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**100 Years After the Tunguska Event and the Metz Wildfire - Can We See a Connection?
Historical novel *Devil in the North Woods* suggests there might have been**

LAKE LINDEN, Mich. (June 30, 2008) – You may have heard of the June 30, 1908, explosive event that took place over Tunguska in the remote interior of Siberia. But have you heard about the two-million-acre wildfire that incinerated that huge chunk of northeastern Michigan’s farm and timber land in October of 1908? A century later, can we speculate that there could have been a connection?

In the Prologue of the 2005 historical novel “Devil in the North Woods” author Walt Shiel suggests just that:

The Sky Splits Apart

On June 30, 1908, a 100,000-ton meteorite or comet plunged to Earth above the sparsely populated tundra of Siberia. Angled 30 degrees to the horizon, it ripped through the atmosphere from southeast to northwest at 50 times the speed of sound and exploded four miles above the ground with the force of a 40-megaton nuclear bomb. Ash and pulverized debris soared 40 miles high and spread around the world, causing brilliant sunsets and sunrises as far away as Western Europe, glowing night skies bright enough to read by over much of the Earth, and seismic and magnetic perturbations 2500 miles from the explosion’s epicenter.

A month later in North America, following an early wet spring, northern Michigan plunged into an extended drought that left the dense underbrush in the virgin forests dry, brittle, and flammable, perfect conditions for a rash of forest fires.

Was the extraterrestrial visitor connected to the Michigan drought and wildfires? We will never know for sure, but we do know that Michigan’s weather that fall took a sudden, unexpected shift.

On this 100th anniversary of the Tunguska event, we should remember that is the only event of its kind in human history for which we have recorded eyewitness accounts. As Don Yeomans, manager of the Near-Earth Object Office at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, says: "On average, a Tunguska-sized asteroid will enter Earth’s atmosphere once every 300 years."

And on this 100th anniversary of the Metz, Michigan, wildfire, we are all watching the wildfires raging through northern California. “Devil in the North Woods” tells the true story of the Metz fire and how the farmers, loggers, and merchants fought to survive without the benefits of advance warnings or modern firefighting equipment.

The Midwest Book Review said that Shiel’s book "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. Though [telling] the story of man vs. nature, its core is emotional and human-centered." And the Historical Novel Society noted that the "compassionate writing creates a community of bright, supportive, and determined people, whose characters develop and deepen as the fire grows."

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