



Chugach National Forest – 2015 Capitol Christmas Tree

The Chugach National Forest is providing the 2015 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree. This is the first time the tree will come from Alaska.

Background

Over the past 50 years, the House of Representatives has celebrated the arrival of the Christmas season with an official Capitol Christmas Tree, also known as “the People’s Tree.” Erected in Washington D.C. after Thanksgiving, the tree is a symbol of the season – a time of year that inspires reflection and gratitude. Since 1970, the official tree has been presented to the People by the country’s national forests working with their home states, neighboring communities, and partners. For participating states and forests, the opportunity to provide the tree has generated statewide pride, celebration, civic engagement, and education.

A Gift from the Great Land

For the Chugach National Forest and participating partners, the opportunity to provide the tree is more than an organizing event or the moving of the tree from Alaska to Washington, D.C. *The tree is a symbol of how the Alaskan landscape sustains and inspires people, especially Alaskans.* It’s about people and place; about Alaskans and their strong relationship – to state, community, each other, and the land – and the stewardship and creativity that connection inspires. For Alaskans, the lands that surround us are more than a place to visit, they’re where we live. Alaskans rely on the Chugach National Forest and other public lands to feed our families, for our livelihood, inspiration and joy. Our Capitol Christmas Tree campaign is about fostering and promoting connections to the Chugach National Forest and Alaska today and into the future.

About the Tree: The U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree is a 74 foot Lutz spruce, a naturally occurring hybrid of the white and Sitka spruce, from the Kenai Peninsula. The tree will be cut on October 27 followed by a celebration in the evening from 5 to 8 pm in Seward at the Alaska Sealife Center. The following day, the tree will be wrapped and prepped for its journey to Washington D.C. Anchorage will host two public events before it begins its nearly three-week long journey at the beginning of November. The tree will make its way to Washington DC via ship from the Port of Anchorage to the west coast and then travel across country via truck and trailer. It arrives in Washington, D.C. on November 18th. The Architect of the Capitol’s office will receive the tree and begin preparations for the public tree lighting that takes place the first week of December.

Companion Trees: 75 companion trees, ranging in height from 8-25 feet tall, will be delivered to congressional and agency offices in the D.C. area.

Ornaments and tree Skirts: More than 4,000 ornaments were created by youth and communities across Alaska. These ornaments were made by schools, community groups, Alaska Native tribes and individuals from around the state of Alaska. Approximately half will adorn the U.S. Capitol tree with the remainder to decorate the companion trees. In addition, Groups and individuals have created Alaska-themed tree skirts for some of the companion trees.



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Community Events: The public is engaged in the celebration through events such as ornament development in local communities and schools, tree cutting, and celebrations in southcentral communities: Seward Community Celebration October 27 at the Alaska Sealife Center 5:00-8:00pm, October 30 in Moose Pass at 11:00 am, Anchorage Cabela’s on October 30 from 5:00-8:00 pm and the final Alaskan appearance of the tree will be at the Trick or Treat Street in downtown Anchorage October 31 from 12:00-4:00 pm. Other events are planned along the cross-country route the tree will take to Washington, D.C.

Christmas Tree Lighting Contest: This contest, sponsored by Senator Lisa Murkowski was open to all young Alaskans in grades K-6. The winner will be announced by Senator Murkowski and will travel to Washington, DC with a parent or guardian to light the Capitol Christmas Tree.

D.C. Tree Lighting Ceremony Events: Events include: a reception hosted by Chief of USDA Forest Service prior to lighting, the Speaker of the House’s lighting ceremony; and a congressional reception hosted by Alaska’s Senior Senator—Lisa Murkowski following the lighting.

Partnerships/Sponsorships: The enthusiasm generated by the Capitol Christmas Tree project has allowed us to connect with existing partners as well as new individuals, non-profit organizations, corporate partners, and sponsors to help us deliver all aspects of the project. Connecting with a broader, more diverse, group of partners and sponsors allows us to highlight the Chugach National Forest and the National Forest System to Alaskans to a wider audience.

Participating Partners & Sponsors

- **Choose Outdoors:** As our lead non-profit sponsor, Choose Outdoors sought sponsors to help achieve our campaign goals and reduce project costs.
- **Alaska Geographic:** Our local non-profit to all federal public lands in Alaska and lead coordinating partner with the Chugach National Forest in the Chugach Children’s Forest—Alaska Geographic is facilitating ornament creation. Dozens of events have already taken place across the state with more events scheduled in the coming months.
- **Other Key Sponsors:** AG&BLD Supply, Alaska Airlines, Alaska Crane, State of Alaska, Alaska State Council on the Arts, Alaska Railroad, Berg Industries, Cabela’s, Chugach Alaska Corporation, Granite Construction, Hale Trailer, Kenai River and Alaska Brewing, Kenworth Trucks, Lynden Transport, Major Marine Tours, ReThink Wood, Shell, Skybitz, TOTE Maritime, Totem, Truckload Carriers Association, Visit Anchorage, Downtown Partnership, and Vital Check. These partners and others have donated goods, in-kind services or cash to the project.

Contact

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