

STAFF SUMMARY FOR JUNE 24-25, 2020

27. WESTERN JOSHUA TREE**Today's Item**Information Action

Consider and potentially act on the petition, DFW's evaluation report, and comments received to determine whether listing western Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) as a threatened or endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) may be warranted.

FGC staff recommends that this item be continued to the Aug 19-20, 2020 meeting based on conversations with the petitioner, other stakeholders, and DFW.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

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| • Received petition | Oct 9-10, 2019; Valley Center |
| • FGC transmitted petition to DFW | Nov 1, 2019 |
| • Published notice of receipt of petition | Nov 22, 2019 |
| • Public receipt of petition and approved DFW's request for 30-day extension | Dec 11-12, 2019; Sacramento |
| • Received DFW's evaluation of petition | Apr 15-16, 2020; Teleconference |
| • Today receive request to continue to the Aug 2020 meeting | Jun 24-25, 2020; Webinar/teleconference |
| • Take action to determine if listing is warranted | Aug 19-20, 2020; Fortuna |

Background

On Oct 21, 2019, FGC received a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity to list the western Joshua tree as endangered under CESA. On Nov 1, 2019, FGC staff transmitted the petition to DFW for review. A notice of receipt of petition was published in the California Regulatory Notice Register on Nov 22, 2019.

California Fish and Game Code Section 2073.5 requires that DFW evaluate the petition and submit to FGC a written evaluation with a recommendation, which was received at FGC's Apr 15-16, 2020 meeting.

Today's agenda item follows the public release and review period of the evaluation report prior to FGC action, as required in Fish and Game Code Section 2074. Fish and Game Code Section 2074.2 allows FGC to continue this agenda item to a future meeting, no later than 90 days after today's meeting.

Significant Public Comments

FGC has received over 250 emails and letters, both in support and in opposition as well as several letters in support of delaying any decision. If FGC continues this item, public comments will be summarized in the meeting materials for the Aug meeting.

Recommendation

FGC staff: Continue this item to the Aug 19-20, 2020 FGC meeting.

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Exhibits (N/A)

Motion/Direction

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission, pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 2074.2(d), continues both the public hearing and the meeting on the petition to list western Joshua tree to the August 19-20, 2020 Commission meeting.