



2006

Wildfire

Sarah Wanlass

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Morrison, Taylor. *Wildfire*. Illustrated by Taylor Morrison. Houghton Mifflin, 2006. ISBN 0618509003. \$17.00. 48 p.

Reviewer: Sarah Wanlass

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Picture books; Informational books;

Subject: Wildfires--Juvenile literature; Forest fires--Juvenile literature; Wildfires--United States--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

"Killer Fires Must Be Stopped!" Headlines such as these encourage people to categorize wildfires as bad. They burn acre upon acre of forest and homes as well; they release smoke into the air; they are expensive in money and manpower to fight. However, *Wildfire* brings to light the advantages as well as the dangers of wildfires. It describes in detail how wildfires help the ecosystem in a forest. In it, Morrison points out that explosive fire is most likely when fire is kept from an area for too long. Forests need fire to clean up the dead brush and debris that make it difficult for healthy trees and plants to grow. If humans do not keep fire at bay unnecessarily, forest fires are more likely to contain themselves and burn out when they have fulfilled their purpose.

Morrison discusses in depth the hard job of a firefighter: the trenches they must dig, the protection they must wear, and the work they must do. He also describes prescribed fire, a recent attempt to undo some of the damage humans have caused by halting forest fires over the past century. Vivid illustrations by the author compliment the text. Some paintings are full-page; others are contained in small boxes to show different aspects or stages of the subject matter. Readers will find the bibliography and glossary, located at the end of the book, helpful as they deepen their understanding. The writing is not too verbose; it grabs and maintains interest.