



2012 U.S. CAPITOL CHRISTMAS TREE

Colorado's Gift to the Nation...

BACKGROUND OF THE PEOPLE'S TREE

The majestic tree which stands in front of the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. following Thanksgiving each year is known by two names – the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree and the "People's Tree." This annual gift to Americans across the country began its hallowed tradition in 1964.

Since 1970, the tree has come from one of the country's national forests. U.S. Forest Service officials select a different national forest for each year, chosen with enough time to find the right tree and raise funds for the project. The U.S. Forest Service selects a suitable tree to present to the people of the United States at Christmas.

Colorado last received this honor in 2000 and is proud to once again give this gift to our nation. The birthplace of the 2012 "People's Tree" is the 2.3 million acre White River National Forest, the top recreational forest in the U.S., located in central Colorado. White River National Forest staff selected a handful of trees to contend for the honor, leading up to the final selection by the Superintendent of the Capitol Grounds in August. The selected Engelmann Spruce tree stands 73 feet tall.



The Tree's Journey to the Capitol

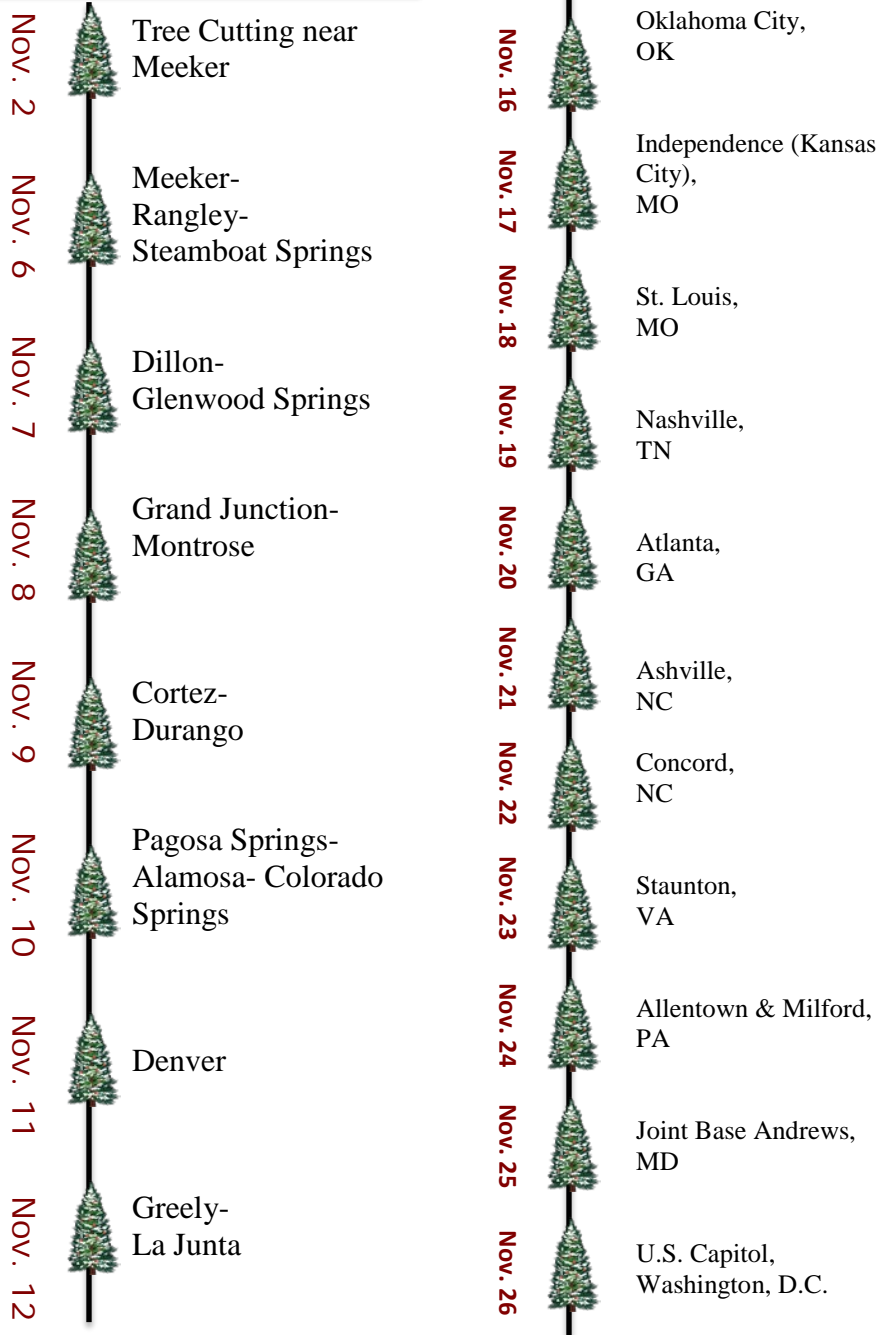
On Friday, November 2, the 2012 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree will be harvested on the Blanco Ranger District of the White River National Forest near Meeker, Colo. The tree will then be wrapped and transported on a custom-decorated Mack Pinnacle truck driven by former U.S. Senator, Ben Nighthorse Campbell.

On November 26, the tree will arrive in D.C. The tree will be placed on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol and decorated with more than 3,000 ornaments handmade by Coloradans depicting this year's theme, "Celebrating the Great Outdoors."

A tree lighting ceremony will be held by Speaker of the House of Representatives, John Boehner, in early December. After the lighting ceremony, the Capitol Christmas Tree will be available for public viewing throughout the holiday season as it will be lit nightly from dusk until 11 p.m.

2012 Capitol Christmas Tree Tour

The Capitol Christmas Tree will travel more than 5,000 miles from Colorado to our national capital, passing through 30 cities and towns. These stops allow citizens from all across the U.S. to enjoy the tree.





2012 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree Contest Winners

Events are planned each year to allow the community to share in this gift to our nation. Young and old alike are given the opportunity to get creative – contests have been held to show off their artistic and creative abilities in a number of different formats.

Juried Art Contest

Colorado-based artist, Cheryl St. John's painting, "Awaiting Spring" was selected as the official artwork to represent the 2012 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree. This year's contest was the first national call for artists, and the winning works will comprise a traveling exhibition to accompany the Capitol Christmas Tree from Colorado to Washington, D.C.

St. John's artwork will serve as the Capitol Christmas Tree song contest compilation CD official cover art, which will be hung in the Chief of the Forest Service's office for one year and then displayed in the Capitol Christmas Tree permanent collection.

Sing4TheTrees Song Writing Competition

After receiving nearly 300 original song submissions, *Standing Tall* by Lindsay Lawler from Nashville, Tenn. was selected as the official U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree song. Lawler was awarded the grand prize of \$2,500 and the song will be featured at the Forest Service Chief's Reception immediately preceding the tree lighting ceremony on the west lawn of the Capitol this December.

Twenty five semi-finalists were chosen from the song submissions. In addition to the grand prize winner, 11 additional artists have been selected to have their songs featured on a Sing4TheTrees compilation CD.

Tree Lighting Winner

Children who submitted ornaments for the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree were eligible to enter a drawing to win a trip to the nation's capital to light the tree with Speaker of the House of Representatives, John Boehner at the lighting ceremony in early December.



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For more information on the 2012 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree and to track the tree's route, visit www.CapitolChristmasTree2012.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/CapitolChristmasTree2012, Twitter: www.twitter.com/CapitolTree2012 Pinterest: <https://pinterest.com/capitoltree2012/>



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