

*Wild & Scenic*

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

# Westfield River Committee

**BUILDING A  
STAIRCASE  
TO THE  
FALLS**



**OUT OF THE CLASSROOM,  
INTO THE RIVER**

**FLOOD-RESILIENT, FISH-  
FRIENDLY STREAM CROSSINGS**

**A PROPERTY PRESERVED  
IN CHESTERFIELD**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

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**Town of Becket**

Mercedes Gallagher, *Treasurer*  
Bill Babcock, *alt.*

**Town of Chester**

Robert Thompson, *Chair*  
Dave Pierce, *alt.*

**Town of Chesterfield**

Nancy Rich, Denise Cormier, *alt.*

**Town of Cummington**

John Bye, Matthew Gallert, *alt.*

**Town of Huntington**

Jeff Penn, *Vice-Chair*

**Town of Middlefield**

Carl LaFreniere

**Town of Savoy**

Vacant

**Town of Washington**

Roy Bryan

**Town of Windsor**

Jim Caffrey, *Secretary*

**Town of Worthington**

Carole Fisher, Jim Dodge, *alt.*

**ADDITIONAL MEMBERS:**

Westfield River Watershed Association

The Trustees of Reservations

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

National Park Service

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**OUR MISSION**

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*The Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee works to preserve, protect and enhance the special qualities and outstanding resources of the Westfield River Watershed in concert with local communities.*

*Front cover photographed by Dan Minicucci. [www.danminicucci.com](http://www.danminicucci.com)*

**LETTER FROM****THE COORDINATOR**

Dear community members,

What a year for the Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee! 2012 was action-packed. I'm proud of the Committee's work to preserve the Westfield River through education, science and monitoring, recreation and trails, and habitat protection.

My role as the Committee's coordinator is the Commonwealth's contribution to the administration of the Wild & Scenic designation. Although it is only a small part of my job, my time spent working on behalf of the Westfield River is the part I enjoy most.

Among our major accomplishments in 2012, we completed the construction of a safe and sustainable staircase to the bottom of Glendale Falls, ensuring that visitors can easily access the Falls for generations to come (p. 6). We've also been working to make stream crossings more fish-friendly (p. 3) and we helped preserve a spectacular parcel of land in Chesterfield (p. 9). And dozens of Westfield State University students joined our preservation efforts on the Westfield River (p. 2).

Our 20th anniversary as a Wild & Scenic River is approaching this November, and we're excited to celebrate our triumphs and reflect on our future plans in 2013 and beyond. Stayed tuned for an invitation to join the celebration!



Sincerely,

Carrie Banks

*Wild & Scenic Westfield River Coordinator*

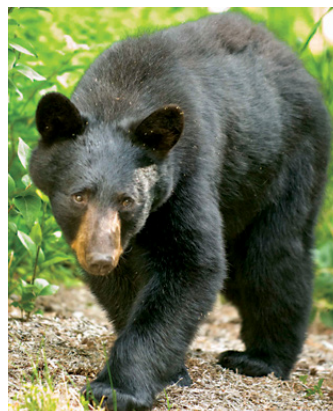
*Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration*

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## OUT OF THE CLASSROOM, INTO THE RIVER

*Students at Westfield State University are getting their feet wet – literally.*

Through the Committee's partnership with the Westfield River Environmental Center at Westfield State University (WSU), over 30 students have jumped out of their classrooms and into the river for some hands-on conservation experience.

In return, the Committee got some hands-on help. Students in the University's Stream Ecology course were instrumental in surveying and documenting pre-restoration conditions for the Kinne Brook Restoration Project.

Their summary report and findings provided a baseline for reference prior to the dam removal and culvert replacements.

Another WSU student – Jessica Applin – worked as an intern for the Committee over the summer, and spent countless hours researching funding and technical resources to create the *Westfield River Landonner Resources Guide* now posted on our website. She donned waders and carried a GPS unit, camera, tripod, compass and measuring tape to collect photo-monitoring

data at several sites in the upper Westfield River watershed.

