

✓ Appeal sought on Gray Whale logging ^{10/3/94}

Gray whale
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SANTA CRUZ — Local environmentalists have asked the county to appeal a proposed logging plan for the Gray Whale Ranch, even before the state Board of Forestry has decided whether to approve it.

The 2,300-acre North Coast property has long been the object of a tug-of-war between environmentalists and owner Ron Yanke, who has tried to cut trees and build houses there since he bought the land in 1988.

Environmentalists hope to save the land from development, but were dealt a major setback in June, when voters rejected a state parks bond measure that could have provided the money to buy the land.

Yanke's most recent logging plan seeks to cut half

the trees on a 165-acre section above Majors Creek. The trees cut would be of mixed ages and would be predominantly redwoods, with about 20 percent Douglas firs.

Two dozen environmentalists showed up at a hearing last month before the state Board of Forestry. The forestry board made no decision then, allowing comments through Sept. 26. It is expected to rule on the plan by Oct. 11.

Attorney Celia Scott, representing Save the Gray Whale Parklands, wrote to the county Board of Supervisors last week, asking them to appeal the forestry board's decision.

Legally, citizens can only appeal those decisions through their county government.

Scott said in her letter that the proposed plan for the ranch's Majors Creek watershed is too vague about whether the logging will injure the California red-legged frog and the Ohlone tiger beetle.

The timber harvest plan also needs to better evaluate how the logging will affect views on Empire Grade, a county-designated scenic corridor, she said.

A study of the cumulative effect of the logging has also been given short shrift, Scott said.

A local branch of the Sierra Club raised similar issues and argued the proposed logging plan doesn't adequately address archaeological concerns on the property. Jodi Frediani, chairwoman of the local group's Forestry Task Force, also criticized the state Department of Forestry for using forest resource managers to fight fires instead of reviewing logging plans.