool in the NYC river in summer 2024

NEW YORK, N.Y. - January 5, 2024 -- In a historic advance, Governor Hochul announced today the foundation of a partnership to open up the natural water bodies across New York State for swimming. Governor Hochul affirmed the State’s intent to expand swimming access across the state and has committed \$16 million to pilot and scale + POOL with the goal to create the first urban river-sourced swim facility in the United States. This summer, the Governor and the nonprofit Friends of + POOL plan to launch an approx. 2,000 sq. ft. version of the water-filtering swimming pool utilizing + POOL’s design and technology. The installation in New York City this summer will demonstrate how the + POOL, and its unique

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filtration system, will provide safe public access to our waters and meet new regulations outlined by the government. It will also contribute to the assessment of a variety of sites for the build out of pools across the State. Bringing river swimming to New Yorkers through + POOL will help New York State take meaningful steps towards the goals of the Clean Water Act.

Governor Hochul declared, “It’s called + POOL, and it will allow New Yorkers to swim in clean, filtered water right under the city skyline. The state will contribute \$12 million, the city committed \$4 million, and will ensure that the pool will be open for testing next summer - and for swimmers the following summer.”

+ POOL Design and Filtration System

When completed, the plus-shaped floating swimming pool will filter water through its walls, cleaning more than 1,000,000 gallons of water a day without chemicals or additives. In addition to contributing to the health of New York State’s waters, + POOL’s is adaptable; able to be reconfigured for lap swimming, lounging, watersports, and children’s activities. Each configuration can be used independently, combined to form an Olympic-length pool or opened completely into a 9,000 square foot pool for play.

Friends of + POOL has engineered a filtration system that brings raw river water to an acceptable microbiological standard for swimming, and patented the design. The team has utilized the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (US EPA) water quality modeling software, the Water Quality Analysis Simulation Program version 8.1 (WASP; US EPA, 2018a), to model the system and to determine that it is possible to ensure + POOL’s water quality without the use of chemical disinfectants. The + POOL team advocated for city and state agencies to create a pathway for river swimming and worked to establish regulations for public access where there were none. This summer’s public demonstration of the system will provide New York State and Friends of + POOL with the final data needed to secure permits and greenlight the completion of the pool’s installation.

Restoring Equitable Access

Mayor Eric Adams says, “Think about this. + POOL. Do you know how long we fought for this? ...This was an invention that was possible, to be able to use our own waterways to have pools in communities that have historically been ignored.”

“New York’s waterways are currently out of bounds from those who could benefit most from them,” says Friends of + POOL Managing Director, Kara Meyer. “+ POOL reclaims New

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York's natural resources by opening our waters. It restores the utility of our waterways. It gives everyone the ability to enjoy the water. It enables people to care for and coexist with nature."

Over the past century, New York has invested in the build out of public pools three times, each time, reaping great public and economic benefits. In the 1870s, after the civil war, public health officials called for more public baths and created floating pools up and down the NY harbor. By the 1900s, 40% of New Yorkers used the 15 floating bathhouses in and around NY1936 was "The Summer of Pools" in NYC, when Robert Moses unveiled the opening of 11 new public pools built as part of the WPA. 20% of NYC's public outdoor pools still in operation today were the WPA pools built nearly 100 years ago by Moses following the Great Depression.¹ Between 1970 and 1972, NYC built 19 municipal pools. In March 1973 after the opening of the pools, then police commissioner Patrick V. Murphy announced an 18% decline in crime.²

"Municipal swimming pools were extraordinarily popular during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Cities and towns across the country opened thousands of new pools that served tens of millions of Americans. These pools became emblems of a new, distinctly modern version of the good life that valued leisure, pleasure, and beauty," says Jeff Wiltse, author of *Contested Waters*. "By 1933, swimming had become as popular as going to the movies. Pools were, in short, an integral part of the kind of life Americans wanted to live."

Today, municipal pools are scarce and yet, they have the potential to provide even more benefits to us in contemporary times. Municipal pools provide relief from increased instances of extreme heat. They serve thousands in a day as opposed to private pools that may only serve a single family and their friends, making them more sustainable. And, with concepts like + POOL, they will reconnect New Yorkers to the waters that surround our great state.

Archie Lee Coates IV, one of the designers of + POOL and co-founder of the nonprofit leading the initiative says, "For the amazing community of supporters that have been pushing for river access with us for so many years, this is a day to celebrate. A lot of incredible people have been working daily to make this happen in New York. It's projects like + POOL that make New York, New York, and we are excited for the work ahead that will contribute to the overall quality of life in the city for all New Yorkers."

"Building + POOLS in the rivers and waters across New York State is a visionary moment in

1 <https://www.nycgovparks.org/about/history/pools>

2 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/04/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-crime-pools.html>

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New York and an extraordinary investment into the health and well being of New Yorkers,” says Friends of + POOL Board Chair, George Fontas. “Governor Hochul and Mayor Adams have shown incredible leadership aligning several New York State and City agencies, dozens of staff and experts to make this proposal a reality. + POOL will spur new approaches to how we experience and interact with our waterways, promote economic activity, and lead to healthier New Yorkers.”

About Friends of + POOL

Friends of + POOL is a nonprofit organization that is reclaiming the water that surrounds us. It is the driver of + POOL, a self-filtering, floating swimming pool that filters river water through the walls of the pool, cleaning more than 1,000,000 gallons daily while providing a public, recreational space for New Yorkers to enjoy. It also produces free public and educational programs to celebrate safe access to the river, promote water stewardship; and educate the public on the issues affecting our water quality. More info at www.pluspool.org

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