WSU students have been instrumental in taking the first steps to extend the National Wild & Scenic designation to surrounding communities and tributaries. In this coming year, the Committee will expand the "Walkin the Watershed" surveys to three additional tributaries of the Westfield River.

**CALLING VOLUNTEERS!**

**Join the Walkin' the Watershed** program to explore three new tributaries – Dead Branch, Kinne and Walker Brooks.

**FLOOD-RESILIENT,**

# FISH-FRIENDLY STREAM CROSSINGS

*The Committee is working to improve stream crossings and raise awareness about the importance of building and maintaining culverts and bridges with rivers in mind.*

Almost half of the 1,300 road-stream crossings in the Westfield River watershed create barriers to the movement of fish and wildlife. And when stream crossings are damaged in storms, it can disrupt life in affected communities and limit emergency access.

The Committee provided a \$10,000 grant to Trout Unlimited for design and engineering of two bottomless culverts and the removal of a small stream barrier along Kinne Brook in Chester. The original culverts

were washed out during Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. When complete, the project will reconnect over ten miles of river habitat and benefit a number of fish species, including Eastern Brook trout, Atlantic salmon, slimy sculpin and shiny dace.

The Committee provided a \$4,000 grant to the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance to host a series of three workshops titled, "Improving Stream Crossings: Flood Resilient, Fish Friendly." The workshops, intended for DPWs, conservation commissions, municipal officials, contractors, and consultants, addressed how crossings can be improved to increase both public safety and fish/wildlife passage.

## **Have your crossings been designed with rivers in mind?**

The Committee is offering member towns preliminary engineering site assessments for stream crossings to help identify aquatic habitat restoration sites. Selected projects will be eligible to receive technical services by consultants via contract with the Committee.

