# National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form

## 1. Name

**Historic** Barker Dam

**And/or Common**

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## 2. Location

**Street & Number** Not applicable

**City, Town** Joshua Tree National Monument

**State** California

**ViCINITY OF** Twentynine Palms

**Congressional District** Forty-third

**County Code** 06

**County** Riverside

**County Code** 065

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## 3. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building(s)</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Unoccupied</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Work in Progress</td>
<td>Educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Public Acquisition</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>Yes: Restricted</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being Considered</td>
<td>Yes: Unrestricted</td>
<td>Scientific</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## 4. Agency

**Regional Headquarters (If applicable)** National Park Service - Western Region Office

**Street & Number** 450 Golden Gate Avenue - Box 36063

**City, Town** San Francisco

**State** California (94102)

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## 5. Location of Legal Description

**Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, etc.** Riverside County Recorder's Office

**Street & Number** P.O. Box 751

**City, Town** Riverside

**State** California (92502)

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## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

**Title**

**Date**

**Depository for Survey Records**

**City, Town**

**State**
### DESCRIPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITION</th>
<th>CHECK ONE</th>
<th>CHECK ONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X EXCELLENT</td>
<td>X UNALTERED</td>
<td>X ORIGINAL SITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETERIORATED</td>
<td>RUINS</td>
<td>MOVED DATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>ALTERED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAIR</td>
<td>UNEXPOSED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Barker Dam consists of a structure of cement and stone faced with stone about nine feet high with a later concrete addition three feet high, raising the total height to twelve feet. The dam, including the addition, is about 150 feet long. Its design is rather odd, incorporating several indentations. Above the dam is a low wall of dry stone probably intended to keep livestock out of the deeper part of the tank formed behind the dam. ("Tank" is a rural western term for reservoir.)

Below the dam is a crude pond fed by a pipe from the reservoir. The pond consists of two low circular walls of concentric design. The pipe apparently fed water into the center circle for human consumption, and it overflowed into the outer circle for consumption by stock in the canyon below the dam.
**SIGNIFICANCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td><em>ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC</em> <em>COMMUNITY PLANNING</em> <em>LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1400-1499</td>
<td><em>ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC</em> <em>CONSERVATION</em> <em>LAW</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500-1599</td>
<td><em>AGRICULTURE</em> <em>ECONOMICS</em> <em>LITERATURE</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600-1699</td>
<td><em>ARCHITECTURE</em> <em>EDUCATION</em> <em>MILITARY</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700-1799</td>
<td><em>ART</em> <em>ENGINEERING</em> <em>MUSIC</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1899</td>
<td><em>COMMERCE</em> <em>EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT</em> <em>PHILOSOPHY</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1900</strong></td>
<td><em>COMMUNICATIONS</em> <em>INDUSTRY</em> <em>POLITICS/GOVERNMENT</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>ENGINEERING</em> <em>RELIGION</em> <em>SCULPTURE</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>LITERATURE</em> <em>SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN</em> <em>THEATER</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>MUSIC</em> <em>TRANSPORTATION</em> <em>OTHER (SPECIFY)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIFIC DATES</th>
<th>1900-present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Barker Dam is of local historical significance under the category of agriculture. The dam is typical of such structures erected by cattlemen in arid desert regions to impound run-off rainwater from infrequent desert cloudbursts in an artificial "tank" or reservoir in order to provide water for their stock. This particular dam created a sizeable "tank" which served a number of cattlemen over the years. In less rocky terrain, earthwork dams were more common, but the rocky, boulder-strewn high desert topography in what is now Joshua Tree National Monument together with the character of its arroyos apparently encouraged construction of dams employing cement and local rock rather than earth.

The above statement of significance is based upon the following historical data:

A local cattleman named C.O. Barker constructed a nine-foot high cement dam faced with native stone in 1900. Construction required sixteen eight-day-long trips to haul the cement, wooden forms, mixing equipment and other material from Banning to the site of the dam. When completed, the dam impounded run-off rainwater from desert storms to form a reservoir where cattle could obtain water. Subsequent to 1917, at an unknown date, another local cattleman named William F. Keys obtained ownership of the dam, and using concrete, he raised its height from nine to twelve feet in order to increase the amount of water the dam was capable of impounding. The dam, still serviceable, provided water for stock as long as cattle were run within its vicinity.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
Fact File, Joshua Tree National Monument Library
Interviews with William F. Keys

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 290
UTM REFERENCES

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
Boundary is roughly a square, its corners delineated by the above UTM references

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE
Gordon Chappell Regional Historian (Revision of 1971 form by F.R. Holland)
ORGANIZATION
National Park Service - Western Region Office
STREET & NUMBER
450 Golden Gate Avenue - Box 36063
CITY OR TOWN
San Francisco
STATE California (94102)
DATE June 11, 1975

CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION
YES X NO ___
FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE
DATE SEP 5 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DATE 10/29/75
ATTEST:
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DATE 10/21/75
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DATE