

EXCERPT FROM

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GYRO-TRAC CHEWS FIREBREAKS FOR LAKE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY IN FLORIDA

AUGUST 17 -- LEESBURG, FL: The Gyro-Trac smashes like a tank through the dense hammock and brambles of Fern Prairie Preserve, devouring everything in its path. The firebreak it cuts is covered in mulch — just what the Lake County Water Authority ordered. The state Division of Forestry owns the Gyro-Trac machine, and according to the [Leesburg Daily Commercial](#), the DOF is working with the Water Authority to build firebreaks that will not only help protect nearby homes but also open up the land for future park management.

"This is primarily for wildfire protection and to clean up the area," said Patricia Burgos with the Water Authority. Their land is primarily forested uplands and wetlands; the hammock and pine forest is overgrown, and dozens of homes along the boundary have grown into a fire-prone interface. Some homes are just 10 feet away from the fenceline bordering the property - too close for DOF comfort.

"When housing comes closer than a quarter of a mile it becomes a concern," said DOF Forest Ranger and Gyro-Trac driver Steve Bennett. "Creating defensible space is our objective. It also gives us access to clean up the property and allow for prescribed burns." The Gyro-Trac, used throughout the state, provides an environmentally friendly way of "paving" firebreaks with mulch. "An ordinary bulldozer plow compacts the soil and leaves a sandy canal in its wake," said Pat Gurnee, senior forest ranger for the DOF. Gurnee says the Gyro-Trac mulches everything in its path, and can work on soil that would bog down a bulldozer. More information's online from gyrotrac.com and the Florida [Division of Forestry](#).