



# Vineyard Conservation Society

Protecting the environment of Martha's Vineyard since 1965

P.O. Box 2189 • Vineyard Haven, MA 02568 • 508/693-9588 • Fax 508/693-0683

12 December 1996

Mr. James Decoulos  
Decoulos & Company  
248 Andover St.  
Peabody, MA 01960

*Re: Moshup Trail, Gay Head*

Dear Jim:

Thank you for your 9 December phone call. I am following up to reiterate the position of the Vineyard Conservation Society (VCS) with regard to your interest in identifying an appropriate access to your Gay Head real estate holdings.

As you know, VCS is a participant in a remarkable effort involving other conservation organizations, the town, the state environmental affairs office, private foundations and scores of individual contributors to permanently preserve Gay Head's Moshup Trail heathlands. The project area represents one of the last contiguous blocks of this globally rare habitat left anywhere in the world, hosting a wealth of protected rare plant and animal species. The primary threat to this habitat comes from its fragmentation through house and road construction. Our acquisition efforts over the last year have resulted in the permanent protection of many of the areas most at risk of fragmentation, and the work continues.

We understand that you are interested in developing land near the conservation project area and are exploring the possibility of securing access through parcels 99 and 102, currently owned by VCS.

It is important to be clear that we have no desire to impinge on your rights in your land, and would be happy to cooperate in any way we can in identifying other, more appropriate access. Similarly, we trust that your own planning efforts will respect our land - this most precious neighboring natural resource area - and its limitations.

The question really seems to be, on balance, what is the best access solution? Because road construction through the heathland preserve would fragment the habitat and threaten its long-term viability, that route is not the best answer. For an area where so much time, effort and public money has been spent to maintain this last vestige of a vanishing ecosystem, it does not make good business or public policy sense to adopt an approach which would compromise gains



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made to-date.

We sincerely hope we can reach agreement on this point. VCS stand ready to help in any way we can as your inquiry into the best access to your land proceeds. Please feel free to contact us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brendan T. O'Neill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".

Brendan T. O'Neill  
Executive Director