WRECKAGE AND IMPACT

The Safety Board investigator-in-charge performed an on-scene wreckage documentation and initial examination on February 11, 2013, the day following the accident.

The accident site was located on a movie ranch, with the debris stretching over 110 feet from the first impact marking (left toe skid) to the farthest debris found (portion of the tail rotor); the main wreckage was situated near the end of the debris path. In character, the basin and surrounding area was comprised of dirt and brush typical of the Southern California desert. The global positioning satellite (GPS) coordinates for the main wreckage were approximately 34 degrees 25 minutes 56 seconds north latitude and 118 degrees 14 minutes 36 seconds west longitude, at an elevation of about 2,415 feet mean sea level (msl). All pieces of the helicopter were found at the wreckage site with the exception of the two of the doors, which were removed before the flight for the purpose of filming.

Earlier in the day, the helicopter departed from Van Nuys, California. Where the pilot was based, which was located 18 nautical miles (nm) from the main wreckage on a heading of 042-degrees.

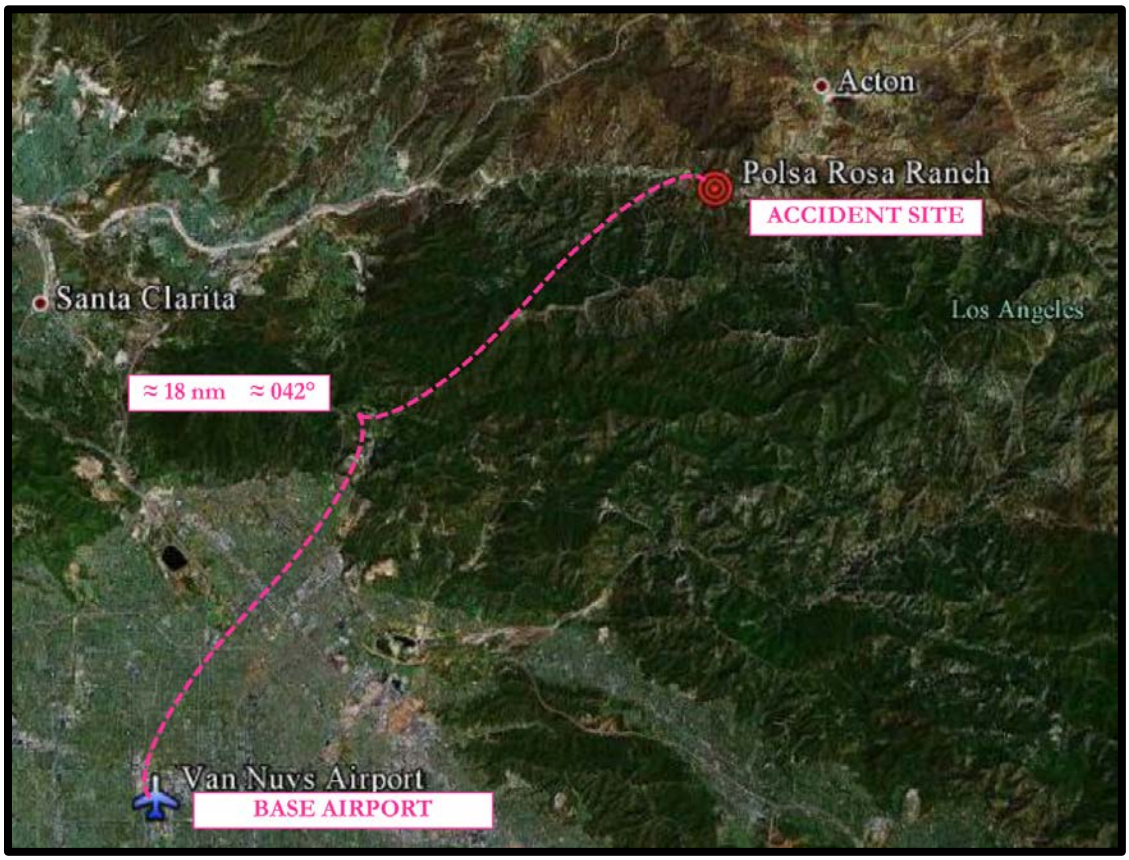

Figure 1: Distance from base airport to accident site.

The main wreckage came to rest at the base of a hill in a ravine that contained dry creek beds and dirt roads. The landing zone (LZ) was about 1,500 ft from the accident site on a heading of about 340 degrees. The production crew that was filming was positioned on the plateau on top of the hillside in between the accident site and the LZ. The location that the helicopter was destined and where a bag was to be dropped for filming purposes, was located just up the hill from the main wreckage. From that vantage point, the film crew planned on capturing video of the bag dropping out of the helicopter over the drop zone.

