

mining, drilling, off-road vehicle riding, and other activities that could damage these special places.

We are working with the Sheep Mountain Alliance, the San Juan Citizens Alliance, the Ridgeway-Ouray Community Council, Silverton Mountain School, business owners, and other allies to build public support for this initiative. Meanwhile, we are urging Salazar to make his bill even stronger by protecting the proposed Snaggletooth Wilderness in the Dolores River Canyon, and the other 10,800 acres of McKenna Peak WSA. Another potential improvement is a ban on proposed mineral leasing at the Perins Peak State Wildlife Refuge, as urged by the La Plata County Commission.

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SOUTHEAST Almost half a century ago, a regional commission hatched a plan to create a system of four-lane highways to alleviate poverty in Appalachia. One of these highways was called Corridor K. This scheme is blindly moving forward to complete a highway between Asheville and Chattanooga—even though these cities currently are well connected by I-40 and I-75. If completed, Corridor K would cut through the mountains of southeastern Tennessee and southwestern North Carolina, bisecting the Cherokee and Nantahala national forests.

A 2003 Tennessee government study found that 35 rare species in that state would be jeopardized by this project. Reductions in the black bear population and other wildlife are likely, too. This report concluded that road construction would bury 5,400 feet of mountain stream, thus increasing siltation and other pollution in these waters. Greater truck noise, spoiled views from the Appalachian Trail, and air pollution are also predicted.

Today eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina are perhaps best known for their natural beauty. A major highway project would probably do more economic harm than good, by making the region's natural features less attractive to visitors who have become vital to the dynamic tourism and recreation industry.

We are working with the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, WaysSouth, and others to develop an environmentally sound plan: A Better Way for Corridor K. This solution would address the real highway issues without destroying the surrounding landscape. Such an alternative would also reduce the cost of this pork-barrel project, which otherwise could cost billions of dollars.

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MID-ATLANTIC New Jersey is the nation's most densely populated state and continues to lose 50 acres a day to development. Fortunately, the state has been in the forefront of the land conservation movement. To counter the threat to New Jersey's natural heritage, the state's voters have approved 12 bond issues over the years, and with the help of local governments and nonprofits, the Garden State has preserved more than 1.2 million acres since 1985. But the money approved in 2007 has run out. In November, the state's voters will have an opportunity to replenish the Garden State Preservation Trust with \$400 million—less than \$1 per month for each household.

The Wilderness Society is part of the Keep It Green Campaign, which helped push the ballot question through the state legislature this year and will continue working toward creation of a long-term dedicated



A proposed highway would run right through high-quality black bear habitat in North Carolina and Tennessee.

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