

PRESS RELEASE

Umeå, 26 July 2026

Over 100 took part in Riverfest – returning on 24 July 2027

Over 100 people swam, floated, paddled and cycled along the Umeälven on Saturday as Riverfest returned for its second year. The river festival will now be back on Saturday 24 July 2027. Tickets are released this week.

Participants gathered in and around the Umeälven, while curious onlookers followed the activities from the riverbank and the Lundabron bridge. The festival is run by Umeälvens Simklubb, Umeå Kallbad, Umeå Kanotklubb, Rewilding Sweden and Vän i Umeå.

The roughly five-kilometre swim and float started at Energicentrum in Klabböle. There, open-water swimmers prepared for the journey downstream, side by side with participants inflating giant yellow rubber ducks and blowing soap bubbles.

The starting signal was given by a woman in a swimming cap playing the flute.

Along the river, first-timers met experienced swimmers, kayakers, pink flamingo floats and two dogs on SUP boards. The mix of people and activities captured the idea behind Riverfest: to create a welcoming folk festival where more people can experience the Umeälven in their own way.

At the finish on Bölesholmarna, participants were met by music, a food truck and activities on the riverbank. The festival area also drew passers-by who stopped to watch the finish and share in the atmosphere.

From pilot to growing river festival

Riverfest first ran as a pilot event in 2025, when around 40 people took part on the water. This year the festival broadened as Umeå Kanotklubb and Vän i Umeå joined the collaboration.

Umeå Kanotklubb contributed a kayak flotilla and safety support along the water route. At the same time, Vän i Umeå organised a group bike excursion from central Umeå out to Energicentrum in Klabböle and back.

“We started Umeälvens Simklubb to help people swim safely in open water and to create welcoming, fun events for people with all levels of experience. Riverfest shows what becomes possible when associations work together,” says Camilla Johnson Spiller of Umeälvens Simklubb.

Volunteers behind the finish line

The finish was at the new steps that volunteers from Umeå Kallbad have built on the riverbank at Bölesholmarna over the past year.

Volunteers also carried much of the day itself. They put up signage, registered participants and raised a temporary pavilion by the river.

“A central part of our work at Umeå Kallbad is making it easier for people to reach and experience this magnificent river. Seeing pink flamingos travelling downstream alongside experienced competitive swimmers sums up, in many ways, what Riverfest is about,” says Kasimir Suter Winter of Umeå Kallbad and Parti Design.

Riverfest returns in 2027

Following this year's festival, the organisers have now confirmed that Riverfest will return on Saturday 24 July 2027. Tickets are released in the coming week.

"It's a special feeling to watch the festival take shape, and to see people experience the river and learn more about the life in and around it," says Riverfest co-founder Dan Allen-Hörfeldt.

"We want to take the next step towards establishing Riverfest as a recurring highlight of Umeå's summer. The festival should be created by people, for people. Associations, organisations and anyone else who would like to run an activity within Riverfest is very welcome to get in touch."

About Riverfest

Riverfest is a non-profit folk festival on and along the Umeälven. The festival first ran in 2025 and today brings together swimming, floating, paddling, cycling and activities on the riverbank.

It is organised jointly by local associations, non-profit organisations and volunteers. The aim is to help more people experience, understand and care for the Umeälven.

Riverfest returns on Saturday 24 July 2027. Tickets are released this week.

Website: <https://riverfest.se>

Press contact

Elvira Lundgren Press and communications, Riverfest +46 73 024 97 73 elvira@umeakallbad.se

Images

High-resolution images from Riverfest 2026, photographed by Fredrik Larsson.