

Proposed Revisions to Draft Joshua Tree Conservation Plan

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The California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) held its second meeting on the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Plan (Draft Conservation Plan) on April 16, 2025. Though no formal action was taken, the Commission received a presentation from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), discussed potential revisions to the Draft Conservation Plan, and heard additional public comments. In addition, CDFW presented a summary of changes it plans to incorporate into the Draft Conservation Plan based on feedback received to date. Key changes include:

- **Action Avoidance and Minimization.** Adding a discussion on siting large development projects in low-conflict areas to minimize impacts to western Joshua tree habitat.
- **Land Conservation and Management.** Adding a management action that allows for the deliberate, short-distance (<2.5-kilometer) movement of western Joshua trees into unoccupied, future suitable habitat areas — an approach designed to increase the likelihood of successful relocation.
- **Fees.** Acknowledging that in-lieu fees may disproportionately affect low-income residents and single-family homeowners and supplementing the Draft Conservation Plan with a description of the fee adjustment process.
- **Relocation Guidelines and Protocols.** Simplifying relocation thresholds, reducing the percentage of required relocations, and creating exemptions for certain single-family residential projects.

As detailed in our [previous alert](#), the CDFW released the Draft Conservation Plan to the Commission on December 12, 2024, pursuant to the requirements of the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act (Act). The Draft Conservation Plan establishes management practices and guidelines aimed at avoiding and minimizing impacts to western Joshua trees. The Commission first considered the Draft Conservation Plan and accepted public comment at its February 12, 2025, meeting, which we [summarized here](#).

CDFW is expected to release a revised Draft Conservation Plan by the end of May for consideration at the Commission's June 11-12, 2025, meeting. Although the Act requires the Commission to adopt the final Conservation Plan by June 30, 2025, the Commissioners have indicated a possible willingness to delay adoption until August 2025 to allow for additional public review.

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