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## Death Valley News Release

Release: **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Release Date: December 5, 2007  
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### **“Holiday in the National Parks” Celebrated at the White House Death Valley National Park Ornament Displayed on the Official White House Christmas Tree**

Death Valley National 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.”

Carre Shandor, the park’s Facility Management Specialist, turned a common golden globe into a collage of images showcasing the significant historical and natural features that make Death Valley National Park one of our nation’s greatest treasures. “With a park as large as Death Valley it was difficult to decide what image or images best represented the park on an 8 inch ball,” states Superintendent JT Reynolds. Carre was accompanied by her husband Aaron Shandor, a park protection ranger at Death Valley, to be present at a special reception held at the White House on November 28<sup>th</sup> and attended by the First Lady Laura Bush.

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.

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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.

Most Americans will not have the opportunity to visit the White House, so the White House website will focus on the decorations, with a few surprises as well. You can see it for yourselves at [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov) .

“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 100<sup>th</sup> 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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