



Hands on the Land

A National Network of Field Classrooms Linking Students, Teachers, and Parents to their Public Lands and Waterways

Featured Site

Red Rock Canyon

National Conservation Area

The Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (RRCNCA) is located just a few miles west of Las Vegas, Nevada in Clark County and encompasses 197,000 acres within the Mojave Desert. Red Rock Canyon is an area of worldwide geologic interest and beauty. The unique geological features, plants, and animals of Red Rock Canyon represent some of the best features of three different desert ecosystems, the Mojave, Colorado Plateau and the Great Basin.

As one of many educational programs at RRCNCA, the Mojave Max Education Program is turning heads. This successful and very popular education program, initially funded by a Hands on the Land grant, stimulates students' appreciation of science and threatened species through education. Designed to enhance a Clark County Desert Conservation Program contest where students try to guess the exact time and date that a live desert tortoise, Mojave Max, appears from his burrow in the RRCNCA, the program now incorporates a teacher's workshop, interactive website, informational brochures and retail items along with classroom curriculum and assembly programs. The successful program has thousands of students in the valley researching species, temperature and cycles of the Mojave Desert. Now in its eighth year, the Mojave Max Education Program interacts with students across Nevada and Utah while serving over 15,000 students in RRCNCA's local area, Clark County.



Teachers learn about transect and tortoise as part of a workshop which integrates science and tortoise management.



Students from Coral Cliff Elementary School, in Utah, enjoy Mojave Max's visit from Las Vegas as part of a Mojave Desert Tour.

Mojave Max is a live desert tortoise that resides in a habitat at the Red Rock Visitor's Center. Every year, the plants and animals of the Mojave Desert respond to cooling weather trends to survive. Reptiles brumate, mammals hibernate and plants go dormant. Max's brumation is a natural indicator of winter in Southern Nevada when desert wildlife experiences a period of rest, sleep and replenishment. "Many desert plants and animals may not be visible during the winter," said Christina Gibson, Management Analyst II for the Clark County Desert Conservation Program. "It's important that people continue to respect and protect the desert habitat during the winter."

While Mojave Max's brumation is a good indicator of winter in the Southern Nevada, his emergence from brumation is a good indicator of spring. Knowing the date of Max's brumation, in addition to studying desert weather and other scientific conditions, helps students make educated guesses on when Max will re-emerge to mark the first day of spring in the valley.

Originally created by Bureau of Land Management staff, Friends of Red Rock Canyon volunteers, Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association staff, Clark County School District staff and others, the Education Program's concepts are being utilized by students and teachers in Nevada, Utah, and soon in Washington.

To learn more about RRCNCA, contact Kathy August at kaugust@blm.gov, or visit the HOL site profile, http://www.handsontheland.org/profiles/profile_details.cfm?sitecode=rero. For specific information on the Mojave Max Education Program, visit www.mojavemax.com.

Check It Out!

Nominate Your HOL Site Today!

Don't forget to submit your nomination for the 2007 HOL awards no than **July 31, 2007**. The Nomination Form is located on the HOL website at

<http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/nomination.cfm>.

Project BudBurst A National Phenology Network Field Campaign for Citizen Scientists

Help track climate change data on the timing of leafing and flowering of trees and flowers in your area by participating in Project BudBurst. More information about this project can be found at www.budburst.org.



Build an Outdoor Classroom at Your School

Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation, International Paper and National Geographic Explorer! classroom magazine have partnered to create an outdoor classroom grant program to provide schools with additional resources to improve their science curriculum by engaging students in hands-on experiences outside the traditional classroom. All K-12 public schools in the United States are welcome to apply. More information can be found at <http://www.lowes.com/lowes/lkn?action=pg&p=AboutLowes/outdoor/index.html>.

Web Corner

Share Hands on the Land with your community

Have you shared your site's involvement in HOL with your local community? In an effort to increase the profile of HOL, sites are being asked to share their participation in HOL with their local and regional communities. To support the effort, HOL administration has created a comprehensive Publicity Kit complete with a press release and talking points to help spread the word. Additionally, the Kit provides HOL logos for reprinting along with a Certificate of Membership to showcase your site's participation. By sharing your site's connection with HOL, we hope to see more interest and participation in the network, enhancing everyone's experience.

To access the HOL Publicity Kit follow these steps:

1. Go to the HOL homepage and click on the Program Provider link in the left-hand column.
2. Click on the HOL Publicity Kit link. You may choose to open the document in either Word or Adobe pdf formats. Choosing Word allows you to modify the document to serve your site's needs.
3. Modify the press release document and send to various local and regional media outlets.
4. Add your site's information to the Certificate of Membership and display in a prominent location at your site!

Please contact the interim HOL Program Director, Wendi Liles at wiles@keystone.org with any questions.

Upcoming Events

The Sense of Wonder: Rachel Carson Intergenerational Photo, Essay and Poetry Contest

This is a fantastic way to involve all ages to creatively honor the 100th anniversary of Rachel Carson's life. To honor her amazing life, The EPA Aging Initiative, Generations United, and the Rachel Carson Council, Inc. announce a photo, essay, and poetry contest "that best expresses the Sense of Wonder that you feel for the sea, the night sky, forests, birds, wildlife, and all that is beautiful to your eyes. We want you to share this love of nature with a child and others around you. When we teach our eyes and ears and senses to focus on the wonders of nature, we open ourselves to the wonders around us."

Entries must be joint projects involving a person under age 18 and a person age 50 or older. Submissions must be received by **Friday, June 15, 2007**.

Specific information regarding this contest can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/thesenseofwonder/index.htm> or contact Kathy Sykes at 202-564-3651.

