

# Gray Whale advocates must raise \$600,000

Sentinel staff report

SANTA CRUZ — A handful of dedicated open-space advocates met on the steps of the county building Wednesday to kick off a major fund-raising campaign for the Gray Whale Ranch purchase.

Save-the-Redwoods League, a national non-profit conservation group, announced in October that it would buy the property from ranch owner Ron Yanke and donate it to the state parks system. On Wednesday, League Executive Director Mary Angle-Franzini accepted a promised \$20,000 anonymous donation and another \$2,000 through the Open Space Alliance. Save the Gray Whale Parklands presented her with another \$9,000 in donations.

The community must raise \$600,000 to help Save-The-Red-

woods League with the purchase, which has been reported to be around \$12.75 million. In the past the league has received matching state grants to acquire such property. But in the last two years those funds have been unavailable, said Mack Shaver, assistant secretary for the League. Several people said Wednesday they were encouraged by the donations and hope to secure the \$600,000 by July 1.

Mary Tsalis, director of the Open Space Alliance, has said the \$600,000 will help leverage the more than \$12 million assembled by Save-the-Redwoods from a variety of donors. Angle-Franzini would not confirm the actual purchase price of the 2,349 acre property.

"A lot of people have told us it's

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the greatest thing that's happened in a long time," said Santa Cruz City Councilwoman and long-time Gray Whale activist Celia Scott.

The Gray Whale Ranch sits between UC Santa Cruz and Wilder Ranch State Park. It includes more than 1,000 acres of second-growth redwoods and is home to a variety of wildlife, from mountain lions to the endangered red-legged frog. About 550 acres have been logged on the property, and at one time another 650 acres were slated for harvest, Scott said.

The purchase of the property by Save-The-Redwoods means an end to logging on the land. Tsalis said that the purchase will create an uninterrupted expanse of redwood forest and rolling meadows all the way from the Summit to the Pacific Ocean.

But Gray Whale advocates have a long road ahead. Tsalis and Angle-Franzini hope the Board of Supervisors, the city of Santa Cruz, and perhaps UC Santa Cruz can be persuaded to contribute significantly to the fund.

Two grassroots fund-raising events have also been planned. The first is an auction Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. at the home of Santa Cruz City Councilwoman Katherine Beiers, 135 Gharkey St., Santa Cruz. The second will be a dessert party with a slide show on local habitats at 7:30, Jan. 24, at the Loudon Nelson Center.

Donors who give \$20,000 or more to the effort will be able to place a name on a selected grove in the park. Contributors of \$1,000 or more will be acknowledged on an honor grove map board. Donors of \$100 or more will receive a commemorative print of the ranch. All smaller donations will also be accepted.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Mary Tsalis opens the fund-raising drive.

Donations can be sent to Open Space Alliance — Gray Whale Ranch, P.O. Box 1769, Santa Cruz, Calif. 95061. People may call 426-2286 for a donor packet.