



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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“Holiday in the National Parks” Celebrated at the White House Independence National Historical Park Ornament Displayed on the Official White House Christmas Tree

(Philadelphia, PA) – An Independence National Historical Park ornament is prominently displayed on this year’s official White House Christmas Tree. The tree is the centerpiece of elaborate decorations celebrating the theme of “Holiday in the National Parks.”

“It is an amazing honor for the National Park Service to be selected as the theme for the White House holiday decorations by the President and Mrs. Bush,” said National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar. “Mrs. Bush is the best champion for our national parks, and the beautiful decorations in each state room showcase the natural and historical treasures found in parks throughout the country.”

The tree, located in the Blue Room, is adorned with handmade ornaments representing the country’s 391 National Park Service sites. “Each ornament on the magnificent 18-foot Fraser fir was designed by an artist selected by the park,” said Bomar. “The ornaments tell the stories of our parks, just as our parks tell the stories of our nation.”

The Independence National Historical Park ornament was created by local artist Kevin Lewellen. Other sites also represented on the White House Christmas Tree are the Edgar Allan Poe National Historical Site, with an ornament created by Brett Edenton, and the Thaddeus Kosciusko National Memorial, with an ornament created by Deirdre Murphy. Mr. Lewellen and Mr. Edenton attended a White House reception hosted by First Lady Laura Bush on November 28. “I am grateful for the time and talent donated by these local artists, who have done such a fabulous job representing these historical sites for this national celebration” said Acting Superintendent Darla Sidles, who has responsibility for all three sites.

The holiday displays incorporate the wide variety of natural, cultural, and recreational features preserved by the National Park Service. Models of icons such as the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and the Statue of Liberty share space with paintings of scenic vistas from Grand Canyon, Zion, and Rocky Mountain National Parks. Holiday garlands intertwined with park objects including seashells, pine cones, and gold aspen leaves add to each room’s festive feel.

A highlight of the decorations is a scaled-down, but architecturally accurate, gingerbread reproduction of the south view of the White House, a unit of the National Park Service. The

edible masterpiece includes Bush family pets Barney, Miss Beazley, and Willie frolicking on the lawn with moose, elk, raccoons, and other animals found in national parks.

“National Parks commemorate the people, places, and events that define the American experience,” said Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne. “I am so appreciative of President Bush’s efforts to recognize the important role of national parks in American society. Our country will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016 and the President has been instrumental in establishing the National Park Centennial Initiative to prepare the parks for the next century.”



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