

Off-Grid vs. Grid-Tied

Discovering a True Long-Term Solar Solution

In 2003, Suncatcher Solar founder Angelika Ortlepp followed a long time dream to build a solar home. On land near Saskatoon, Canada, she and her husband designed and built a passive solar home with an off-grid solar and wind power systems.



The couple chose off-grid because they couldn't find reliable programs to feed power back to the utility and there were no incentives for installing grid-tied solar. In 2003 in Saskatchewan, the solar industry was still young and solar was still expensive.

In 2016, the industry had matured, and after 13 years of off-grid living, they converted to grid-tied solar.

"Our batteries were full by 10:00 A.M. and with nowhere else to store excess sun power," explains Angelika. "If only we could store that for the winter! A grid-tied system on the net metering program makes that possible."

She continues: "Now, instead of starting the generator when there is not enough solar power, the utility company provides backup. It's much less expensive and a lot more convenient." Finally, the couple were able to replace propane appliances with electric, since the energy usage is offset by solar.

For Anjelika, moving to off-grid was the best long term solution. But a long term solution was not just a personal choice for Anjelika; this is what her company, Suncatcher Solar & Electric, is known for. In fact, this is truly the Suncatcher brand: providing durable, long term solar solutions for clients.

The off-grid solar house located just outside of Saskatoon.

The SolaTrim® Solution

In providing these solutions, Suncatcher ran into a problem. If they were truly offering long term solutions, their clients needed more than durable panels—they also needed protection against weather and pests. Pigeons and squirrels love nesting under roof-mounted solar arrays and can do serious damage to wires linking inverters to panels. These damaged wires then become fire hazards. These hazards are serious enough that it is now code that all systems using string inverters must have protection around the panels to keep pests out. Finally, detritus from these nests cause damage that lead to roof rot.



The
SolaTrim
Solar System
Protection
Solution

The SolaTrim® Solar System Protection Solution employs a beautifully designed aluminum trim custom to SolaTrim. The Protection Solution has several advantages over simple wire mesh. It is a strong product made of lightweight aluminum with an aviation grade adhesive tape that seals it securely to solar panels. It is extreme temperature tested and comes with a 25-year warranty.

The SolaTrim® Solar System Protection Solution was the perfect match for Suncatcher Solar. Now, they can offer their clients a true long term solar solution.

“We like that it is designed to be a permanent solution that will last the lifetime of the panels.

We also chose this solution because it didn’t detract from the beauty of the home. SolaTrim adds curb appeal by providing a clean and elegant finish to the array.”

**ANGELIKA ORTLEPP, FOUNDER
SUNCATCHER SOLAR & ELECTRIC**