

2016 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree Payette National Forest

Kickoff Event – McCall’s Winter Carnival
 To publicly launch the project, we hosted a kickoff event during the annual McCall Winter Carnival. As we always have an entry in the parade, and build a snow sculpture for the carnival, this year our snow sculpture and the parade float featured Smokey Bear and Woodsy owl gathering a Christmas tree from the forest, and heading to the U.S. Capitol with it.



**CLICK IMAGE TO PLAY. 2015 U.S. Capitol
Christmas Tree Launch Video**

With Choose Outdoors as our partner, we hosted a “Get Involved” event in downtown McCall on Saturday and Sunday of the first weekend of winter carnival. At a yurt in Depot Park, we offered an opportunity for thousands of McCall visitors to make ornaments that will be sent to Washington D.C. with the Christmas tree. It was a huge success with 610 ornaments made, while thousands of people learned more about the Forest Service, the Payette Children’s Forest, Choose Outdoors, and the 2016 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree project. Choose Outdoors is marketing a limited edition tree ornament that is sponsored by the Pancake House in McCall.

We conducted a “media-opportunity” event with Idaho’s senior Senator Mike Crapo at the yurt as he is excited to see the state of Idaho showcased for all of America to see.

KTVB, Idaho’s News Channel 7 is a sponsor of our campaign and in addition to broadcasting the parade, they ran news stories related to the carnival and the 2016 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree throughout the weekend. They have produced three promotional PSA for our project that are currently airing in the greater Boise media market. Click the two images below to play the PSAs.



We also wish to thank McCall’s Star News for helping to get the story out to public about the events and focusing on the hard work that our Payette Employees Association put it on the snow sculpture and the parade float.

**CLICK IMAGES below to play short videos from
the Winter Carnival Event.**



You’ve done it Payette Employees!! We have a theme for our 2016 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree project and you as employees made that happen! With the help of many employees, we have chosen “An Idaho Mountain Gem” as our theme! We received nearly 30 suggestions and looked for common themes within those suggestions. Mountains, the Gem State, and gift were common words – from those we developed the theme. Teresa Wheeler from the Weiser Ranger District was spot on with her suggestion of “Idaho’s Mountain Gem to America,” as was Whitey Rehberg with “An Idaho Gem from the Gem State.”

Our theme and logo are key parts of our “branding” of the campaign, and with the Christmas tree being a “gift from Idaho,” we selected Idaho based artist Ward Hooper to design our logo. The final logo design incorporates elements that make it clear the tree is coming from Idaho, and the subtle reference to the Forest Service with the use of the iconic fire lookout tower. For more of Ward’s uniquely Idaho art, visit his website at:

<http://www.wardhooper.com>

THE TREE!

Chris Niccoli and his crew are busy making plans for finding the candidate trees that are needed for the Architect of the Capitol’s, Ground’s Supervisor to review in July.

Thanks to a handful of employees, we have four potential candidates now, but of course we need



“AN IDAHO MOUNTAIN GEM”
 Idaho Artist Ward Hooper grew up in the Grangeville area.

more. While finding the perfect tree is “like finding a specific piece of hay in a haystack,” if you know where some great trees are located, be sure to let Chris know! The tree must come from Forest Service land.

The tree team has plans to continue the search over the winter months via “over the snow vehicles” and snowshoes, and KTVB accompanied the crew into the Forest a few weeks ago to do a news story on the “search for the tree.” In addition to finding the tree, the tree team is responsible for the logistical aspects of getting the tree to Washington D.C.

Choose Outdoors has brought sponsors on board to provide the tractor and trailer, and they are close to forming a partnership with a sponsor that will provide the fuel. The route through Idaho and then across the county is nearly finalized – we are planning to take a more southern route across the United States this year as the tree has traveled 190 for the past several years.



CLICK IMAGE TO PLAY. KTVB featured Chris Niccoli and Jared Schuster in a news story on finding the 2016 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree.

