



United States Department of Agriculture

HCR 46 - Representative Gestirn.
Attachment 2



The Payette National Forest has been selected to provide the 2016 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree. For more than 50 years a tree has graced the west lawn of the U.S Capitol; and since 1970, a national forest has been selected to provide the honored tree, a gift from the national forest and its home state. The last time the tree came from Idaho was in 2003, when the Boise National Forest provided an Engelmann spruce from the Middle Fork of the Payette River.

Showcasing Idaho! An annual symbol of hope and celebration, the tree is an opportunity to showcase how Idaho's landscape sustains and inspires us. The tree will symbolize Idahoans and our connection to the communities that make up our home. Idahoans rely on our national forests for the habitat they provide for wildlife, for their outstanding scenic value and world-class recreational opportunities, and for the economic opportunities they provide to communities.

Thousands of ornaments made by Idaho children. In addition to providing a 60-85 foot tree to the U.S Capitol, 8,000 ornaments designed and created by school- children across Idaho will decorate the tree. Each ornament will symbolize a part of Idaho. By using our state's official symbols such as the Syringa, Appaloosa horse, cutthroat trout, western white pine, star garnet and many more, each ornament will represent a part of Idaho that is near and dear to us. As our state is well known for our potatoes, we will of course design an ornament that highlights the potato as our state vegetable.

Companion trees. An additional 70 companion trees of 6 to 25 feet in height will accompany the Capitol Christmas tree and be set up in congressional and other governmental offices in Washington D.C. These



Playing off our "Gem State" nickname, we developed a theme and logo for the 2016 Capitol Christmas Tree.

companion trees also come from Idaho, and our staff will partner up with many of the Christmas tree growers in northern Idaho to donate these trees for the project. Each companion tree is delivered to the D.C. offices with ornaments, and a tree skirt also made by Idahoans.

It takes strong partnerships to pull off this project! The Payette National Forest and its lead non-profit partner for the project, Choose Outdoors, are already in full swing and working on the project. We will make contact with many businesses throughout the state to offer sponsorship opportunities to help offset the costs of the project. These sponsors will be afforded the opportunity to highlight their business throughout the state and across the county to further show the unique and diverse business opportunities we have in Idaho.





Celebration events! Once the Capitol Christmas tree is selected from somewhere on the Payette National Forest, we will host a Tree Cutting event that is designed to recognize and honor the many contributing partners that have made the project possible. That location is a secret for now, but it is safe to say that it is in an accessible part of the Forest.

Following the Tree Cutting, the Capitol Christmas tree will make a tour through southern, central, and northern Idaho. Each tour stop is intended to be a celebration of the season, but also will honor the thousands of school children who have made ornaments.

Once on the road to Washington D.C., the Capitol Christmas tree will make several stops in states along the route. These stops are a great opportunity for people from other states to learn about Idaho and celebrate the holiday season.

We are also planning events for McCall's Winter Carnival and a Christmas in July event that will help spread the word about the project and help to get ornaments made.

Our Elected officials. The Forest will be working closely with elected officials on planning local and D.C. events and community collaboration across Idaho. We welcome all involvement that our elected officials!

Volunteers! Groups, organizations, and individuals interested in helping with the year-long celebration can contact the Payette National Forest at 208-634-0700 or by e-mail at bdharris@fs.fed.us.

Choose Outdoors. Our non-profit partner in pulling this project off is actively pursuing sponsors for the logistics of getting the tree, ornaments and companion trees to Washington D.C. If you are interested, please contact Bruce Ward at bruceward1@gmail.com, or 303-917-1476

<http://www.capitolchristmastree.com/>
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