



Location and Construction Details Save a Paradise Home

Butte County, CA Three generations of the Rogers family escaped extreme danger when, on November 8, 2018, the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history brought an urban firestorm to the Town of Paradise. In the early morning, as a huge cloud of smoke and wind-driven blazing embers appeared from the east, John and Sandra Rogers threw a few items in their vehicles to escape through smoke, flame and chaotic traffic. As John Rogers described the experience, "It was almost totally black, like midnight, and everyone was trying to make their way out of town. It took an hour to drive the first mile to the Holiday Market, then another two



Corner lot location and wide streets provided some protection

hours to get to the edge of town."

The three Rogers families, whose homes were scattered in different parts of the town, were desperate to reach each other and make sure that everyone was safe. Fortunately, they all escaped the fire and were able to re-unite later in the afternoon at a safe distance from Paradise. That evening, however, they had to evacuate again as the Camp Fire continued to grow. The blaze was not contained for another 17 days.

Back in Paradise, while the fire destroyed 18,804 structures, countless vehicles, trees and almost anything that could burn or melt, the home of

John and Sandra Rogers was spared. They received the news about a week after their escape, when a utility worker noticed a partially-blistered phone number on John's electrical contracting work truck. He called John to inform him that the house and truck had survived with minimal damage. Sadly, the homes of their children and four grandchildren were lost.

While the exact reasons for the survival of the Rogers house can never be known, likely its location on a corner lot and adequate distance from neighboring structures were important factors. Three surrounding streets and a



Homeowner John Rogers returned to undamaged Paradise home

gravel side driveway provided a perimeter of safety, even though all the neighboring houses were reduced to ashes. Several other homes on corner lots also remained standing.

Many construction details may also have helped to protect the Rogers' home from being consumed by the fire. John and Sandra had just completed a year-long remodel of the interior and exterior of their home. A fire-resistant roof; new siding; double-pane, low-e windows; and an extremely tight building envelope certainly made a difference. In a rush to complete everything before an impending sale, John had inadvertently added some soffit boards that effectively blocked the eave vents. This mistake was fortunate, as no embers were able to enter the attic during the fire.

When they finally came home the Rogers family was surprised to find that the tight construction had even protected the interior and furnishings from smoke damage. The only odor was from spoiled food in the refrigerator. While fire destroyed 95 percent of the town, they were able to move back to their beautiful, comfortable home, and are eager for the return of their neighbors and the recovery of their community.



Setback from ignition sources plus new roof, windows and siding helped protect this Paradise home

More information:

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
www.caloes.gov

Town of Paradise
www.townofparadise.com

Butte County Government
www.buttecounty.net/

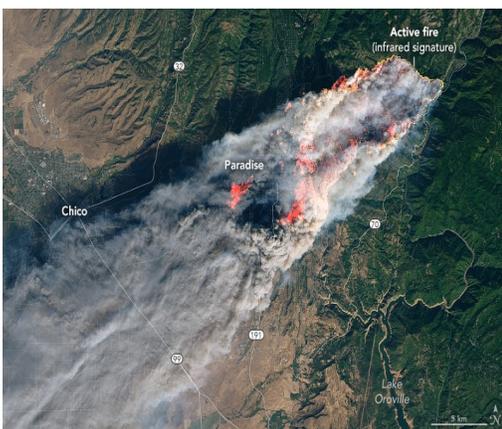
National Fire Protection Association / Firewise USA
www.nfpa.org

Project Wildfire
www.projectwildfire.org

Publication # 468 At home in the Woods—Lessons Learned in the Wildland /Urban Interface https://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/woods/athome_woods.pdf

Home Builder's Guide to Construction in Wildfire Zones
<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/15962>

The National Flood Insurance Program
<https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program>



Camp Fire satellite image