

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Joshua Tree National Park



Barker Dam Parking Lot Expansion

Joshua Tree National Park

Public Review and Comment

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Project Description

Expanding the Barker Dam Parking Lot involves converting the two undeveloped disturbed islands in the interior of the lots into parking spaces. The total areas of the islands is approximately 11,000 square feet (see image below). The project would be phased, with the first phase converting the islands into a dirt surface by saw cutting and removing the curb line, clearing vegetation and organic material, and then capping the area with 3" of road base. As funding becomes available, the parking area would receive additional base preparation and would be eventually be paved with asphalt. When completed, an additional 40 parking spaces would be available. The vegetation clearing would require the relocation of 13 Joshua trees to an area adjacent to the parking area.

The protection of affected Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) is an important component of this project. Joshua trees recently (9/22/20) received candidate status under the California Endangered Species Act. Under the federal Endangered Species Act, they do not have special status, but for JTNP, their survival and conservation is paramount to the park's mission.

Purpose and Need

During peak season JOTR can have over 4,000 vehicles entering the park per day vying for only ~1,500 parking spots. The formal parking spots in use today at JOTR were developed in the 1990s and are undersized for the number of vehicles entering the park during peak season. Recent management guidance documents (Foundation Document Jan. 2015) recommend the Park expand parking to address the aging and inadequate infrastructure and to reduce resource conflicts.

Visitors in their vehicles are vying for limited parking spaces, and when parking lots are filled, the parking spills over into off-road parking areas where there is little or no shoulder to accommodate parking. Vehicles parking off-road or on inadequate shoulders cause an ever-expanding disturbance footprint on adjacent native desert habitat. And from these off-road parking spots, pedestrian travel from their vehicles to formalized hiking destinations cause social trailing into the fragile desert ecosystem and/or unsafe walking along busy roadways. In addition, park operations staff are routinely dispatched to these high congested parking areas to manage the gridlock and maintain safe conditions and emergency access. Park staff can get diverted for hours a day, taking away from their ability to perform other job functions.

Project Location

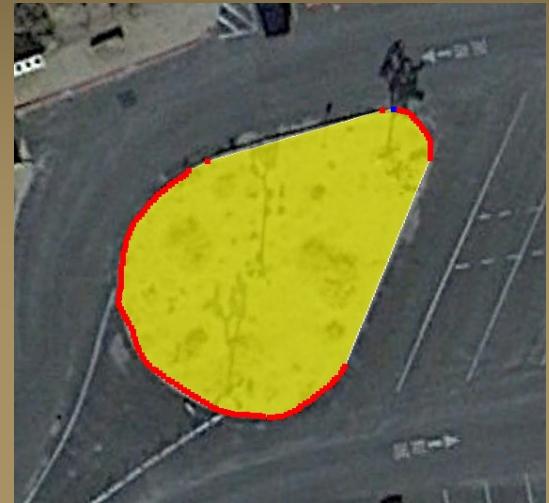
Project will be conducted entirely within the current Barker Dam parking area. No construction will take place beyond the confines of the two vegetation islands.



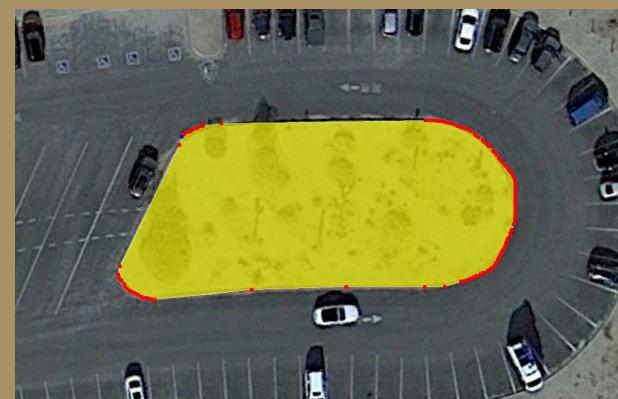
Project Phasing

- Removal of two vegetation islands and installation of Virgin Class II Road Base.
- West island is 3,186sqft.
- East Island is 7,627sqft.
- Approx. 12 Joshua Trees are in these two islands along with other vegetation.
- When removed these two areas will allow approx. 40 more vehicles to park.
- Temp lines in black will be painted to aid drivers in parking.

Perimeter: 216 Feet
Area: 3,186 Square Feet



Perimeter: 361 Feet
Area: 7,627 Square Feet



Rendering of Completed Project

This project will add approx. 40 new Parking spots for regular cars.

Ability to park RV's will be retained with ability to adjust parking lot if needed through restriping.

