

The Caldor Wildfire, more than any other, fueled later recognition of the extreme fire dangers facing the Lake Tahoe region and the need for additional fire safety and evacuation planning.

The fire was allowed to burn up the American River canyon toward Lake Tahoe and when the burned area exceeded the area of Lake Tahoe the communities on Lake Tahoe's south shore in California and Nevada were evacuated. Few tourists were present due to all the smoke since weeks before, many residents had already left, and the evacuation was orderly but nonetheless it took many hours once evacuation orders were issued. In a worse case, a fast-moving wildfire on a busy summer holiday it is likely that tens of thousands could be incinerated, as computer simulations now support. In subsequent years, wildfire evacuation issues figured heavily into the other activist work, as it still does.

Several days following the evacuations the Caldor Fire raged out of control and across Echo Summit at the top of the canyon and Sierra crest. By some miracle of topography and wind the fire blew across the Christmas Valley canyon and southeast into the wildlands of Nevada, with the work of dedicated fire crews on the ground putting out falling embers and hot spots. By the grace of god and the heroic efforts of the fire crews in Lake Tahoe the South shore was saved from calamity.