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Rally in front of the Truth Tree

CUMBERLAND GAP NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK SUPPORTS RALLIED AGAIN

Cumberland Gap National Historical Park supporters rallied again on August 16th in front of the visitor center beneath what is now reverently known as the “Truth Tree.”

Since early March, retired rangers and advocates have been at the park protesting the administration’s budget and staffing cuts impacting national parks nationwide.

With the new school year underway, Retired Park Ranger Carol Borneman explains it was imperative to hold this rally. “Education empowers individuals, unlocking a world of new opportunities and leading to a more fulfilling life. Our park and all national parks offer valuable educational opportunities embedded within a robust curriculum based Parks as Classrooms Program.”

Throughout the year, thousands of students from the region and beyond and from all age groups visit the park or have a ranger visiting their classroom. Borneman shares, “From Clairfield TN Headstart to TNT Primary in New Tazewell to Elydale Middle in Ewing to Southeast Community College in Middlesboro to Pineville Elementary to Lynn Camp Middle to Corbin to Everett KY Middle School

and every school in between - over the years, students have come to the park or rangers have been at the schools.”

David and Tina Mike are devoted rally participants with a deep love for the park. David Mike, respectfully named ‘Coach Mike,’ was an educator for 34 years, teaching 28 years at Middlesboro Middle and 6 years at Middlesboro High.

Coach Mike comments, “A highlight field trip for my classes was to our park and especially to Hensley Settlement. On the day of the settlement visit, students were over the top, with many wearing bib overalls.” Mike recalls, “Students were beaming with pride as they realized the settlement was a testament to our Appalachian culture, visited by thousands of individuals from throughout the US and the world.”

At Willie Gibbons’ blacksmith shop, Mike always enjoyed showing the students a worn broken saw repurposed as a hoe. “I really stressed to the kids that repurposing and recycling were not new ideas, but essential practices with deep roots in history.”

Historically, the park has also recruited high school and college students for positions in federal student programs, as



interns, or as volunteers. Several of these students transitioned into careers with the National Park Service and other government agencies.

Others moving into the private sector were highly sought after for the exceptional interpersonal skills and unwavering work ethic developed at their time during the park.

Borneman and Mike are among the legions now deeply concerned that severe cuts to the park will significantly reduce these many educational and career opportunities.

According to Borneman, the administration also continues to undermine education in its aggressive campaign to whitewash and erase



America’s history. “Our and all national parks now display required signage, asking visitors to report any negative stories about either past or living Americans, as part of President Trump’s ‘Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History.’ Our history includes both positive and negative chapters. We become

a stronger and more empathetic nation by never covering over or forgetting the bad.”

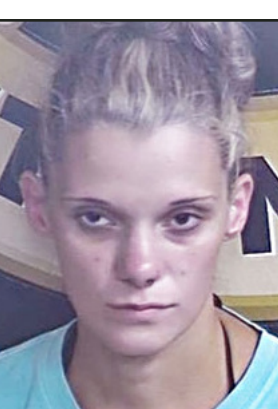
The August 16 rally culminated in an impressive demonstration of park support: a procession into the visitor center, where participants donated to the park’s crucial efforts.

By September 30, the group is hoping

\$3500 will have been deposited into the park’s donation box. Each dollar represents a dime for each of the 35,000 proud community members who attended the park’s July 4, 1959 dedication.

Borneman encourages all, “Let’s make a collective impact - bring your donations and be part of our park’s future. Every single donation will positively impact our park and showcase to the current administration our profound pride and love in the park.”

Follow Facebook pages “Support Cumberland Gap National Historical Park” and “How We Fight” to learn about how to advocate for the park and upcoming rally dates.



Middlesboro Police arrest suspected drug dealer

Miracle charged with trafficking and tampering with evidence

On Monday, August 18, 2025, Lt. Barry Cowan of the Middlesboro Police Department arrested 30-year-old Bethany Miracle, of Middlesboro, on charges of trafficking in methamphetamine and tampering with physical evidence during a traffic stop.

Lt. Cowan reportedly discovered a large quantity of suspected methamphetamine and digital scales in her possession, marking the third suspected drug dealer arrested by MPD in recent days.

The Middlesboro Police Department remains committed to taking aggressive action against individuals who sell illegal drugs and will continue working to keep them out of our community.

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