



DESERT MANAGERS GROUP

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Mojave Max Makes Spring Debut

After months of anticipation Mojave Max, the famous Southern Nevada desert tortoise who resides at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, officially emerged from his burrow at 11:27 a.m. April 14, 2008. This year Max slept late, it is his latest official emergence to date. Warmer weather and a spectacular wildflower season finally lured him from his burrow.

The tortoise's debut is hailed by thousands of students in Nevada and California who have been studying Mojave Desert weather, temperatures, and conditions to scientifically estimate when Mojave Max would emerge from his burrow in 2008. They entered their guesses on line at www.mojavemax.com.

Entries are being tabulated and the official winner will be announced soon. Eligibility for prizes offered in Southern California included students in grades 1-12 enrolled in schools in Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties.

"The Mojave Max Emergence Contest is one of several components of a desert wide tortoise education program being developed by the Desert Managers Group (DMG) to help students learn more about the desert tortoise," said Anne Staley, DMG Desert Tortoise Outreach Coordinator. The DMG is a consortium of county, state, federal and military agencies that work together to manage federal and state lands within southern California.

"Our goal is to get many more students in southern California involved in the contest and our educational program to learn more about the tortoise, which was federally listed as a threatened species in 1990," added Staley.

Like other desert tortoises, Mojave Max enters a burrow to brumate (the reptilian form of hibernation) every winter and emerges every spring. Warmer temperatures, longer daylight hours and an internal clock are factors known to contribute to his emergence every year.

For more information contact Anne Staley at (760) 367-5528 or visit the DMG web site at <http://www.dmg.gov>.



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