

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
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: California Department of Fish and Wildlife Western Joshua Tree Seed Collection Project (Project)

Project Location: The Project will occur throughout the range of western Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) in Mono, Inyo, San Bernardino, Kern, Los Angeles, and Riverside Counties. Collection areas may include, but are not limited to, ecological reserves owned and managed by the California Department of Fish Wildlife (CDFW); and, with advanced written permission, property owned and managed by the California State Lands Commission, California State Parks, California Native American tribes, the federal government, and on private property.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and its agents will collect and store western Joshua tree seed to provide source material for the long-term maintenance, restoration, and enhancement of western Joshua tree habitat. Project activities directly support conservation and recovery activities as outlined in the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Plan (August 2025). CDFW and its agents will attempt to collect from at least 110 locations throughout the range of western Joshua tree in California between 2026 and 2033. Only a very small percentage (not to exceed 10%) of available fruit will be collected. At each collection site, CDFW and its agents will harvest approximately 20,000 - 30,000 seeds, roughly 10 gallons of ripened fruit, from at least 50 individuals. Collections will only occur in "mast" years (i.e., when many western Joshua trees within a region flower and produce fruit synchronously) and will follow Center for Plant Conservation standards. Staff will use telescoping poles with a hooked attachment or long trash grabbers to gently remove fruit from trees. Site information will be recorded for each collection location. Seed will be processed and placed into long-term storage using standard seed banking practices at a CDFW storage facility. Seed will be used for future restoration, enhancement, or research projects.

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

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Andrew Kaiser, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist), California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Exempt Status:

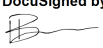
- ☐ Ministerial;
- ☐ Declared Emergency;
- ☐ Emergency Project;
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Section 15306, Class 6, and Section 15306, Class 7

Reasons why project is exempt: This Project will advance conservation of western Joshua tree by ensuring that seed is available for critical research, conservation, restoration, and recovery related projects. The Project consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which will not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The Project follows collection standards and methods that ensure the existing populations of western Joshua tree are protected.

Project Contact Person: Andrew Kaiser

Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (916) 224-6469

Signature:

DocuSigned by:

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1/23/2026

Date:

Isabel Baer, Habitat Conservation Planning Branch Manager

☒ Signed by Lead Agency

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____