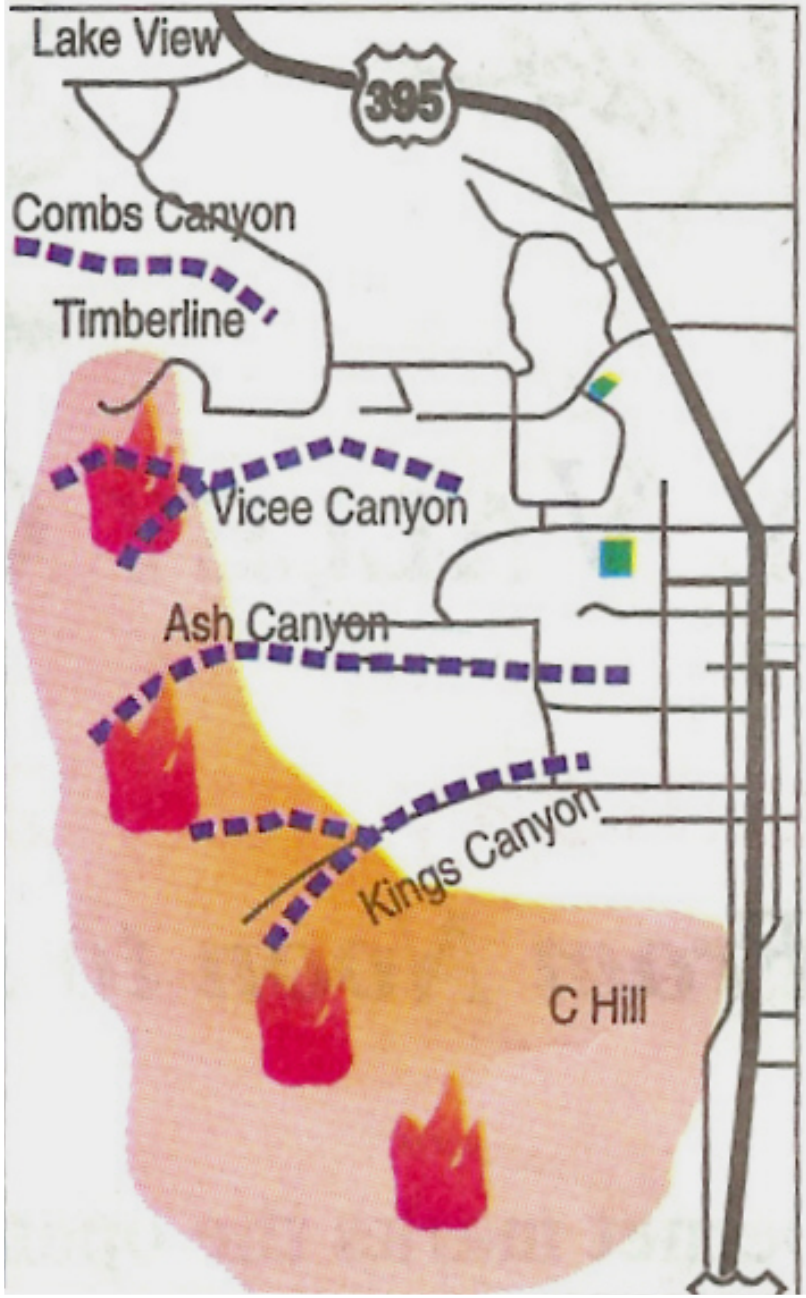
WATERFALL FIRE
IN CARSON CITY, NEVADA

JUNE 2004

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Map of the West side of CARSON CITY, Nevada (July 15, 2004)

The fire was spotted at about 3 AM on July 14, 2004 in Kings Canyon.

Then it started spreading around.

The fire crews were on the scene at 3.38 AM.



July 14, 2004, 6:25 AM:
A brush fire on the crest of a hill in Kings Canyon area



Applying fire retardant. Three planes in service.



A water dump from a chopper nails a spot fire



Heading back for a refill



7:30 AM: The fire has expanded down the hill



Two of five choppers in service all day



The fire is growing, but still a mile away.

(I tell myself that we have nothing to worry about as long as those houses on the hills are safe, because if those homes can be defended, ours will be no problem.)



Big P3 tanker coming out of the smoke on a retardant dump.
This one fills up at the airport overlooked by our new house, time after time.



