

INTRODUCING WAYSOUTH

Welcome to a familiar friend with a new look. WaysSouth is now the name of the organization that has been working hard on transportation issues that you care about, including the proposed Interstate 3, Corridor K, and advocating for responsible transportation throughout Appalachia. Our primary goals remain stopping I-3 and promoting environmentally-sound solutions for Corridor K.

WaysSouth fills a niche that has long been neglected, one that is critically important to the preservation of the environment, heritage, and sense of place in the southern Appalachians. Our niche is to help find ways to meet the transportation needs of the region, while protecting its unique environmental, cultural, and historic characteristics. We aim to do this by developing a vision of what the southern Appalachians will be like in the future if their special qualities are preserved, while at the same time their

transportation needs are met in a manner that ensures the continued prosperity of the region.

The WaysSouth vision starts with the premise that not all regions of the south need to follow the typical development pattern of highways, strip malls, and high-density single family housing developments. There is significant value for the nation in preserving the southern Appalachians as a special place.

We are fulfilling our vision by developing and engaging: (1) expertise in transportation planning, (2) knowledge of all modes of transportation and their benefits and costs, (3) economic needs of, and impacts on, communities and the region, and how they are affected by transportation, and (4) the environmental, historic, cultural, and community qualities that make southern Appalachia special and how they may be impacted by transportation development.

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UPDATE

We are not sitting on our laurels while waiting for the study of I-3 to begin. Our staff and volunteers are keeping in touch with the Federal Highway Administration and working with legislators and local officials to ensure that WaysSouth has a seat on the study advisory committee so that we can represent your interests.

We are also insisting that the study include an opportunity for meaningful public input, and that public input inform the recommendations of the study. Visit www.stopi3.org/action.html to see how you can help.

While these efforts go forward, we continue to add to the list of counties and regional planning organizations (RPOs) that have adopted official resolutions opposing I-3. We are working with three grassroots groups in South Carolina – the Oconee Preservation Unlimited Stewardship Trust (OPUS), Upstate Forever, and the Concerned Citizens for Conservation. Our joint goal is to persuade the Oconee County, SC commission to pass a resolution opposing I-3.

Oconee County sits in the beautiful rolling hills of northwestern South Carolina. The people of

“Oconee County SC Commission Targeted For Stop I-3 Support”

Oconee County desire to protect the natural resources, open space, and scenic views that are endemic to this historic area. The Oconee County resolution will further enhance the impressive list of counties and RPOs in Georgia and North Carolina that are already on record as opposing I-3. See www.stopi3.org/resolutions.html to view these resolutions.



UPDATE

We need your help to share this information with others. If you are interested in getting involved with our Corridor K effort in North Carolina or Tennessee, please contact WaysSouth. Learn about the link between Corridor K and the controversial Interstate 3, and see maps of the area by visiting the Corridor K Web site at www.wayssouth.org.

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the Tennessee and North Carolina departments of transportation continue their efforts to build a major interstate highway through some of the most beautiful and fragile parts of the Cherokee and Nantahala National Forests, including the Ocoee Gorge. The Corridor K highway was proposed more than 40 years ago by the Appalachian Regional Commission. The rationale was to alleviate the isolation and poverty of the Appalachians. But since then, a highly-successful historic and recreational tourism economy has developed which is dependent upon the preservation of our unspoiled mountain vistas, valleys and forests. The proposed highway would seriously compromise these very qualities that have brought prosperity to our region. Increased heavy commercial traffic and large manufacturing plants would degrade the environment and the local economy on which the population now depends.

Existing infrastructure, with alterations and maintenance, can handle current and future transportation needs without further unnecessary destruction of our natural environment. Improvements to existing roads in North Carolina and Tennessee would go a long way in solving commercial traffic concerns. The re-emergence of railways on existing rights of way is already demonstrating their capability to absorb growth in commercial transportation.

North Carolina Where we are now, and how you can help.

WaysSouth recommends that the NCDOT consider alternative transportation solutions rather than create a new, four-lane road from Stecoah to Robbinsville. To see the NCDOT report and read WaysSouth's concerns, go to the Corridor K Web site at www.wayssouth.org.

The Southern Environmental Law Center has submitted formal comments with signed endorsements of the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, Western North Carolina Alliance, WildSouth, The Wilderness Society, and WaysSouth. Additional letters of opposition to the intrusive highway were submitted by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Benton MacKaye Trail Association, Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, North Carolina Wildlife Federation, Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, WaysSouth, and Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning. Expert transportation analysis and geology comments have been submitted questioning the need and true impact of the proposed four-lane road. NCDOT plans to hold a public meeting early in 2009, distributing information and answering questions at that time. We will advise our mailing list of the details as they become available.

