Comparisons between fire control efforts and military operations are often made in books dealing with wildland fires. Pyne states early that he does not think such metaphors are appropriate or valid, but many times throughout the book he makes the same kinds of comparisons and uses the same kinds of metaphors.

For some readers, Stephen Pyne’s writing style and vocabulary may make Tending Fire more difficult than necessary to read. The writing style actually varies throughout the book, with some sections easily read and others requiring more effort. The reader can become lost in his long, compound sentences, requiring that some parts be reread to understand his point. I found Pyne’s book challenging to read.

Overall, Tending Fire is informative, and it brings to light ideas and perspectives dealing with wildland fires that I had not previously considered or encountered. Its good insights into fire are rewarding enough to outweigh the arduous reading.—Andy Eldred, Washington State University, Pullman, WA.