

# Former U.S. Forest Service Ranger

Dan Kincaid spent three decades as a ranger. Now he aims to educate others by writing books.

By MADDIE CUTLER

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For Dan Kincaid, the outdoors was his home.

Kincaid is a retired forest ranger and worked with the United States Forest Service for 31 years keeping national parks safe and maintained for visitors.

He grew up near the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia, surrounded by nature. Because of this, he developed a love for fishing, hiking and camping at a young age.

Though retired, Kincaid still maintains his love of the outdoors. He likes to spend his time writing and has written six books of his own, with another on the way.

"My first book is an account of my high school basketball team," Kincaid said. "The others are all related to my time as a forest ranger."

Kincaid has two series of books that are anthologies of columns he wrote for several newspapers. They contain statistics and tips on how to keep forests and natural areas safe.

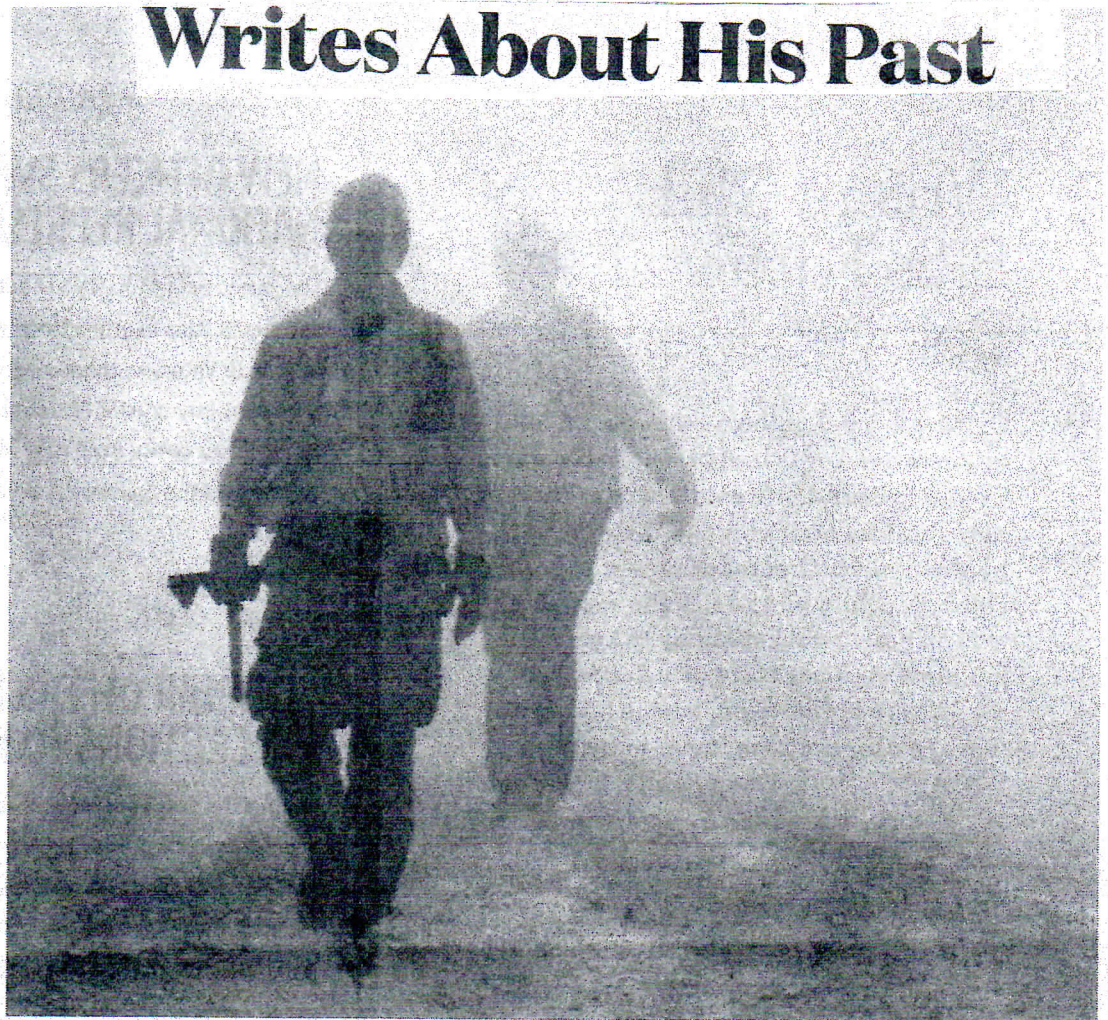
"Some people who still work with the U.S. Forest Service encouraged me to put the articles all in one place," he said. "They are great resource tools for people who want history of the forest and the area."

