

ALL-TERRAIN PUMPER HELPS IN WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING



Technical Release

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Fire: fire suppression

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INTRODUCTION:

Wildfires threaten the safety of communities, destroy the investments of forest land owners, and significantly alter wildlife habitat. Tractors, hand crews, and aerial patrol are all effective means of frontline attack. The Centaur All-Terrain Pumper serves a valuable role in complementing traditional firefighting methods.



Fig. 1: The Centaur has a rear platform which offers versatility in the field.

GENERAL FEATURES:

The Centaur is an amphibious, eight-wheel vehicle manufactured by Ontario Drive and Gear Corp (ODG). Unlike the lighter duty Argo, also manufactured by ODG, this model carries a payload of 1,400 to 1,500 pounds. The base vehicle provides a rear platform, allowing the unit to be modified for a variety of uses. MeadWestvaco employees engineered the company Centaur for wildfire fighting. The vehicle is equipped with a pumper unit consisting of a 100-gallon aluminum tank, pump and engine, 100 feet of one-inch hose, and a variety of nozzles. To aid its use in forested areas, a brush guard and winch are mounted on the front. Safety and communications devices such as a radio, fire extinguisher, and gel blanket are located in the cab. The unit can be easily loaded onto a trailer and pulled behind a pick-up truck.

OPERATION:

The MeadWestvaco Forestry Division operations

in South Carolina have found the Centaur useful in a number of firefighting scenarios. While it is not designed to replace a tractor, its all-terrain abilities and water-carrying capacity allow it to navigate plowed lines to monitor the fire or extinguish small spot-overs. As with traditional pumper units, the use of a foaming agent and foam nozzle will extend the capacity of the 100-gallon tank. It is a durable unit which can maneuver across bushes and small saplings. During prescribed burning operations, it can be used to monitor fire lines or to string fire.

COST:

The Centaur comes in both gas and turbo diesel models. The gas-powered model has a 3-cylinder, 31-horsepower engine and retails for \$28,595. The turbo diesel model retails for \$30,195. ODG offers a commercial grade model under the Argo trade name which retails for \$14,399; however, the Argo vehicle carries a lower payload than the Centaur. The fire fighting modifications cost approximately \$3,000. To find a Centaur dealer near you, visit www.argoatv.com. *Prices may change without notice.*

APPLICATION:

The Centaur should be considered an accessory to complement traditional methods of fire fighting. The unit has one main advantage. It can reach



Fig. 2: MeadWestvaco employees modified the company Centaur for use in fighting wildfires.

areas inaccessible by other vehicles, with 100 gallons of water on board.

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Fig. 3: The unit can be used to extinguish small spot-overs.