Discussion Questions for *The Big Burn* by Timothy Egan

(some questions taken or adapted from http://bestsellers.about.com/od/bookclubquestions/a/big_burn_q.htm)

1. Did the title, subtitle and cover accurately represent the book? Was the book what you expected?

2. Did you know anything about the time period before reading the book? Did you learn anything new?

3. What did you find most interesting about this story?

4. Had you ever heard of Gifford Pinchot before reading this book? If so, where and why?

5. What are your views on American conservation? Did this book change them?

6. Do you think a president like Teddy Roosevelt would be elected in today’s America? Why or why not?

7. Do you think *The Big Burn* saved America? Why or why not?

8. How did you find the pace of the book? Did the author’s method of unfolding the events make you feel you were living through the era?

9. Did you learn anything new about Theodore Roosevelt?

10. Does anyone have a personal story connected to the events or figures in this book?

11. One notable passage (pp. 148-149) reads: “The Italians had a saying: ‘I came to America because I heard the streets were paved with gold. When I got here, I found out three things. First, the streets weren’t paved with gold. Second, they weren’t paved at all. And third, I was expected to pave them.’” Were there any passages you took note of?

12. Does this book relate in any way to the current state of the world, international relations, the press, or celebrities?

13. Do you have unanswered questions? If the author were here, what would you ask him?

14. Are there any additional comments you would like to share?