Ornaments!

The need for ornaments increased when we learned that a total of 8,000 ornaments were



needed, rather than the 4,000 that we were initially told. With that, our ornament making team has been busy developing themes for the ornaments.



Above, members of our ornament team are shown preparing materials for snowflake ornaments, while the other photo shows a prototype of a Cutthroat trout ornament made from recyclable materials.

Parts of northern Idaho and eastern Washington are referred to as the Palouse area. This horse comes from that area, so hence; a Palouse horse – Appaloosa.



Idaho’s First Lady Lori Otter has joined us in the campaign by helping to connect Choose Outdoors with corporate Idaho and Idaho Legislatures. She also will be encouraging Idaho children to make an “I’m an Idaho Kid”

ornament. These cute ornaments are made in the likeness of the child and are made of 100% recyclable materials.



She will also help us select the final tree in July and has volunteered to author another book of her “Ida” stories that feature a young girl named Ida who explores Idaho. In this book, Ida will explore the entire campaign of the 2016 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree. Governor Butch Otter will also join us at various times throughout the campaign to lend this support in showcasing Idaho to the nation.

[CLICK TO PLAY KTVB’s ornament making story](#)



To fully represent Idaho, our ornament themes will follow our official symbols from the state such as the Monarch butterfly, huckleberries, Mountain Blue birds, the Appaloosa horse and of course a reference to POTATOES. Speaking of the Appaloosa horse, do you know where its name comes from?



“I’M AN IDAHO KID” ornaments



Sponsors

Our challenge cost share agreement with Choose Outdoors allows for private entities and corporations to become sponsors of the 2016 U.S.



Capitol Christmas Tree. Choose Outdoors is a non-profit created to help unite the many diverse interests using our public lands – a great fit for partnering with for the Capitol Christmas Tree!

It’s a big project, and we truthfully could not accomplish this without the support of non-Forest Service sponsors.

Our sponsors to date are below and this list continues to grow!

- KTVB, Channel 7
- BRINC
- Kenworth
- Eaton transmissions (in partnership with Kenworth)
- Truckload Carriers Association
- Skybitz
- Meritor General
- McCall Chamber of Commerce
- Rocky Mountain Treasures
- Ward Hooper
- Cabela’s
- Idaho Department of Education
- Evergreen Resource, INC
- Hale Trucking

- The Pancake and Christmas House
- Weiser Candy
- BWXT (Idaho)
- Salmon River Brewing Company
- Pro Build
- Select Health

If you know of anyone interested in becoming a sponsor, please have them contact Bruce Ward with Choose Outdoors; 303-917-1476, bruceward1@gmail.com

Contacts

Our campaign is being managed by four branch managers – yes, we purposely titled them “branch” managers and the pun is fully intended. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions!

- Brian Harris – Communications, Partnerships and Administration; bdharris@fs.fed.us, 208-634-0784
- Chris Niccoli – The Tree and logistics; caniccoli@fs.fed.us, 208-634-0379
- Kim Pierson – Events; kpierson@fs.fed.us, 208-347-0301
- Pattie Soucek – Ornaments; psoucek@fs.fed.us, 208-634-0812

Stay tuned for monthly updates! Visit our website at: www.capitolchristmastree.com Follow us on Facebook by [clicking this link](#).

Calendar of Events

Project Kick-Off – McCall Winter Carnival
 The Search for “The Tree”
 Kick-off the Ornament Making Plan with Schools
 Christmas in July Event - McCall
 Host the Architect of the Capitol for Tree Selection
 Deadline for Receiving Ornaments
 Tree Celebration – Payette National Forest
 Idaho and Cross Country Tour
 Capitol Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

January 30th and 31st
 Now through early July
 March
 July 4th Weekend
 July
 October 1st
 November
 November
 Early December



Coming Soon!

The route of the 2016 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree through Idaho, then across country.

Launching of the ornament making plan throughout the state.