Kincaid has three volumes dedicated to the Wayne National Forest in Ohio and one volume for the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia.

His latest book is part of an ongoing fiction series called "Kade Holley — Forest Ranger." The series focuses on Holley as he travels the country to help protect national forests from various threats. Kincaid said the books are for a young adult audience, and hopes that anyone who reads them will develop a deeper appreciation for nature.

"I wanted to have a different audience engaged with the topic," Kincaid said. "The stories that the book contains are inspired by all the years I spent working in the national forests."

## Writes About His Past



Submitted photos  
Dan Kincaid, left, walks in swirling smoke from a forest fire he helped control. In his right hand he carries a fire rake, a tool used to break up burning debris and control the spread of flames.

One of the projects he is most proud of is taking care of a 60-foot-tall Norway spruce that became the Capitol Christmas Tree in the year 1987.

"I cared for that tree nearly every day, making sure it was healthy and that it stayed in good condition," he said. "Getting to see it all lit up was one of the most satisfying feelings ever."

The tree came from Wayne National Forest in Ohio, where Kincaid spent a majority of his time as a ranger.

However, the most dangerous and destructive fire Kincaid assisted with was the Hayman fire in Colorado in 2002. The fire destroyed 137,760 acres, making it the most destructive fire Colorado ever had seen.

"Because I was a part of a federal agency, they sent me to a few different locations for emergencies," Kincaid said. "I was the fire information officer,

There were over 1,000 people at the fire during that time.

Kincaid helped with the blaze and wrote the daily news releases regarding updates on the fire.

As summer approaches, Kincaid said, wildfires will increase. However, anyone can help curb the number of fires that destroy forests, he said.

"If the weather conditions are bad, then there will be a burn ban," the Village of Dunedin resident said. "Other times, it's

best you talk to your local fire station and get a burn permit before you burn anything."

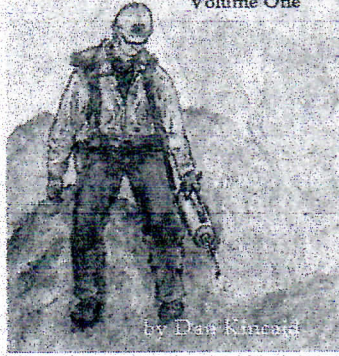
Kincaid cited discarded cigarettes and improperly extinguished campfires as common sources of fires and suggested people take caution while outdoors.

In Kincaid's home, the walls of his office are covered in plaques, awards and pictures from his career. Several of the wooden plaques are carved in the shape of Ohio.

# Kade Holley

## Forest Ranger

Volume One



**Dan Kincaid's latest novel follows Kade Holley across the country as he helps protect National Forests. Artwork by Mary Linscheid**

Two photographs of helicopters hang above a tall cabinet that holds books and mugs sporting the logo for Wayne National Forest.

"Those are from a fire that

spread between Minnesota and Canada," Kincaid said. "I took two photographers onto the river and they caught the helicopters dumping water onto the flames."

Each image captured a helicopter hovering over flames darkened by soot. The aircraft carried buckets full of water ready to drench the blaze.

Kincaid's wife, Vicki, created a scrapbook chronicling his time working as a forest ranger.

The scrapbook's pages are filled with snapshots of Dan, including one of him standing next to the Norway spruce in Wayne National Forest and an action shot of him emerging from the hazy smoke of a fire in Ohio in 2005.

"There are pictures of him all across the country in this book," Vicki said. "I wanted to honor his hard work and devotion."

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