

Hundreds see Sugar Bear in Crescent City

November 6, 2021



Sugar Bear, the 84-foot white fir selected as this year's U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree, made its first stop in Crescent City - where hundreds of local residents posed in front of the tree, listened to the Del Norte High School band and choir, posed with Big Foot and listened to an essay reading by fifth-grader Michael Mavris.

The day's event also included lines of local students who passed through educational booths, before stopping to pen a note and take a picture in front of Sugar Bear - which was carefully nestled and decorated inside a 102-foot-long cab and trailer.

For the next 10 days, the tree will travel and make several stops in California before heading eastward towards Washington D.C., which is located 2,500 miles away.

"One of the reasons for a project like this is to connect people to public lands and the national forest," said Samantha Reho, public affairs specialist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Over the next three weeks, Sugar Bear will stop in 25 different communities before it will take its place on the west lawn in front of the capitol.

According to a Department of Agriculture fact sheet, the process of providing the capitol Christmas tree is a year-long undertaking that includes the cutting down of 60 other “companion” trees ranging from 10 to 25 feet, which will also be displayed in various government locations.

“We deliberately chose this tree and the others in areas that needed to be thinned anyway,” said Reho.

When the tree arrives at its destination, Mavis, a student from Mary Peacock Elementary in Del Norte County, will officially light up the tree sometime in December, though the actual date of the tree-lighting ceremony has not yet been set.

Mavis was chosen for the high-profile ceremonial position after his essay ‘Six Rivers, Many Peoples, One Tree’ won first place in a contest that drew 53 submissions.

Mavis read his essay in front of a large crowd at the Crescent City event on Oct. 29 and will do it again in front of the capitol.

“From this great forest, we bring you the majestic white fir to be the capitol’s Christmas tree,” Mavis read. “As the lights are strung and the ornaments placed, we, the people who live in the tree’s symbolic shadow, hope that its beauty and grandeur provide a beacon to America and a reminder that on this Christmas all things are possible.”

According to Reho, the entire event - from the harvest to its delivery to the east coast - is paid for through private donations.