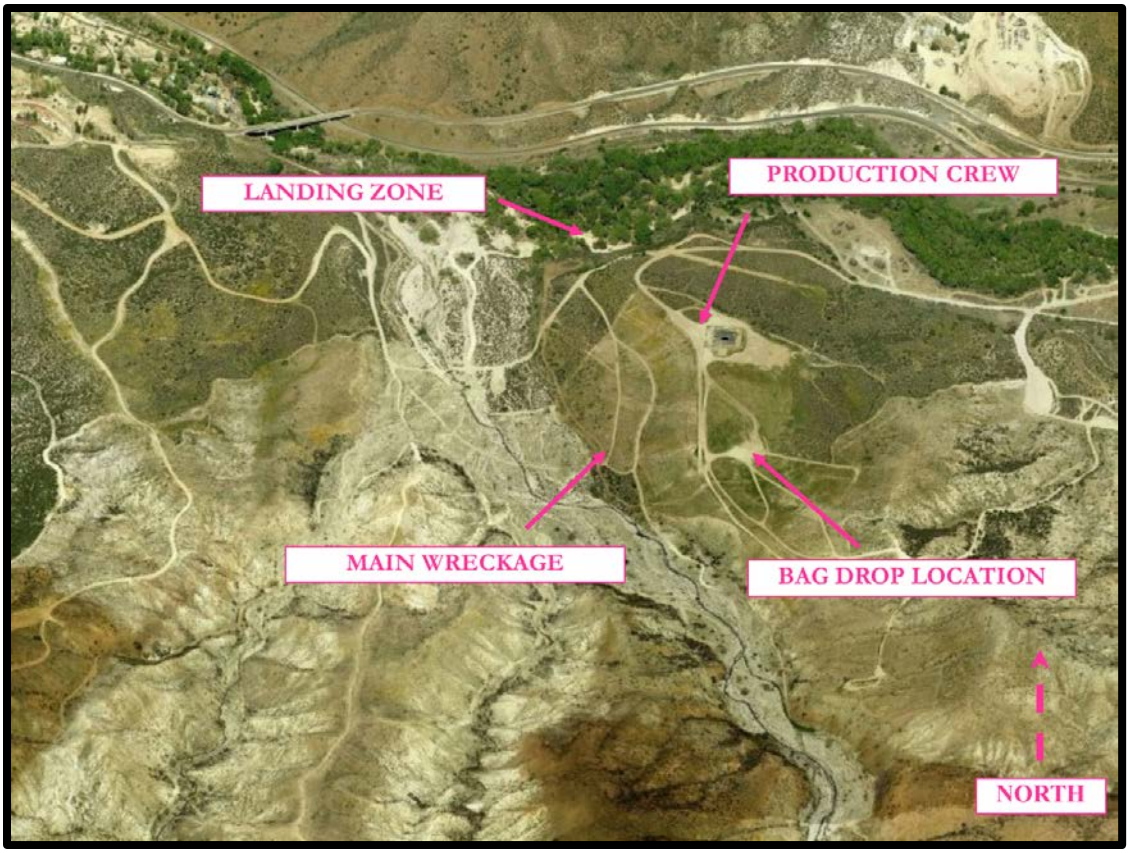

Figure 2: Aerial depiction of accident site with reference to the landing zone.

The westerly facing hillside where the filming was to transpire was about 325 ft high which started from the lower basin where the accident occurred to the plateau. This equated to about 85 ft in elevation.

