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Thrush delivers first 510G Switchbacks to Georgia's State Forestry Commission
Revolutionary firefighting aircraft will provide faster and more agile fire detection and response capabilities to protect state's woodland resources.

(Albany, GA) Today, as firefighters in the air and on the ground continue to battle devastating wildfires in Southern California, the State of Georgia's Forestry Commission took a major step forward in helping prevent similar outbreaks in their home state by taking delivery of the industry's newest firefighting aircraft – the Thrush 510G Switchback.

Powered by a GE H80 turbine engine, the Switchback is designated as a Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) aircraft and will be used by the Georgia Forestry Commission for fire detection, rapid response firefighting and training. Thanks to its size and maneuverability, the 510G Switchback has the ability to quickly deliver 500 gallons of water, retardant or fire suppressant with pinpoint accuracy in tight environments. In addition, the Switchback has the ability to switch from agricultural spray duties to firefighting capabilities in a matter of minutes thanks to its unique fire gate delivery system.

Georgia experiences an average of some 4,000 wildfires annually, which typically damage roughly 35,000 acres of forested land. With wood being one of the state's leading commodities, wildfires have the possibility of causing a significant impact on the state's economy as well as its expansive forest resources. The Georgia Forestry Commission is responsible for the management and protection of those resources, and its aerial attack capabilities play a major role in both fire prevention and suppression.

"We're extremely proud to be adding the Switchback to our aerial firefighting fleet," said Georgia Forestry Commission's director, Chuck Williams. "It boasts many advantages for our firefighting efforts and heralds an exciting new chapter in our commitment to protect and conserve the more than 24 million acres of timberland across our state. You'll see these aircraft deployed not just for rapid fire suppression – but also in the very important role of rapid fire detection, which can sometimes make all the difference in being able to contain a wildfire, versus having it become uncontrollable."



The two Switchbacks being delivered today both feature advanced avionics for navigation and situational awareness, as well as to provide the pilots with numerous options for delivery of materials when making a firefighting drop. Thanks to its power and agility, the 510G Switchback can make a drop from as low as 80 feet and accurately deliver a 500 gallon salvo in less than two seconds. They also feature dual cockpit and dual control systems which enable them to serve in a training role for GFC pilots as well.

“This is a significant day for all of us here at Thrush,” said Payne Hughes, president and CEO of Thrush Aircraft. “Not only are we delivering our first 510G Switchbacks, but we also have the privilege of watching them go to work right here in our home state,” he continued. “We designed and built this airplane to help and protect others from the ravages of wildfires – and it’s an honor to know they will now be in Georgia skies doing just that.”

Caption for attached photo – The Georgia Forestry Commission has taken delivery of two new Thrush 510G Switchback firefighting aircraft, which will be used for fire detection and suppression across the state’s more than 24 million acres of forested land.

About Thrush Aircraft Company

Headquartered in Albany, Georgia, Thrush Aircraft manufactures a full range of aerial application aircraft used in agriculture, forestry and firefighting roles worldwide. Founded in 2003, Thrush is well-known for building the most durable aircraft in the aerial application industry, as well as the best flying – from both pilot and operator perspectives. All Thrush models provide superb visibility, light control response, and a high degree of maneuverability and speed, along with superior efficiency and low direct operating costs. Today there are more than 2,400 Thrush aircraft operating in some 80 countries around the world.

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