

# Triathlon volunteers stay the course

Planning Sunday's annual Greenfield Lightlife event a year-long endurance test

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**GREENFIELD** — When the starting gun of Sunday morning's Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon fires and athletes surge into the Green River, it'll be the result of lengthy preparation by hundreds of volunteers behind the scenes.

"As soon as the race is over, we meet the next month as a debrief to see if there were any issues. Then we roll right into planning and getting things in place for the next year," said Greenfield's Recreation Director Christy Moore. The annual competition is one of the department's largest fundraisers.

On Friday night, a group of eight volunteers packed bags with T-shirts, water bottles, snacks, to be given to athletes.

"This will be my fourth," said Amy Bowse, a triathlete who's also on the race's seven-member planning committee, pausing as she worked. Bowse designed the T-shirts. "I loved it so much after the first year. I wanted to be a part of it," she said.

Come Sunday, Bowse and more than 300 other triathletes from across the United States will simulta-



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**Volunteer Amy Bowse packs bags in preparation for Sunday's triathlon Friday.**

# Volunteers

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neously race on a shorter “sprint” — 0.31 miles swimming, 15.14 miles biking, 3.09 miles running — and longer “international” — 0.63 miles swimming, 30.28 miles biking, 7.19 miles running — course. Athletes compete as teams or individuals.

## A labor of love

Over the past year, volunteers have hired a professional agency for timing the race; organized staff, solicited sponsors, and maintained roughly 15 road miles that the race covers.

“That’s definitely one of the labor intensive positions,” Moore said. Course maintenance is managed by Dan

Gagaris, an engineer by trade and a member of the triathlon’s support committee. Gagaris gives his time because “the rec. department back in my home in Ohio was very formable in my life. I recognize this event as one of the key fundraising linchpins to allow the rec. department to do many of their programs,” he said.

Gagaris’ wife, Terrie Gagaris, organizes a post-race meal of lasagna, salad, bread, and bananas donated by local businesses.

Starting around June, when athletes begin training, “I pick up trash, cut back sticker bushes, and sweep glass, (sand), a few dead animals on occasional. I’ve been doing that since moving into town back in 1992,” Dan Gagaris said via phone from Colorado, where he was traveling for

work.

Come Saturday, Gagaris will fly back in time to sweep that night — using a push broom to cut down on noise. Then, race day morning, Gagaris will be working by 4 a.m. putting up signs, clearing debris, and making sure everything is safe for the starting gun.

After more than 50 directional signs have been placed with help from Greenfield’s Department of Public Works, the course swept by 8 a.m., Gagaris and other volunteers disperse as course marshals. Then, police and volunteers will shut down Nash’s Mill Road and Eunice Williams Drive for the race’s start.

## Driven by volunteers

Bicycle assistants are on hand for mishaps, emergency medical workers are there if

things go awry, and “all the lifeguards are on duty” when 50 swimmers at a time plunge into the water, Moore said. “Once the event starts, it’s a constant check in that everything is on a schedule.”

By 10:30 a.m., racers start trickling across the finish line. At 11, award ceremonies begin.

“That’s when we start announcing the sprint race awards, right after that, we do our international awards,” she continued. “And then it’s hours of cleanup; picking up fencing, the water stops.”

In the following week, Rick Roy — a spectator at the first ever triathlon in the mid-1980s, and a volunteer the year after — will hand carve each winner’s trophy from red oak. Next month, planning for the 2018 triathlon will begin.

For more information on



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**On Friday, Recreation Director Christy Moore reviews final details for Sunday’s triathlon.**

how to volunteer; visit [www.greenfield-triathlon.com/](http://www.greenfield-triathlon.com/) volunteer. The Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon is sponsored by local businesses including MedCare Ambulance; Greenfield Kiwanis Club;

Franklin County Rotary Club; Franklin County Amateur Radio Club; and Friends of Greenfield Recreation.

Proceeds from signups help fund Greenfield Recreation programs throughout the year.