



Slipdown Mountain Publications LLC

For Immediate Release...

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RAMPANT AMERICAN WILDFIRES ARE NOTHING NEW New book vividly captures wildfire experience

Lake Linden, Mich. (January 9, 2006) – Over the past few weeks, 3,600 wildfires have scorched some 240,000 acres in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, New Mexico and Colorado, destroying 480 homes and killing five people. While recognizing the scope of this tragedy, Americans should reflect on how much worse it could have been without modern communications, firefighting equipment and trained firefighters.

A hundred years ago, wildland fires swallowed entire communities before anyone recognized their size, speed or threat. On October 15, 1908, a wildfire raged across the northeastern portion of Michigan near the farming community of Metz, devastating two million acres of farms and forests, consuming over 900 homes and leaving 4,600 homeless and 43 dead. Like many modern wildfires, this 1908 fire was started by man and whipped into a frenzy by high winds racing through dry vegetation.

Slipdown Mountain Publications' recent historical novel – “Devil in the North Woods” – relies on contemporary newspaper reports, recorded oral histories and a storyteller's knack to chronicle this tragic fire's genesis, growth and aftermath. By combining a realistic portrayal of being caught in a rampant wildfire with a fictionalized, yet historically accurate, account of the effects of this particular fire on actual residents, author Walt Shiel has created an entertaining, terrifying and educational story.

Midwest Book Review noted this week that Shiel's novel “vividly recreates the terrible blaze from start to finish, the toll it took, and the trials of human beings forced to recover from the devastating losses it inflicted.”

“Devil in the North Woods” contrasts the terror of nature's destruction with a chronicle of love, sorrow, family and recovery from loss. Midwest Book Review confirms that though the novel “tells the story of man vs. nature, its core is emotional and human-centered.”

“Devil in the North Woods” takes readers beyond the nightly news videos of wildfires and their devastation and allows them to step into the midst of a raging fire to experience its terror and challenges in a world before aircraft, radio, television and organized wildland firefighting teams. As In the Library Reviews noted, “Thanks to the writing ability of Walt Shiel, this catastrophic moment of history leaps off the written page and into the hearts of readers.”

Based in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Slipdown Mountain Publications LLC publishes fine art prints and books on fiction, aviation history and cryptozoology. The company plans to publish two or three new books per year. Books may be purchased via the company's website (SlipdownMountain.com) or by phoning 906-523-6105 (or 866-686-6706 toll-free).

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