



FOREST RIVER OUTDOOR RECREATION & NATURE CENTER – FAQ

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1. **What does the project include?**

The project includes these main elements:

- New pools - one lap/adult and one kiddie, with deck and grass areas surrounding the pools
- Renovation of the bathhouse – to include restrooms, lockers, family changing rooms, office space, & a new nature’s classroom/community room with associated patio
- 2 artist’s installations, including a splash pad and lighted mural
- A new filter building with first aid/lifeguard station
- New entrance with automatic gate and parking for accessibility
- Restored saltwater wetlands, cove and marsh areas, concessions, and picnic areas
- New accessible pathways and natural educational opportunities

2. **Why does the project include 2 pools and a “splash pad”?**

Two pools offer separation between adults and smaller children, which is a benefit to both users. In addition, if there is a need at any point to shut down a pool, only one pool needs to be shut down. The “splash pad” is an artist designed space near the concession area that will have water interactive features and seating. Pools can only realistically be open 2-3 months, largely because of available staff and weather. Salem can have very hot days in late May and in September, and sometimes the pool can reach capacity. Therefore, this area allows community members a place to cool off when they cannot get into the pool. For the rest of the year, it will be a space for visitors to relax or can be used as an outdoor classroom. The bathhouse can support other off-season water related activities such as kayaking, scuba, etc.

3. **What is the history of the pool and why was the pool closed?**

The pool started as a tidal area that had a gate to hold high tide waters in the early 1900’s. There was a small bathhouse, which was replaced in the 1930’s with the current structure you see (a similar building used to exist at Smith Pool near the Willows). In the early 1970’s, the two pools were built and the building upgraded, and in the early 1990’ the building was upgraded, and the pools were turned into chlorinated, including the addition of the filter building. The City has invested in this area every 20-30 years, and the current facilities are at life and in need of major upgrades. The pool was closed prior to the 2018 season as the existing pool had deteriorated to the point where it could no longer be fixed to provide a safe environment. In addition, the storms of 2018 inundated the filtration plant, causing it to fail.

4. **Tell us more about the Public Art?**

“Rivers of Time” is a permanent public art installation comprised of an interactive splash pad/mini amphitheater and a 3D mural both designed by artists and community activists Louis Chinn and Huameng Yu. Pulling from nature-based inspiration, the splash pad will include Salem specific ancient fossil brass inlays, glacial benches, and terraced steps representing volcanic and geological

layers over time. In their 3D mural made of acrylic glass and brass, Yu and Chinn have been inspired by the surrounding waterways and tributaries of Salem Sound and used them as “a metaphor for the cultural history of each different group of people that have arrived in this place at different points in time.”

5. *What is the project’s schedule?*

Construction on the project started in December of 2020. The pool, bathhouse, and most of the landscaping and paths will be completed December 2021. A few areas remain for work, including the splash pad, educational signage, cove planting, solar lights, and other small areas that will not affect use of the building and grounds. The pool and splash pad will be open Spring 2022.

6. *What are the community benefits of the project?*

This project will provide a modern recreational facility for residents and regional visitors. It will provide a place for people of all ages and abilities to learn how swim or to cool off during a hot summer day. This will also provide space or support other outdoor activities, such as, running, biking, walking, bird watching, kayaking, frisbee, nature education, and photography.

This project also will have the following benefits:

- High levels of sustainability, including zero net energy, & efficient heating/cooling
- Reduced runoff and green infrastructure, native plantings
- Renovation of a historic structure
- Year-round nature’s classroom/community space for activities and small events
- New security cameras and improved safety and emergency systems
- Resilient design located several feet out of projected storm surges

7. *What is the cost of the project and how is it being paid for?*

The estimated construction cost is \$11M, and the total cost, including soft costs such as design, construction oversight, testing, and contingency brings the total to \$13.5M. Most of the cost is being paid from City bonds. Other sources of funds include CPA and water and sewer bond to pay for the new sewer and water lines. The City has also receive a federal Land & Water Conservation grant and a Seaport Economic Council grant.

8. *How will Forest River facility be operated and maintained once the improvements are completed?*

The facility is under ownership and operation of Park and Recreation. They will operate the facility and may issue an RFP for the pool operation. Maintenance of the buildings and the pools will be part of the major contract for the first few years for major equipment, and then will be managed cooperatively by Park and Recreation, Engineering, and Public Services moving forward. The City has done an Operation & Maintenance plan for the facility, and will use revenue generated from the facility for the maintenance and for a capital reserve for future needs.

9. *Who is the team for this project?*

This project is being led by the Sustainability & Resiliency Department, in direct coordination with Park and Recreation. The lead designer is Bargmann Hendrie + Archteype and the Owner’s Project Manager is Anser Advisory. The General Contractor is Colantonio. Significant coordination has occurred with Engineering, DPW, Fire, Police, IT, Electrical, Health, and Planning Depts. If you have any questions, please contact Jenna Ide at jide@salem.com or 978-618-5699.