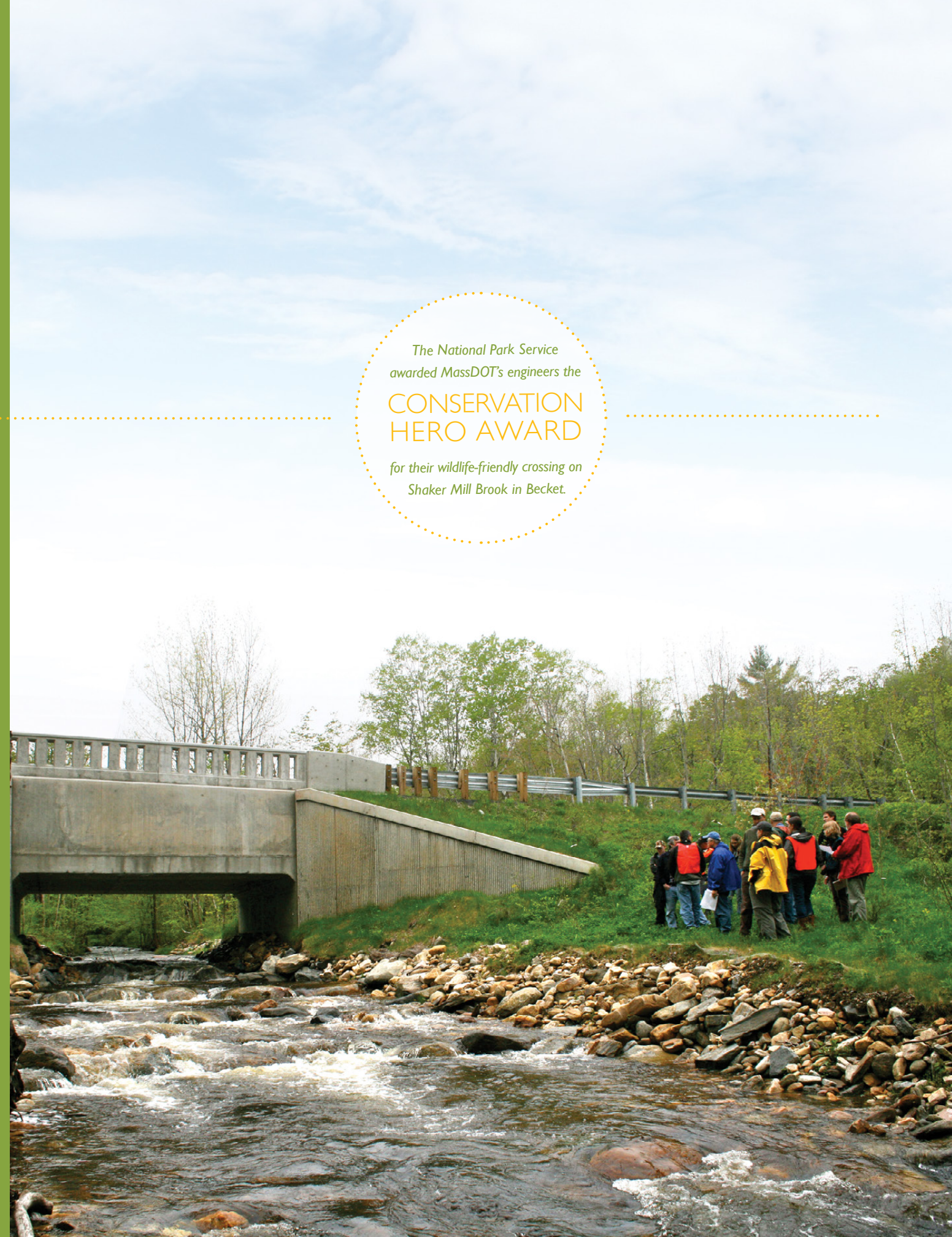


*Road crossings with an outlet drop create a barrier in the stream that blocks fish passage.*

*The National Park Service awarded MassDOT's engineers the*

## **CONSERVATION HERO AWARD**

*for their wildlife-friendly crossing on Shaker Mill Brook in Becket.*





## BUILDING A

# STAIRCASE TO THE FALLS

*Glendale Falls now has a staircase and trail worthy of its status as one of the highest waterfalls in Massachusetts.*

In 2012, Committee volunteers, joined by the Trustees of Reservations, completed a four-year project to build a safe and sustainable staircase to the bottom of Glendale Falls.

Visitors have long flocked to admire Glendale Falls, which runs through the Middle Branch of the Westfield River, but catching a glimpse of the plunging rapids was no easy task. As one Walkin' the Watershed volunteer reported to the Committee, the previous path was rocky and difficult to navigate.

Over 100 volunteers joined the campaign, "One Step at a Time Down Glendale Falls," which began in 2009 as an effort to build a rustic wooden staircase. When sections of the trail became too precipitous for wooden stairs, the Committee and the Trustees joined forces to secure funding from the Massachusetts Recreational Trails Grant Program in order to supplement the trail with a low-maintenance stone staircase.

Master trail builder Peter Jensen and his crew led the stone staircase project where the trail was too steep. The new staircase has 70 wide stone steps and cribbing, making a clear and complete path to the Falls.

Volunteers joined numerous work parties and labored for many hours to help build the staircase.

"Visiting Glendale Falls is now better than ever," said Jim Dodge, a volunteer and Committee alternate for the town of Worthington. "I helped out when I could over several Saturdays and was always pleased to meet so many enthusiastic volunteers willing to give their time to lug hundreds of bags of gravel in a terrific team effort."

The Committee and the Trustees of Reservations will hold an opening ceremony at Glendale Falls in the spring of 2013. To hear about the event, "Like" us on Facebook.

**THANK YOU** to all the folks who volunteered time and donated funds to bring this trail to life. We're especially grateful to the McGinn Family Trust, who generously housed our weary trail crew during construction, allowing them to enjoy the comforts of home after working long days at the Falls.

Your contributions and many volunteer hours demonstrated the tremendous community support for the project, which was vital to receiving the Recreational Trails Grant.

*Photographs: Our enthusiastic volunteers joined work parties to help build the staircase.*



“ My favorite moment was when my friend and I were moving boulders. The rocks were five hundred pounds and it took half an hour to move them 25 feet. It was exhausting, but we finished the day with smiles on our faces and joy in our hearts. ”

*~ Kristine Vorwerk, Teen Volunteer*

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR BILL WARREN



Bill Warren, the Wild & Scenic Volunteer of the Year, is hooked on helping. He began as a volunteer with the Committee four years ago and hasn't looked back.

