

## Defensible Space and Fire Resistant Building Materials Saves Property

Calaveras County, CA – “When it looks like it’s snowing and its 90 degrees outside, that’s not a good thing,” recalled Darren Borgedalen of Mountain Ranch, a community in rural Calaveras County, California. The “snow” Borgedalen was referring to was actually ash from the Butte Fire that swept his property in September 2015. It burned through more than 70,000 acres, mostly in Calaveras County, damaging or destroying more than 1,000 homes.

On the afternoon of September 10th 2015, the Borgedalen’s could see the smoke in the distance and when Cal Fire drove up their road and told them they should evacuate, they knew it could get bad.

Two of the Borgedalen’s neighbors lost their properties to the wild- fire as it consumed the mountain they called home. “Those that cleared were saved”, he said, referring to the trails he had established as a defensible space around his property.

For years Borgedalen and his wife had maintained a defensible space around their property by keeping the underbrush cleared.

With the wildfire fast approaching he brought in his bulldozer and cleared the trail he had established in the previous years. Meanwhile, Mrs. Borgedalen began to clean up any problem areas surrounding the house, garage and workshop before the fire arrived.

Borgedalen had used fire resistant metal roofing and siding on his house, garage, and shop building, which withstood the extreme heat and the burning embers from the approaching wildfire. Borgedalen recalled that the metal roofing cost about the same as standard Class A-rated shingles, but the installation was about one-third less because the larger metal sheets required fewer man-hours than installing an equivalent area of shingles.

There are many sources that provide information about protection from wildfires; [www.fema.gov/wildfire](http://www.fema.gov/wildfire), [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org), and [www.readyforwildfire.org](http://www.readyforwildfire.org). Using fire safe methods and materials does work and the Borgedalens are proof of this.



Fire break trails in the woods



Metal sided and roofed home