Thanks to those who responded to our Action Alert by sending your concerns and opinions to the NCDOT. If you did not receive the Action Alert and would like to receive future mailings, contact us at: info@wayssouth.org.

Tennessee Where we are now, and how you can help.

WaysSouth recommends improvements to the existing two-lane road through the Ocoee Gorge. We strongly oppose the proposed new road to be constructed through the Cherokee National Forest and the Hiwassee River watershed. The consultant on the Tennessee segment of Corridor K, URS, Inc., will soon begin preparing their Transportation Planning Report (TPR) and Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS). We need local people concerned about the integrity of the Ocoee Gorge and surrounding natural areas who are willing to be involved in the Department of Transportation (DOT) processes as members of our resource teams. Please let us know if you or someone you know is interested in learning more about serving in this capacity.

Donate Now

by going to our
web site,
www.wayssouth.org,
or send a check to
WaysSouth,
1074 Arbor Drive,
Lakemont, GA
30552.



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Using this expertise, we intend to engage in dialogue and negotiation with the several state departments of transportation, regional planning agencies, county and city governments, and local leaders to develop common goals and vision for meeting transportation needs while preserving the special qualities of Appalachia. We hope to develop partnerships with universities, agencies, and other non-profit organizations so that we can work together to achieve our common goals. We believe that our goal of a prosperous southern Appalachia whose special environmental, historic, and cultural qualities are preserved and enhanced is shared by all those who have the long-term good of the region at heart.

Ted Doll - WaysSouth Chair

WHY THE NEW NAME?

Several months ago people began asking, "Oh, I-3, hasn't that been stopped already?" This prompted the Stop I-3 board to consider what we would do if the results of the impending routing study showed that no such road is needed. Some board members were of the opinion that we should throw a big party and fold-up the organization. Others with experience in fighting interstates reminded us that

winning a battle does not mean we've won the war. Highways have a way of bounding back to life 15 to 30 years later. It's also clear that I-3 might be built in pieces, the proposed "Corridor K" highways in North Carolina and Tennessee being among them. Other issues that need

**“WaysSouth
Reflects Our Broader Mission
Which Includes Corridor K
And Stop I-3”**

attention are also apparent -- particularly the place of rail in the future transportation needs of the Southern Appalachians. As the board looked at all of the transportation issues that contribute to protecting the Southern Appalachians and our way of life, the decision was made to broaden our mission. In doing this, it became obvious that the organization needed a broader name. After much deliberation, the name WaysSouth was chosen.

When working on stopping I-3, the familiar name, the Stop I-3 Coalition, with its widely recognized logo, will be used. The Web site, www.stopi-3.org, will continue to provide information about our efforts to stop Interstate 3. WaysSouth will work proactively to solve transportation problems in the Southern Appalachians while preserving our environment, our economy, and our way of life. We hope you will join us as we go forward, knowing that the organization will be on the job in case the fight against I-3 goes on for many years. Thanks for your continuing support.

Lucy Bartlett - Past Chair

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RECENT FINANCIAL HELP

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CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS - PLEASE GET INVOLVED!

This January, make a resolution to become an active player in the fight to protect Southern Appalachian from unsustainable transportation quick-fixes. WaysSouth can always use a helping hand, but now more so than ever. We need three volunteers right now to be able to continue our work. If you can help please contact Chance Finegan at volunteer@WaysSouth.org.

MONITOR OUR EMAIL LISTSERV - Do you check your e-mail at least once a day? Can you remember a password? We need someone who can moderate our email LISTSERVs. All you would need to do is make sure the e-mail is not spam and hit 'approve.' It would take less than an hour of your time each week.

WRITE A WIKIPEDIA PAGE FOR US - Do you enjoy writing? If so, then this volunteer position is for you! Wikipedia is one of the world's top references, love it or hate it. WaysSouth needs its own page. Want to write, but not sure how to use Wikipedia? We can show you.

THE RAILWAY ALTERNATIVE - We need volunteers to help develop a package of rail alternatives in the southern Appalachians. Whether you are a rail aficionado or have a penchant for research, maps, writing or marketing, please email Bob Grove of Brasstown, N.C. at bob@grove-ent.com.

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