"Being outdoors, getting some exercise and leaving behind a healthier watershed is kind of addictive," Bill admits.

Bill was instrumental in assisting the "One Step at a Time Down Glendale Falls" project. He clocked in over sixty hours of hauling gravel, transplanting native fauna, and spreading decaying leaves and branches to cover the forest floor.

The Committee asks our volunteers to be the "eyes and ears of the river," and Bill has taken this to heart. He loves to take photographs of the special features and concerns he finds along the river and share them with others. His goal: to help people understand how unique the river is and why it needs protection.

And he says he enjoys being part of the "Walkin' the Watershed" program because it takes him to stretches of the river he would not have explored otherwise. With maps in hand to conduct a visual survey, he heads off into the woods, an explorer and detective with a mission.

We look forward to seeing him again soon, out on the river.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

*Project funding provided through the National Park Service's Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers Program (except as noted).*

### GENERAL EXPENSES

General Operations*	5,808
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### OUTREACH & EDUCATION

General Outreach and Education	2,400
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Stream Crossing Workshops	4,000
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### RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Biological Monitoring	5,402
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Riparian Conservation Grants	6,940
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River Internships	4,000
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Stream Team Projects	20,537
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Trail Stewardship*	3,842
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Westfield River Environmental Center	5,000
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### COMMUNITY GRANTS

Friends of the Keystone Arches	2,600
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North Becket Village Drainage Project	12,000
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Trout Unlimited Culvert Project	10,000
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**Total Expenditures: \$82,529**

*Additional program and technical assistance provided by staff at the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, Department of Fish & Game.*

*\*A total of \$662 of these funds came from other grants and donations.*

## A YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

*From hauling stone steps to monitoring macroinvertebrates, 2012 was a year of action. Check out what we accomplished.*

**\$94,770+**

in grants, donations, in-kind and volunteer services given to the Committee.

**225**

hours volunteers spent "Walkin' the Watershed" as the local eyes and ears on the river.

**70**

stone steps and cribbing and **47.7 tons** of gravel were used to construct a trail down to the base of Glendale Falls.

**45**

community members participated in trainings for a total of **149 hours** of watershed education to deepen local river stewardship.

**3**

professional climbers donated over **18 hours** to remove vegetation that was compromising the wonderful Keystone Arch Bridge.

**44**

locations documented by interns and volunteers with **696 photos** as part of on-going photo-monitoring efforts.

**63**

volunteers donated over **450 hours** of labor to clear, build and mark community trails.

**16**

samples collected by volunteers from **4 macroinvertebrate** monitoring sites.



**JOIN US FOR WORKDAYS ON THE RIVER IN 2013**

## WILD & SCENIC SATURDAYS

**Garlic Mustard Muster Pull**  
MAY 4TH, 9AM - 1PM  
Meet at Chester Railway Station

**Glendale Falls Trail Cleanup**  
MAY 25TH, 9AM - 1PM  
Meet at the Glendale Falls Parking Lot

**To register**, contact Meredyth Babcock at (413) 623-2070 or [volunteer@westfieldriverwildscenic.org](mailto:volunteer@westfieldriverwildscenic.org).

"Like" us on Facebook to find out about upcoming workshops.

## A PROPERTY PRESERVED IN CHESTERFIELD

Two sisters – Grace Kingsbury and Alice Williams – shared one wish: to preserve the natural state of their 38-acre property along Indian Hollow Road in Chesterfield.

