

Aug. 22, 196.

Ronald F. Lee
National Park Service
143 South Third St.
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

Dear Mr. Lee:

Now that there is a Cape National Seashore Bill, many sincere supporters of this measure are anxious to do something to stop the continuing deградations in the heart of the designated Park area. The worst damage is being done around Gull and Long Ponds and the dune lands immediately to the east.

Dozens of houses have been built, and are currently under construction; two houses within half a mile of Thoreau's (and our) house were started a week before the bill was passed, several others during the past winter and spring. Thinly scattered throughout the conservation area, their driveways continue to inflict fresh wounds.

It appears certain that before the necessary funds are appropriated by Congress and any direct action may be taken, further ravages are inevitable unless a more powerful deterrent than difficult mortgage loans is provided.

Can an unequivocal statement by the Department of the Interior in respect to the enforcement of the retroactive clause in the Bill provide such a deterrent?

Another issue related to the retroactive clause in the Bill which may have most unpleasant repercussions is, we are sure, under consideration by your Department. Many landowners within the originally proposed Park boundaries decently and civic-mindedly held back from any development on their land until the proposal became law. These property owners took the retroactive clause and the 3 acre provision in the Bill at face value.

It would be obviously a violation of the Bill's intention if these had their property taken at unimproved value, while those others who have cynically carved up the landscape, and in some cases deliberately built for no other reason than to sell to the Government at a huge profit are allowed to "get away with it" in spite of precautionary provisions in the Bill.

We urge you to make an inspection at the earliest time to convince yourselves of the necessity for some immediate action on both these counts. It will be all too sad if after the 25 years of house owner tenancy another quarter century were to be added for landscape recovery from a spreading rash and the public spirited be made to feel that they have been misled by their own Government.

Sincerely yours

Serge Chermayeff