

NEWS RELEASE

April 24, 2023

Mojave Max Has Emerged!

Local Desert Tortoise's Emergence Marks Beginning of Spring

Mojave Max, Southern Nevada's famous desert tortoise and weather prognosticator, officially emerged from his burrow April 24, 2023 at 3:40 p.m. This is the latest day he has emerged. The earliest he has emerged was Feb. 14, 2005, at 11:55 a.m. The latest date he emerged prior to this year was April 17, 2012, at 12:41 pm.

Mojave Max is a live desert tortoise who calls the Las Vegas Springs Preserve his home. Like other Southern Nevada reptiles, he enters a burrow to brumate (the reptilian form of hibernation) every winter and emerges every spring. Mojave Max's emergence marks the beginning of spring-like weather in Southern Nevada. Warmer temperatures, longer daylight hours and his own internal clock are factors known to contribute to his emergence every year.

As part of the 23rd annual Mojave Max Emergence Contest, elementary school students from Clark County, Nevada have been studying Mojave Desert weather, temperatures and conditions to scientifically estimate when they believed Mojave Max would emerge from his burrow in 2023. They entered their guesses online at www.mojavemax.com. The entries are being tabulated and the official winner of the Mojave Max Emergence Contest will be announced soon. The winning student will receive prizes including a year-long family membership to the Springs Preserve, an "America the Beautiful" year-long family pass to National Parks and Federal Recreation areas, and a laptop computer. The winner's entire class will receive Olympic-style medals and T-shirts as well as a trophy for his or her school, and a field trip, with a pizza party, to the Springs Preserve to meet the live Mojave Max tortoise, while the winner's teacher will receive a laptop computer.

"Each year, Mojave Max's emergence signals the unofficial beginning of spring in Clark County," said Marci Henson, Director of the Clark County Department of Environment and Sustainability. "Thanks to the Mojave Max team, this school year alone nearly 10,000 Clark County elementary school students learned the importance of the threatened desert tortoise, why it is considered a keystone species, and the importance of respecting and protecting our delicate desert ecosystem so it can be enjoyed for generations to come".

The Emergence Contest has taken place every year since 2000. More than 4,200 guesses were received during this year's Emergence Contest.

Questions about the live Mojave Max tortoise should be directed to Tom Bradley with the Las Vegas Springs Preserve at (702) 822-8365.

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Mojave Max Has Emerged! cont.

Questions about the Mojave Max education program should be directed to Audrie Locke with the Clark County Desert Conservation Program at (725) 270-4286. More information is available at www.ClarkCountyNV.gov or www.MojaveMax.com.

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About the Department of Environment and Sustainability

The Department of Environment and Sustainability is the air pollution control agency, regional Endangered Species Act compliance program, and sustainability office for all of Clark County, Nevada. Established as the Department of Air Quality by the Clark County Commission in 2001, it was renamed in 2020 and is comprised of two divisions: Air Quality and Desert Conservation Program. Through these two divisions, DES is ensuring the air we share meets healthful, regulatory standards, administering the County's Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and addressing climate change through the All-In Clark County initiative.

About Clark County

Clark County is a dynamic and innovative organization dedicated to providing top-quality service with integrity, respect, and accountability. With jurisdiction over the world-famous Las Vegas Strip and covering an area the size of New Jersey, Clark is the nation's 11th-largest county and provides extensive regional services to 2.3 million citizens and 45.6 million visitors a year (2019). Included are the nation's 8th-busiest airport, air quality compliance, social services and the state's largest public hospital, University Medical Center. The County also provides municipal services that are traditionally provided by cities to 1 million residents in the unincorporated area. Those include fire protection, roads and other public works, parks and recreation, and planning and development.