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September 17, 2007

Martha's Vineyard Commission
Box 1447
Oak Bluffs MA 02557

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to voice my support for the proposal currently before the Commission to declare the five ancient ways in question Districts of Critical Planning Concerns. Along with these paths being ties to our island history and heritage, they are some of the few remaining areas that people can utilize recreationally without interference by automobiles and traffic. As I live close to all of these pathways, I enjoy their peaceful tranquility often as I walk, bike, or run with my dogs or family. It is a rare occurrence that I do not pass others in my travels, which is indicative of how popular these paths are. With the ever increasing development of the island, such protected pathways and recreational areas are few and far between and it is crucial that we preserve those that do remain so that future generations will have them to enjoy as well.

I will concede that my support of this proposal is not entirely altruistic. If these paths are not protected, it is possible that one individual with landholdings in the area will continue the unauthorized cutting of trees, creating access via these paths to the Edgartown Meadows development where I reside. This would possibly provide direct vehicle access from the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road to the West Tisbury Road, significantly increasing traffic in our private development. Many of the property owners, myself included, purchased property in a private development with dirt roads to purposely avoid such traffic. This increase in vehicular traffic in our quiet neighborhood would take its toll on our dirt roads and increase needed maintenance, for which the property owners in Edgartown Meadows are financially responsible. It would also increase the risk of injury to my small children or animals and possibly decrease the value of my home.

The reasons to declare these pathways Districts of Critical Planning Concerns are numerous and largely for the greater good, whereas arguments against their protection are not. I would strongly encourage the board members to declare these paths as such and protect and preserve our history for generations to come, while also ensuring that one individual will not alter these paths in such a ways as to negatively impact 66 other private properties in the Edgartown Meadows development.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and to consider the nomination of these pathways.

Sincerely,

Gail Gardner Craig
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Edgartown

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