

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Rm. 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch
Native Plant Program
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Project Title: Western Joshua Tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) Management and Research at Prime Desert Woodland Preserve (Project)

Project Location: The Project will take place in Los Angeles County at the City of Lancaster's Prime Desert Woodland Preserve (PDWP) located at 43201 35th Street West in Lancaster, California (34.66829, -118.19637).

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to Dr. Juniper Harrower (California Endangered Species Act Permit No. 2081(a)-24-008-RP) pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(a) for a project involving western Joshua tree seed collection, propagation, invasive species removal, and outplanting for a habitat restoration project at PDWP. Additional project activities include non-destructive root excavation research to improve understanding of western Joshua tree root spread. Between April and November 2025, up to 100 western Joshua tree seed pods will be collected from PDWP for propagation and outplanting. Information on seed collection location, seed pod size, parent plant size and number of branches, number of seeds per pod, germination rates, seedling growth rates, and transplant survival will be collected each year in December, May, and August. The Project will also investigate root spread by carefully hand excavating western Joshua tree roots following the root from the base of the tree outward, measuring full length and mapping root branching patterns through sketches and photos. A total of three main roots will be excavated per tree using hand trowels and mixed bristle brushes. Any rhizomatous sprouts detected from the base will also be tracked. After measurements and photo documentation, roots will be re-covered with soil. No negative impacts to western Joshua tree are expected from the root excavation research.

California Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Dr. Juniper Harrower, Assistant Professor, Reed College

Exempt Status:

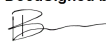
- Ministerial;
- Declared Emergency;
- Emergency Project;
- Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Sections 15306 and 15307, Classes 6 and 7

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project consists of experimental management and resource evaluation activities to ensure the maintenance, restoration, and enhancement of an existing population of western Joshua tree. The permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Project includes measures to ensure existing populations of western Joshua tree are not impacted.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Joanne Heraty

Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (916) 594-4574

Signature: _____

DocuSigned by:

36A908313DB6442

Date: 5/29/2024

Isabel Baer, Native Plant Program Manager

Signed by Lead Agency

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____