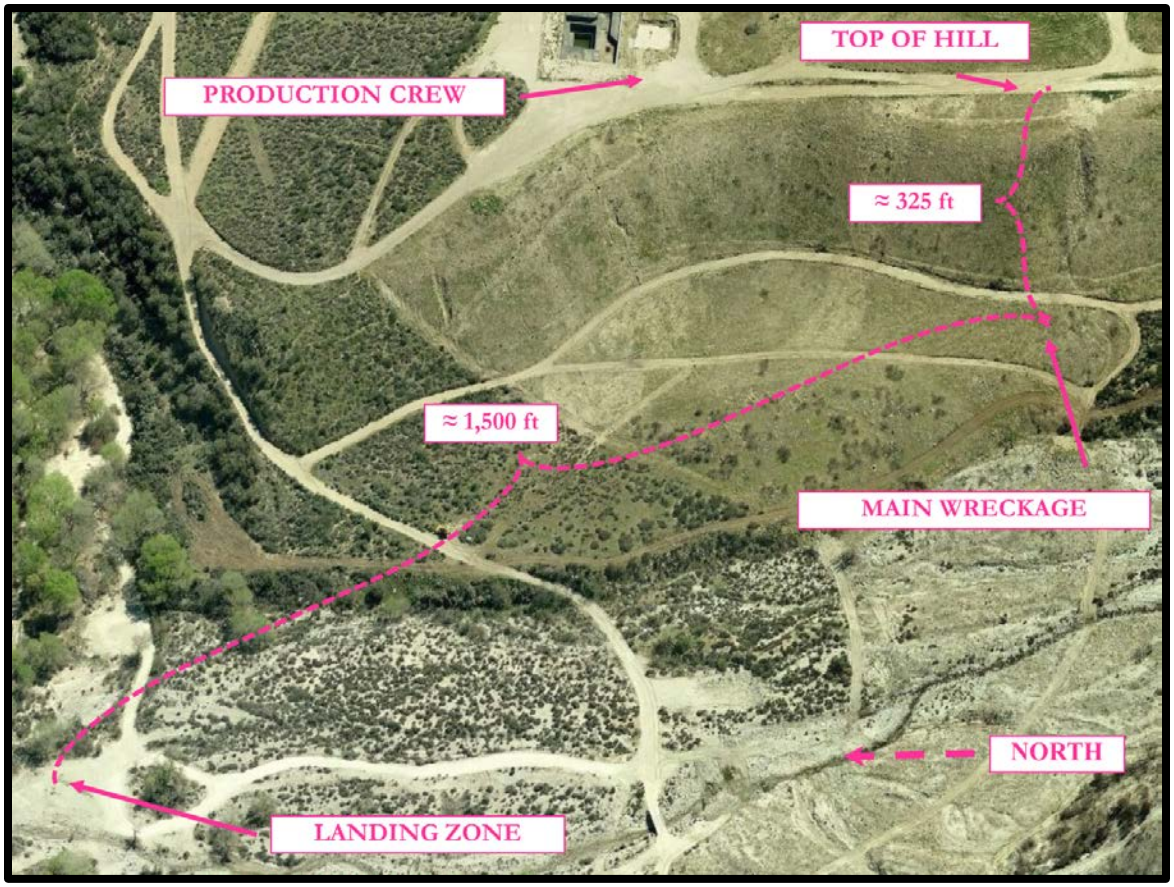

Figure 3: Aerial depiction of accident site with reference to the landing zone and hillside.

