



Appendix E

Western Joshua Tree Survey Report

Kimley»»Horn



Rincon Consultants, Inc.

8825 Aero Drive, Suite 120
San Diego, California 92123
760-918-9444

December 20, 2023
Revised October 23, 2024
Rincon Project No: 23-15079
Kimley-Horn Project No: 099997003

Jessie Fan, Environmental Specialist
Kimley-Horn
660 South Figueroa Street, Suite 2050
Los Angeles, California 90017
Via email: Jessie.Fan@kimley-horn.com

Subject: Western Joshua Tree Survey Report for RPCA Lear Avenue Project, Twentynine Palms, San Bernardino County, California

Dear Ms. Fan:

Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) conducted a Western Joshua Tree (WJT; *Yucca brevifolia*) survey for the RPCA Lear Avenue Project (project) located in Twentynine Palms, California (Figure 1 and Figure 2). This species was recently protected by the state under the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act and is considered a candidate species for listing as threatened by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) under the California Endangered Species Act. The WJT census survey was conducted to document WJT presence on the project site and, if present, fully evaluate potential impacts to them from project activities, including the preparation of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) application package. The report herein describes the results of the survey.

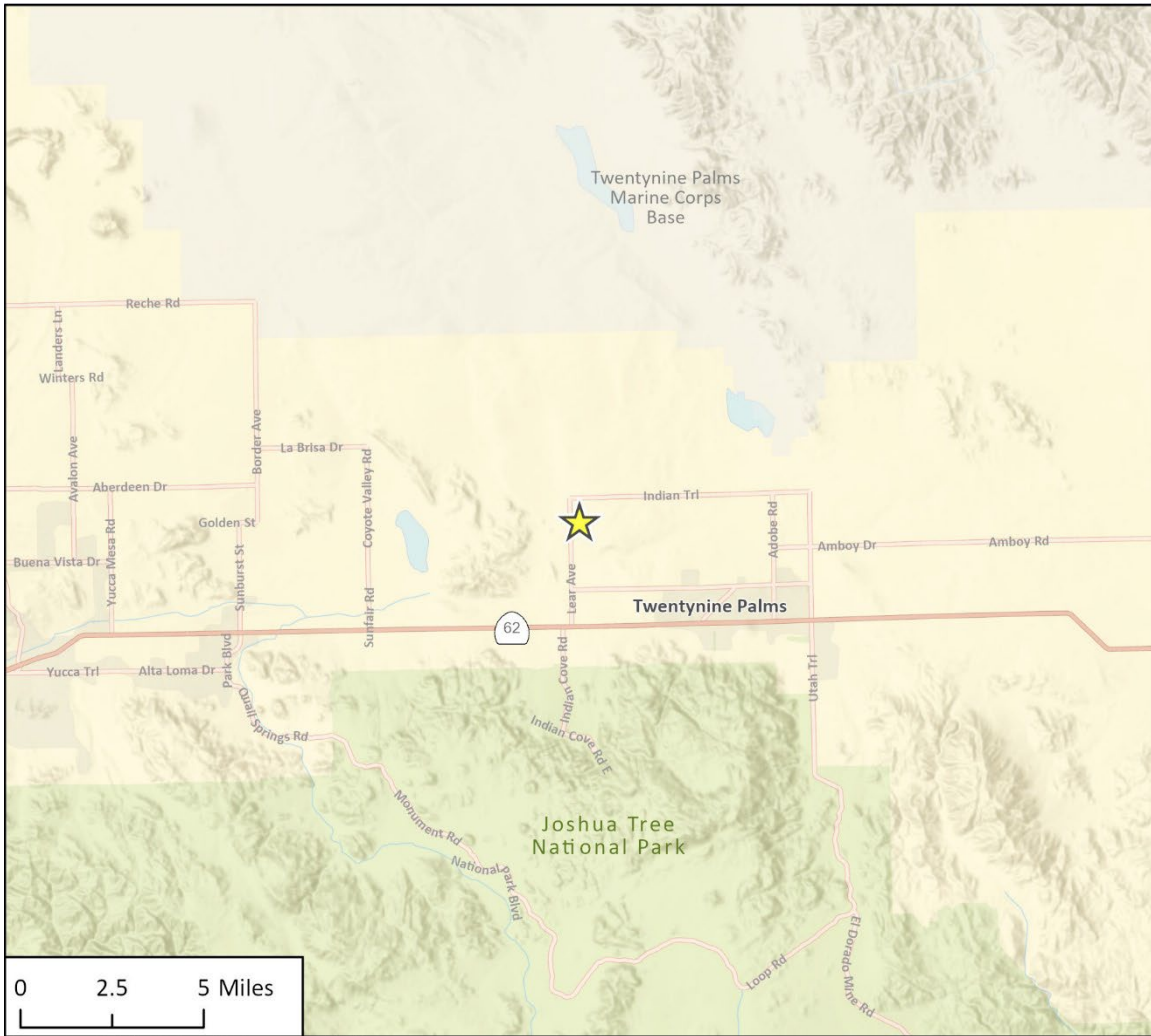
Project Location and Description

The study area included an approximately 80-acre project site and a 50-foot buffer along Lear Avenue in Twentynine Palms, San Bernardino County, California, with a relatively uniform elevation of approximately 2,200 feet above mean sea level. The project site is bounded by Mesa Drive to the north, Cove View Road to the south, Shoshone Valley Road to the east and Lear Avenue to the west. Rincon understands the project site is under consideration for development of a solar project.

Methodology

The WJT survey was conducted by Rincon International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist Genelle Watkins (#WE-12998 A) and Rincon biologist Bryant Reynolds on October 25, 2023, between the hours of 0800 and 1500. The weather on-site was 59 degrees Fahrenheit and sunny, with 0 percent precipitation and 13 mile per hour winds. The census was conducted in accordance with CDFW's Western Joshua Tree Census Instructions (CDFW 2023), in compliance with California Fish and Game Code section 1927.3, which requires a census of all WJT on the project site and a 50-foot buffer. In accordance with the WJT Census Guidelines, Rincon's certified arborist and qualified biologist walked uniform, parallel transects across the entire survey area routinely checking underneath shrubs and/or the base of any burned trees. All WJT were to be recorded using a global positioning system (GPS) device capable of sub-meter accuracy. Representative site photographs are included in Attachment 1.

