

# GYRO-TRAC NEWS

## VOLUSIA COUNTY USES NEW GYRO-TRAC® TO HELP REDUCE WILDFIRE THREAT

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Even with all the recent rain, and rain from the hurricanes last year, it's not too early to start thinking about wildfires. As part of Volusia County Fire Services commitment to wildfire prevention, members of the Fire Walker Team have a new tool to help them reduce the threat and devastation of wildfires.

The Gyro-Trac®, a heavy-duty brush cutter that can clear a path six-feet wide, is being used throughout Volusia County to help reduce the vegetation fuel that feeds wildfires on vacant tracts of land and near residential properties.

"For wildfire prevention, one of our typical methods for mitigation is controlled, prescribed burns in areas we identified," said Jamey Burnsed, coordinator for the county's wildfire mitigation, training and response program. "With the Gyro-Trac®, we can work year-round, independent of weather conditions, and closer to certain residential areas."

According to Burnsed, with Gyro-Trac® Fire Services personnel can clear an acre in under three hours, depending on the height and density of the vegetation. In some instances, the cutter can clear an acre in an hour.

"The Gyro-Trac® operates on a rubber tracks versus tires, so it is more environmentally friendly," he said. "And, the goal is to clear the vegetation that grows from the ground, leaving the trees. This helps to fight a wildfire by keeping the fire closer to the ground, hopefully making it easier to manage."

The machine was purchased in 2004 and will be used 3 - 4 days a week in unincorporated areas of Volusia County and cities that request the machine. It recently has been used on projects in Ormond Beach and soon will be employed on a new project in Deltona.

"The Department of Forestry has a couple of Gyro-Tracs®, but they cover multiple counties in a regional area," Burnsed said. "We are the only fire department in Florida that owns one of these. It really adds to our commitment to be in front of wildfire response, prevention and mitigation efforts."