

Who are these ‘volunteers’ we speak of? They are students from middle school to college and their parents, stone masons, grant writers and a Cliffside horticulturist, for ecology-friendly vegetation removal, among many others.

Friends of the Keystone Arches, Inc. is the non-profit, volunteer organization that has taken the mantle of building awareness of the Keystone Arch Bridges, these strangely forgotten monuments that are such an integral part of the first mountain railroad. With the wilds around the Keystone Arches and the untamed Westfield River, as a workplace, *Friends* strives to maintain the Keystone Arch Bridges (KAB) Trail, as well as a website, Facebook page and a number of other initiatives over the past 25 years. The Westfield River Wild & Scenic Committee is a ready and frequent partner in the ongoing work.

Friends of the Keystone Arches, Inc. completed the popular trail when a Planning Commission process stalled. Gateway Regional High and Middle School students were utilized in a number of roles; The Outdoor Club for trail building, signage by The Graphic Design Class and kiosk frames by The Welding Fabrication Class. In partnership with the Westfield River Wild & Scenic Committee and the National Park Service / Dept of the Interior, *Friends* mobilized volunteers and paid professionals to stabilize and repair the two Arches owned by MA Fish & Wildlife at the Walnut Hill Conservation Area.

Friends of the Keystone Arches, Inc. is currently producing an hour-long documentary, **Railroad to the Moon**, on Maj. Whistler building this revolutionary rail line over the Berkshires. Previously Historically listed, from there *Friends* gained a series of alternate recognitions for the Arches, including a spot on the ‘Historic American Engineering Record’ (HAER) files of the Library of Congress, the ‘1,000 Great Places in MA’, by The MA Tourism Bureau, the ‘10 Most Endangered Historic Resources in MA’ List, from Preservation Mass and the ‘Editor's Choice’ list of *YANKEE* magazine.

Friends of the Keystone Arches, Inc. was awarded a \$30 K Wild & Scenic Grant used to hire a team of professionals to prepare an Historic Landmark Nomination for the two bypassed, state-owned Keystone Arches and the railroad station at Chester, MA. Freight rail company CSX, wants no part of the venture. This pinnacle of designations must be prepared by experts in the field of study, per Park Service rules. *Friends* will continue to seek recognition and protections for the Keystone Arches. These listings and personal visits via the KAB Trail we trust have created a dedicated group of citizens ready to step forward if the Arches suddenly find themselves in need of grass roots advocacy.

Friends of the Keystone Arches, Inc. also built a trail showcasing a section of the Chester & Becket Railroad (The Chester & Becket or C&B Trail) on the J.J. Kelly Wildlife Area in Chester and received a grant to build an urban extension for that through downtown Chester, ending up at the rail station. All these efforts are geared toward telling the story of Chester's unique history, with a particular focus on rail, to promote growth, tourism and preservation.

Friends of the Keystone Arches, Inc. a 501c3, would like to invite you to join one of these workdays. Know that we don't make everyone hang over the side. We have many good solid ground jobs available. Work sessions will be posted when seasonally appropriate on this page and website. If that doesn't fit your schedule, but you'd still like to participate, donations are always appreciated. Please send yours to: Friends of the Keystone Arches, P O Box 276, Huntington, MA 01050.