Figure 1 Regional Location



Imagery provided by Esri and its licensors © 2023.

23-15079 Lear 610
Fig 1 Regional Location Lear Site

Project Location

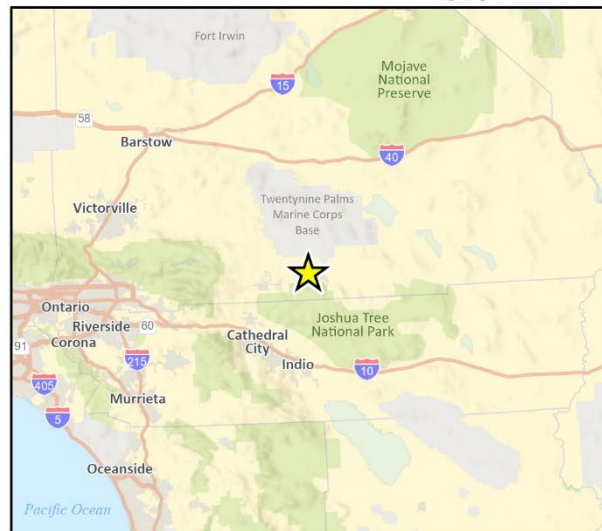


Figure 2 Project Location



23-15079 BIO
Fig 2 Project Location



Results

As shown in the site photographs provided in Attachment 1, the project site is dominated by creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) scrub vegetation. Rincon biologists did not observe any juvenile or adult WJT on the project site during the protocol WJT survey. Therefore, no additional analysis of WJT, a WJT ITP, or mitigation for potential impacts to WJT would be required for project approval and implementation. Under the new ITP Guidelines related to the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act, CDFW has indicated that the Western Joshua Tree census is generally considered valid for one year (personal communication between Rincon Supervising Arborist, Nate Faris, and CDFW Senior Environmental Scientist, Brandy Wood, on December 21, 2023).

Thank you for this opportunity to support your project. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Andrea Maben at 949-243-4620 or amaben@rinconconsultants.com, or Angie Harbin at 858-243-1505 or aharbin@rinconconsultants.com.

Sincerely,

Rincon Consultants, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Genelle Watkins".

Genelle Watkins
ISA Certified Arborist, WE-12998 A

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea Maben".

Andrea Maben
Senior Project Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angie Harbin".

Angie Harbin
Director of Natural Resources

Attachments

Attachment 1 Site Photographs



References

California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2023. Western Joshua Tree Census Instructions. Available at <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/WJT/Permitting/Census-Instructions>. Accessed December 2023.

Attachment 1

Site Photographs



Photograph 1. Creosote scrub vegetation on the western side of the project site, facing northeast.



Photograph 2. Existing dirt road and creosote scrub on the western side of the project site, facing southeast.