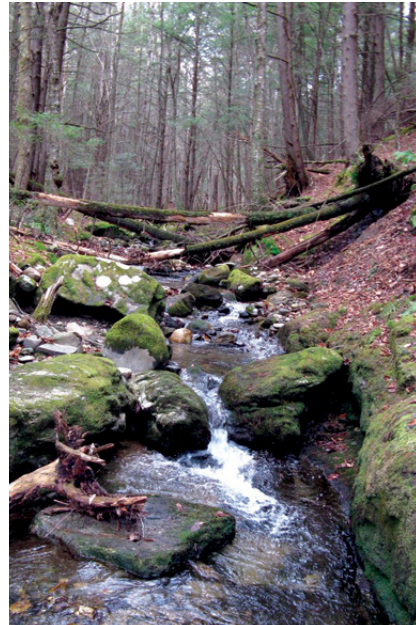
Wish granted. As in, the Committee's Riparian Conservation Grant was instrumental in making it happen. In January, the Committee issued a small grant to the Hilltown Land Trust to help place a Conservation Restriction on the property to protect it as a "critical natural landscape."

"This property has been in my mother's family since 1864, and it is very special to our family," said Kingsbury in a statement released by the Land Trust.

### Why did the Committee support the project?

- **Protecting Wildlife:** With its open grasslands, brushy edges and maturing second growth forest, the land provides breeding and feeding areas for a range of wildlife.
- **Guarding other Wild & Scenic resources:** The property's frontage along Chauncey Brook flows into the Dead Branch of the Westfield River, which in turn flows into the East Branch of the River.
- **Preserving cultural, historic, scenic and recreational significance:** Indian Hollow Road is an attractive, scenic country road – narrow, winding, hilly, unpaved and sparsely settled. Many people drive this road to the campground and stop to enjoy the scenic view from the property.

*The Committee realizes that small grants can make large projects happen – such as protecting this property in Chesterfield for generations.*



*Photograph by Dan Minicucci*

## IN APPRECIATION *of the volunteers who contributed ongoing service or support to the Committee.*

### Volunteer Support:

Erin Amadon  
Judy Andrews  
Dalyan & Bill Babcock  
Mallory Barrow  
Kim Bolduc  
Stacy Box  
Joseph & Eric Brown  
Paul Campbell  
Ron & Rayna Castro  
Robert Catlin  
Pete Clark  
Marc Cohen  
Deb Cook  
Wayne Crouch  
Kathy Damon  
Cindy Delpapa  
Teresa Dengler & 4H Club  
Caron Dewey  
Jim Diltz  
Kevin Doyle  
Susan Dworkin  
Paul Fennessey  
Jay & Patricia Fortier

