

12m Finding/Proposed Listing Joshua Tree (*Yucca brevifolia*; *Yucca jaegeriana*)

About the Document

Title: Joshua Tree Species Status Assessment (SSA): Dated June 1, 2018.

Subject and Purpose: This document evaluates the species needs, threats, current and potential future condition of the two species of Joshua tree. We intend to use the SSA to inform our decision on whether the two species require listing under the Endangered Species Act (Act). Our determination is due to the Federal Register on or before September 30, 2018.

About the Peer Review Process

Type of review: Letter.

Number of reviewers: The peer review process included written requests on May 8, 2018, to 7 species and/or habitat experts to conduct peer review of the Joshua Tree SSA. We received peer review from 1 expert as of June 4, 2018. We will be contacting the remaining 6 experts to request peer review of the SSA.

Reviewer Expertise: Primary expertise for the review is familiarity with the life history, threats, and habitat requirements of the Joshua tree.

Selection of Peer Reviewer: The Service selected peer reviewers based on their expertise with the subject matter and lack of any conflicts of interest as described in the Office of Management Peer Review Guidelines.

Management of Peer Review: The peer review is being managed by the Service.

Estimated Start Date of Peer Review: May 8, 2018.

About Public Participation

Opportunities for the Public: We are in the process of determining if the Joshua tree is warranted for listing. If we determine that either of the two species warrant listing we will develop a proposed rule and make it available to the public. A proposed rule typically provides for a 60-day comment period for the public. Our timeframe for determining if the species warrants listing is September 30, 2018. If we determine that the species does not warrant listing, the public may provide information and comments at anytime after our determination is published in the Federal Register. Public comments are to be submitted either electronically

through *www.regulations.gov* or by hard copy to the Service (Division of Policy and Directives Management).

Public nominations of peer reviewers: No other individuals or groups were asked to nominate peer reviewers.

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