

Conservationists seek protection of California Joshua trees

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A conservation organization has petitioned for protection of the western Joshua tree under the California Endangered Species Act due to the effects of climate change and habitat destruction.

The Center for Biological Diversity filed the petition with the state Fish and Game Commission on Tuesday.

The request comes amid rising concern about the future of the distinctive trees with spikey leaves that have come to symbolize the Mojave Desert and draw throngs to Joshua Tree National park.

The petition asks that the western Joshua tree be given "threatened" status under the act, meaning it is likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future in the absence of the special protection and management efforts.

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