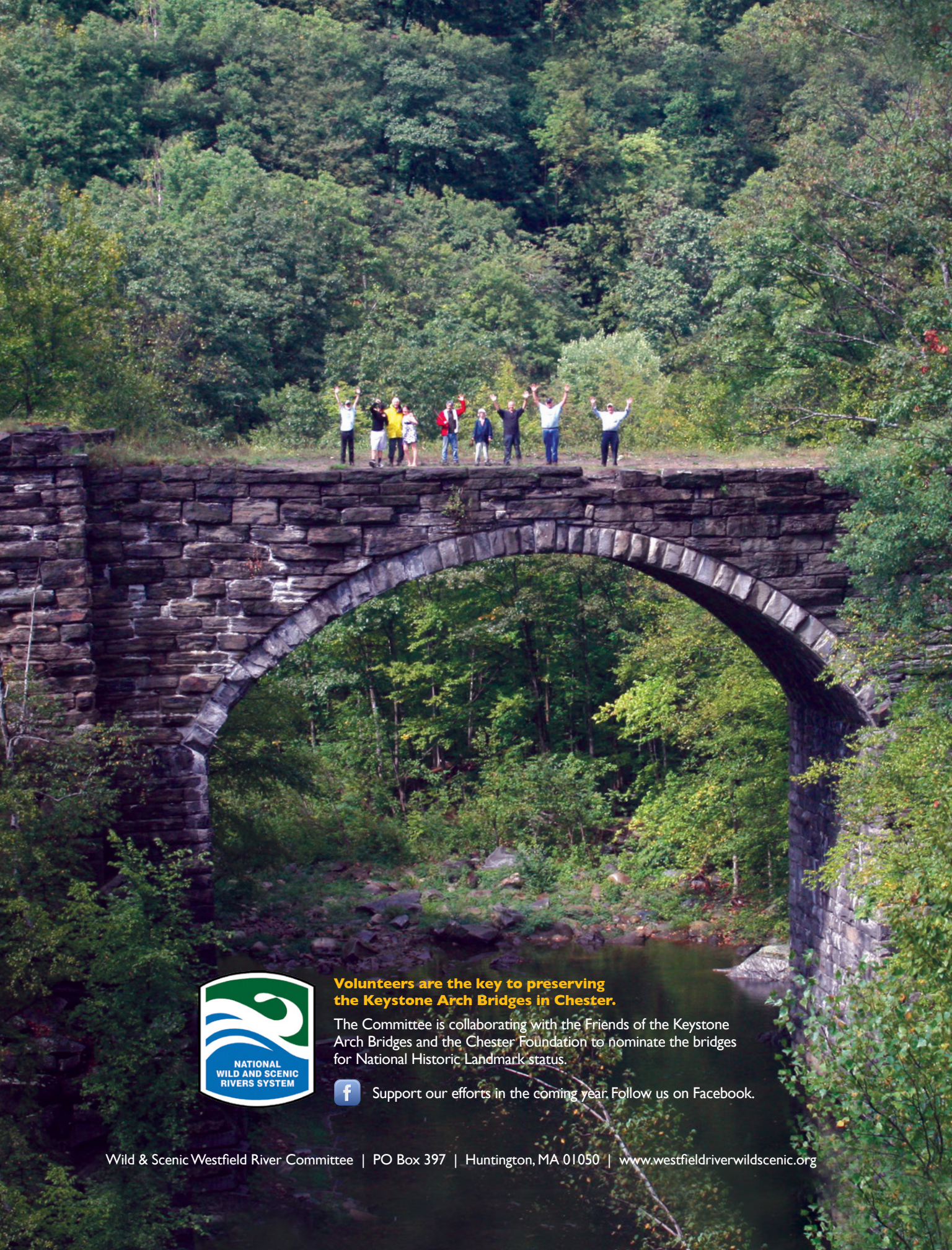
Spring Furlow  
Karima & Hassan Gebel  
Nancy & Daniel Genovese  
Ruth Glazerman  
Ileen Goldstein  
John, Emily & Gretchen Graef  
Greg Cronan  
Cynthia Grippaldi  
Bruce Hart  
Dave & Cindy Healey  
Kurt Heidinger  
Kyle Hume  
Dan Jarvis  
Carol Jolly  
Jim Kierstead  
Lisa LaCroix  
Jeff LaRhetta  
John LaValley  
Sandi Lysick  
Danielle Macknight  
Eric Martin  
Susan McIntosh  
Donald Munger

Marsha Odell  
Margaret O'Neal  
John Porcino  
Sarah Prince  
Claudia Purrilla  
Vicky Reed  
Pamela Robinson  
Cathy Roth  
Jen Schmidh  
Sharon Sloss  
Susan Smith  
Diane Synder  
Karen Thomas  
Michelle Vigeant  
Kristine Vorwerk  
Kester Warlow-Harry  
Pete Ward  
Bill Warren  
Tarin Weiss  
Jennifer Winkler  
Emerson & Cavanaugh Wolski  
Mike Young

### Other Contributors & Project Partners:

Big Y  
Blue Note Café  
Cummington Creamery  
Division of Ecological Restoration, MADFG  
McGinn Family Trust  
Middlefield Highway Department  
National Park Service  
New England Grass Roots Environmental Fund  
Price Chopper  
Trial Court  
The Trustees of Reservations  
Westfield River Environmental Center,  
Westfield State University  
Westfield River Invasive Species Partnership  
White Wolf

*And to all the other members, volunteers and organizations who contributed to the work of the Committee on behalf of the Wild & Scenic Westfield River.*



**Volunteers are the key to preserving the Keystone Arch Bridges in Chester.**

The Committee is collaborating with the Friends of the Keystone Arch Bridges and the Chester Foundation to nominate the bridges for National Historic Landmark status.



Support our efforts in the coming year. Follow us on Facebook.