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Thrush 510G Switchback Firefighter Wins FAA Certification

Revolutionary firefighting aircraft will provide ag pilots with wildfire attack capability.

(Albany, GA) Hurricane Michael did its best to alter the landscape in South Georgia earlier this month – but today, things are decidedly brighter here as the Federal Aviation Administration has just granted full certification to the industry’s newest firefighting aircraft, the Thrush 510G Switchback.

The Switchback is designated as a Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) aircraft. Thanks to its size, speed and maneuverability, it has the ability to deliver 500 gallons of water, retardant or fire suppressant with pinpoint accuracy – all while operating in tight environments. What makes the Switchback incredibly unique, however, is the aircraft’s ability to switch from agricultural spray duties to firefighting capabilities in a matter of minutes – thanks to its unique fire gate delivery system built by Transland.

When in firefighting mode, Transland’s gatebox allows the Switchback to deliver a full 500-gallon salvo drop in less than two seconds while providing an excellent, narrow drop pattern for an effective fire line. Combined with the superb visibility, light control response and high degree of maneuverability that are hallmarks of every Thrush – the Switchback provides SEAT pilots nationwide with the quickest, most cost-effective initial attack platform in the battle against wildfires.

And, within minutes, the Switchback can convert back to agricultural spray operations, allowing operators to keep the aircraft working and generating revenue, both in and out of fire season – unlike other firefighting-only aircraft.

In addition, the Thrush 510G is available in both single and dual cockpit-dual control configurations, allowing operators even greater mission flexibility – from spray operations, to firefighting, to training and observation.

The first two 510G Switchbacks have been delivered to the Georgia Forestry Commission where they are being put into service for fire detection, rapid response firefighting and training. Both aircraft 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.



Another key capability of the 510G Switchback is its ability to land on unimproved surfaces closer to a wildfire. This allows the aircraft to reload and be back in the air over a fire in a matter of minutes, rather than the much longer turnaround time required by larger aircraft. Rapid response suppression is a critical tool for frontline fire control, as is rapid fire detection, which can sometimes make all the difference in being able to contain a wildfire, versus having it become uncontrollable.

Thanks to its flexibility, its revolutionary new gatebox, and its proven durability, the Thrush 510G Switchback is the first aircraft that excels in both fire detection and suppression – as well as in its mission as a highly capable aerial application aircraft for the agricultural industry.

Caption for attached photo

The Thrush 510G Switchback has been granted full certification by the FAA. In a matter of minutes, the Switchback can convert from agricultural spray operations to highly capable firefighter – with the ability to precisely deliver some 500 gallons of water or fire suppressant in less than two seconds.

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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