



## DESERT MANAGERS GROUP

**For Release:** November 21, 2007

**Contact:** Anne Staley (760) 367-5528, Desert Managers Group, Desert Tortoise Outreach Coordinator  
Christina Gibson (702) 455-2860, Clark County Desert Conservation Program

### **Mojave Max Emergence Contest Open for Entries California Students Participate**

Once again the Desert Managers Group announces the official opening of the annual Mojave Max Emergence Contest ([www.mojavemax.com](http://www.mojavemax.com)). Last year the contest successfully concluded its second year in California, and will begin again this November, 2007. Mojave Max is a desert tortoise who lives about 20 miles west of Las Vegas, Nevada in the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. Any student in grades 1-12 may enter the contest. Students may go on-line and register a guess when Mojave Max will emerge from his burrow for the first time in 2008. Eligibility for prizes is restricted to students enrolled in public private and registered home schools in the following counties in California: Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego. The contest will remain open until Max emerges from his burrow.

The Mojave Max Emergence Contest campaign is designed to increase understanding about how desert ecosystems work and especially how the desert tortoise and other indigenous organisms are affected when ecosystem stability is undermined. Desert tortoises are California's state reptile, they are also listed on the endangered species list as threatened. When the weather turns cold, desert tortoises brumate— a reptilian form of hibernation. As the contest matures into a regional awareness campaign, it will increase opportunities for people of all ages to learn about the desert environment. Each year the contest gains more student participation and teacher support

In California, the program was launched by the Desert Managers Group (DMG), a collaborative partnership of local, state and federal agencies responsible for the management of public desert lands. The DMG is also developing "Tortoise Trunks" as part of its desert tortoise outreach campaign. Tortoise trunks are an activity-based curriculum package for third through sixth graders that satisfies state standards for science and social science requirements for those grades. Two separate trunks, one for each for the two age groups, have been developed. Trunks activities will be produced in both English and Spanish and teacher workshops are currently being scheduled on how to use the trunks and activities. For more information contact Lorna Lange, Education Specialist at Joshua Tree National Park 760 367-3011 or Anne Staley, Desert Tortoise Outreach Coordinator at Joshua Tree National Park 760 367-5528

For more desert tortoise media information including news stories, press releases, newsletters, and public service announcements go to: <http://www.deserttortoise.gov/information/news.aspx>  
For Desert Managers Group information, go to <http://www.dmg.gov>