

To the Gray Whale Ranch. . .

1. On the ridge that rises to the north of Santa Cruz
There is a place that I like to go,
Where the red-tails cry, as they soar across the open sky,
While streams flow in canyons down below.

Chorus:

- Oh, the Gray Whale Ranch is where I want to be,
To the Gray Whale Ranch, oh come along with me—
On a fine spring day, to where the mountain lions play,
On the coast of Californ-i-ay.
2. There's a multi-millionaire who lives far away in Idaho,
He'd become the owner of the ranch property.
He had dreams of money multiplying schemes,
Money that was not for you or me.
3. Not so very long ago we'd go to where those mushrooms grow,
We'd go to where the eagles and the coyotes wander free.
But then they got guards to patrol the ranch—"KEEP OUT", it's "PRIVATE PROPERTY",
They closed the Gray Whale Ranch to you and me.
4. They had planned to build their multi-mil—lion-dollar homes with swimming pools,
Tennis courts, and miles of asphalt paving on the ranch.
But the owners of that land did finally understand
That their expensive plans didn't stand a chance.
5. Oh they filed their Timber Harvest Plans, just why, we did not understand—
Guess they planned to clear the land to let their houses grow.
But we the people did defend those redwoods and then we did send
That rich potato back to Idaho.
6. In the future there will be The Gray Whale Parklands, wild and free—
A refuge for the animals, that they will have a home.
That's the way we plan to go, it's the old Rancho Refugio,
The Gray Whale Ranch will be for everyone.

NOTES: The Gray Whale Ranch consists of over 2300 acres—the mantle of the ridge just north of Santa Cruz (as the song says), lying adjacent to Wilder Ranch State Park. In 1988 Ray Gwyn Smith and others who were in the habit of frequenting the southern portion of the Ranch noticed that many of the magnificent redwoods had been tagged—marked to be cut—and called us to tell what they had observed. Upon investigating, we discovered that the Ranch was in the process of being sold, and that the prospective new owners had filed a Timber Harvest Plan (THP), even prior to close of escrow. Several of us then met to form a new group, which we called *Save the Gray Whale Parklands*. That group then challenged the THP—successfully, to our surprise—and those particular trees were never cut. *Save the Gray Whale Parklands* then gathered over 4000 signatures on a petition opposing the proposed development of the ranch. Our campaign (assisted by this song, with lyrics arranged in present and future tense) lasted for nearly a decade, until the owners, tired of battling for their THPs and trying to get their development plans approved by the County, arranged to sell the Ranch to the Save-The-Redwoods League. By then even the owners acknowledged the special qualities of the Ranch, stating that they thought that selling it to Save-The-Redwoods League would be “a nice legacy for everybody”. Escrow closed in 1997, and the land subsequently was annexed to Wilder Ranch State Park.

Thanks are due to the many, many individuals who shared their time, talents and skills, who wrote letters, made phone calls, signed and circulated petitions, made generous donations, and showed how committed our community is to taking care of its special places.