

Lifeguards look back on swim season

Recreation area reports 14 saves over summer

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GREENFIELD — It was another busy summer at the Green River Swimming and Recreation Area, which is wrapping up its season Labor Day weekend. This summer was especially busy for the staples of the area: the lifeguards that watch over the river and save patrons.

Christy Moore, director of the Greenfield Recreation Department, which oversees the



Owen Schilling looks out from his lifeguard post at the Green River swimming area.

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swimming area, said the lifeguards had about 14 “saves” this summer, meaning they jumped into the water to rescue a person in distress.

She said it can be hard to find great lifeguards because the training class, which costs

money, can be prohibitive for interested people.

She pointed to lifeguards like 19-year-old Owen Schilling, who has been at the pool for two summers now. He saved four people this summer.

Schilling said there were about the same number of saves last year, which is standard for a summer at the pool.

In general, there are three people watching the water throughout the day, but that increases during certain holidays and big events.

Schilling said lifeguards watch for active drowning, where someone begins to panic or loses footing. He said they blow the whistle to alert other guards and then jump into the water with the tube, make sure the person is OK and get them to shore.

After they’ve rescued the

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Lifeguard Owen Schilling monitors the beach at the Green River swimming area.

Lifeguards

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person, they usually have to check in with parents and then do paperwork.

Of the four people he saved this summer, Schilling said two were small children, one was a 15-year-old girl and another was a man in his 50s who had lost his footing and ran out of breath.

Schilling said saving someone doesn't stress him out, and in fact he was more nervous before he had saved anyone.

"After a while it's not stressful, you get used to it, you know what to look for," he said.

The swimming area also has rules against large items in the swimming area, which might obstruct the lifeguards' view of the water. He said the training course also helps prepare lifeguards for the job.

"You blow the whistle and just do what you've gotta do," he said.

He said it's important for the public to know that life-

guards rotate stands every minute and get a break every 45 minutes, which helps keep them alert and focused on their jobs.

He also said the guards do more than people may think, from keeping the swimming area clean to making sure people have a good experience.

"We make it a fun, friendly environment," he said.

Moore added that she's always looking for guards, and that the department will be hiring for next summer.

She said it was an overall successful summer for the swimming area and that the weather was cooperative for the most part.

She said beyond the general public, many rentals, school groups and camps used the facilities and that the summer camp was full for the entire eight weeks.

"I think our community is very happy with our services that we provide," she said. It's definitely one of the town gems."

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