

GYRO-TRAC NEWS

Machine Saving Money on Beetle Tree Removal Effort

January 2005

Mark Nielsen, Prince George Citizen

A piece of machinery designed to take care of the mess left behind when beetle-infested pine trees are taken down has left a good first impression with the city.

Although it can't be used everywhere, the Gyro-Trac mulches branches, leaves and even stumps.

"Instead of having to handle the debris a bunch of times, you just leave it on the ground and this thing comes along and grinds it up, mixes it with a top layer of soil and leaves a nice planting medium," said Mark Fercho, the city's environmental services manager. "And, as a bonus, it grinds off the top of the stumps too, which is something we usually have to do as an extra contract item, so it has the potential to really reduce the cost of our program and do a nice job."

The machine is commonly used when cutting seismic lines in northern Alberta and was brought in by TDB Consultants, which was awarded the contract to remove trees from city land.

It was first used at the Pine Valley golf course on Tuesday, where 1,345 trees are being removed leaving about 800 behind.

Fercho said it will also be used in areas where stands of pine must be taken out.

"Where we can maintain some small trees and undergrowth, we're not going to use it, but places where you've got just a stand of mature trees this thing can go in and have your site prepared for less than it would to do the tree removal and the debris disposal," he said.

It will be some time before Fercho knows how much money the Gyro-Trac will save, but so far it looks to be about three times faster than manual methods for getting rid of debris.