The big P3



Two choppers in action



July 15, 2004, 8:00 AM: Trying to quench the fire before it jumps to the canyon other side



One more dump



Trying to keep up with the fire



The Sheriff gives the evacuation order



Small plane drops fire retardant



Flying low and fast



8:30AM: A big dump

on a growing fire



2000 gallon drop by the big bird

(The contractor gets paid $1 per gallon dropped)



One more fire retardant drop



On approach for a big dump by a fire tanker



Into the smoke cloud



On the mark!



11:20 AM:

A losing battle



12:30AM: The fire has grown, and is getting scary



Close to home; ours is on the right



Normally, a nice spot for a BBQ



Wind kicking up, endangering homes.

Dark smoke means hot fire, spreading fast (white is less worrisome)



Aerial drop to protect homes



Out of control



Worried but fascinated neighbors at their deck



Breaking out to the north along the hills



Wildfire racing across the hills.
Municipal water tanks in foreground



Can these homes be saved?



Terrified Bambi's mom





1:15 PM: Seemingly unstoppable…



The wind shifts toward our home



The flames have just rounded the hill, approaching toward us. They have already burned everything around behind this home.



The high wind if fanning and moving the fire and smoke straight at us.
We hear an evacuation order from a Sheriff,
cruising the neighborhood like the ice cream man.



Fire like a tornado.

Last view before driving away, with wedding album, photos, and several boozes of irreplaceable. The sky is dark from smoke before 2 PM on a cloudless day.



On the road: the wind is whipping the trees and the fire



A "Hotshot" waits for orders



Hotshots.

No wimps here.



Ready to roll!



Another bucket



The fire after jumping the road to the south



Hotshots pulling out. Who will defend our homes?



Worried neighbors protected against the smoke and dust



Mid-day sky near downtown Carson City
(no, the buildings are not falling, yet)



"Cactus Jack" salutes a blood-red sun



Looking north on US highway 395, toward the State Capitol. The highway will be closed for a time. The "refugee center" Ben fled to here happens to have the best selection of microbrews in town! Other refugees gathered here also to keep up with the news. These houses are only slightly inclining...



6:30 PM. The road back to our homes is closed



It seems calmed down, but crew after crew are going <u>IN</u>.
Crews are from states all over the West.



A Hotshot works to prevent re-ignition of the burnt hillsides.
Because power and utilities probably aren't restored, Ben now heads to Reno for the night to join Angela as refugees at friends of ours.



Next morning, on the highway back from Reno. The fire is still out of control. Will we have power? This highway is closed that afternoon (as we speak) stranding Angela in Reno on our Anniversary, but we are both grateful that our home is unscathed.



Still out of control north of our neighborhood. Approaching nice hillside neighborhoods that are evacuated that afternoon (as this is written).



Burnt our foreground (within 100 feet of our home) and active fire higher up



Thursday, July 15, 2004:
The next morning it is still burning up above



Amazingly, this house still stands, surrounded by entirely burnt landscape



The fire as viewed from the "new house" in Genoa



You can imagine the charred smoky smell. Scorched earth. The burn zone ended about 40 feet



The char line is visible above the left bank of the walking path



July 16, 2004: We are counting our blessings...

On July 17, 2004

only 50% of the fire area

has been contained…

Post Scriptum

Finally, on July 20 this Waterfall Fire Was Fully Contained.

Summary:

- **7600 Acres (3076 hectares) scorched**
- **1346 Firefighters involved**
- **37 Hand crews**
- **Ground support: 26 Fire engines, 2 Bulldozers, 2 Water tenders**
- **Air support: 10 Aircrafts**
  - **2 Air Tankers P3, drop up to 2,500 gallons**
  - **1 Air attack and lead plane**
  - **4 Single-engine Air Tankers, drop up to 800 gallons**
  - **5 Helicopters**

- **Injuries: 5 firefighters, 1 civilian**
- **Hundreds of people mandatory evacuated**
- **Losses: 15 homes, 25 outbuildings, 1 commercial building**
- **Vehicle loss: 8 destroyed, including 3 fire apparatus**
- **All Carson City west watershed destroyed**
- **Cost: $ 5 million**
- **Cause: Human caused, under investigation.**

Rehabilitation of the land will start on July 24, 2004…