

Replacing a roof in the age of sustainability

The Bethlehem Gadfly Environment January 13, 2021

 *Latest in a series of posts on the environment* 

Alison Steele is a Liberty High School alum who traveled the world looking for adventure and purpose before finding it in Pittsburgh. She has made it her mission to help others make more informed decisions around how they interact with people and the planet.

Gadfly has often called your attention to Steel Town native Steele's blog. He is particularly struck here by the kind of and amount of research and thinking relative to a decision that in the "old days" of his less-than-admirable energy unconsciousness he would have made with the snap of his fingers.

“My Cabin Doesn't Leak When It Doesn't Rain, Part 1

Cost analysis

In spring 2018 some shingles blew off of our roof in a bad storm, and we got a leak that made its way through our attic and down to our living room. This was not too surprising, given that our asphalt roof (generally considered to have a 20-year life) was at least 20 years old when Christian bought the house 10 years prior. He had a stack of extra shingles that came from the last roof replacement and had been using them to patch and perform roof maintenance as needed, but that supply finally ran out. Long story short, it was time to shop for a new roof, and I began exploring options.

At the time, I wrote a blog post based on some cursory research of roofing materials and investment value of asphalt, metal, and the new Tesla solar shingles.[\[1\]](#) Unfortunately, much in the tradition “The Arkansas Traveler,” [\[2\]](#) a song that was sung to me as a child (and clearly had an impact), “my cabin doesn’t leak when it doesn’t rain,” meaning Christian’s patch let us put that decision on the back burner while I did some more research. Nearly two years later, that research still hadn’t happened, and it was time for the house to remind us of our responsibility... on Christmas Eve.

We spent the holiday emptying pans of water in the attic and calling roofing contractors for quotes. I spent the week between Christmas and New Year’s diving into materials research, product warranties, and recycling options to build on my original blog post, which was only focused on financial investment, not product lifecycle. . . .

continue on Alison’s blog

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