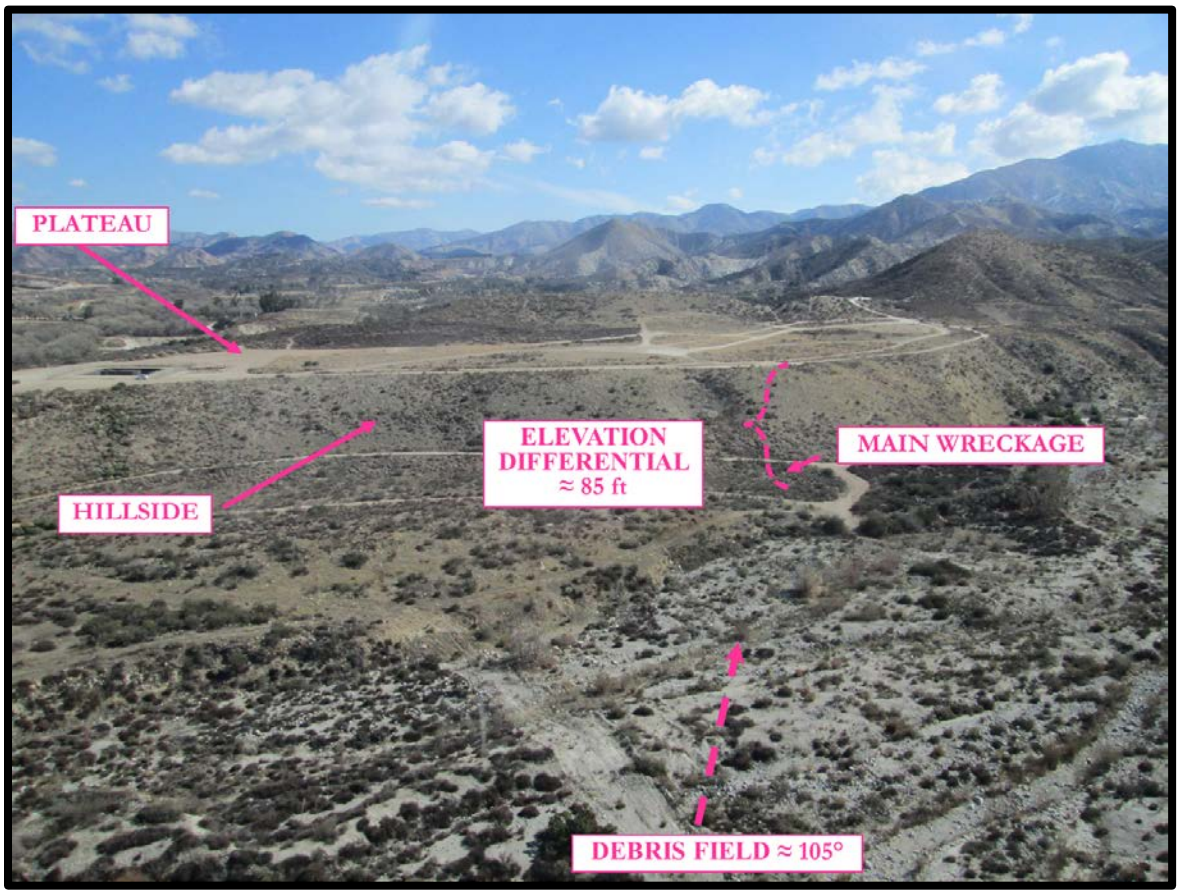

Figure 4: Depiction of the hillside and plateau.

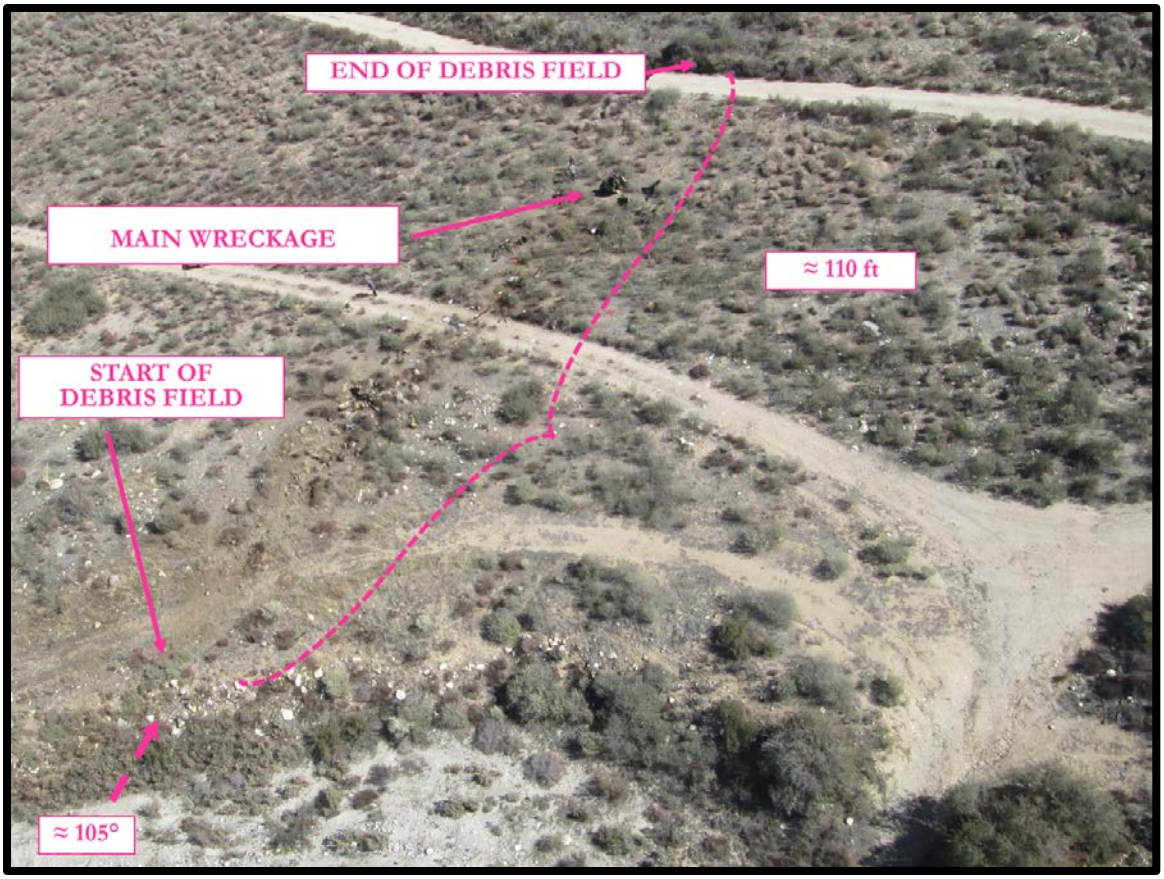

Figure 5: Aerial of the wreckage debris field.

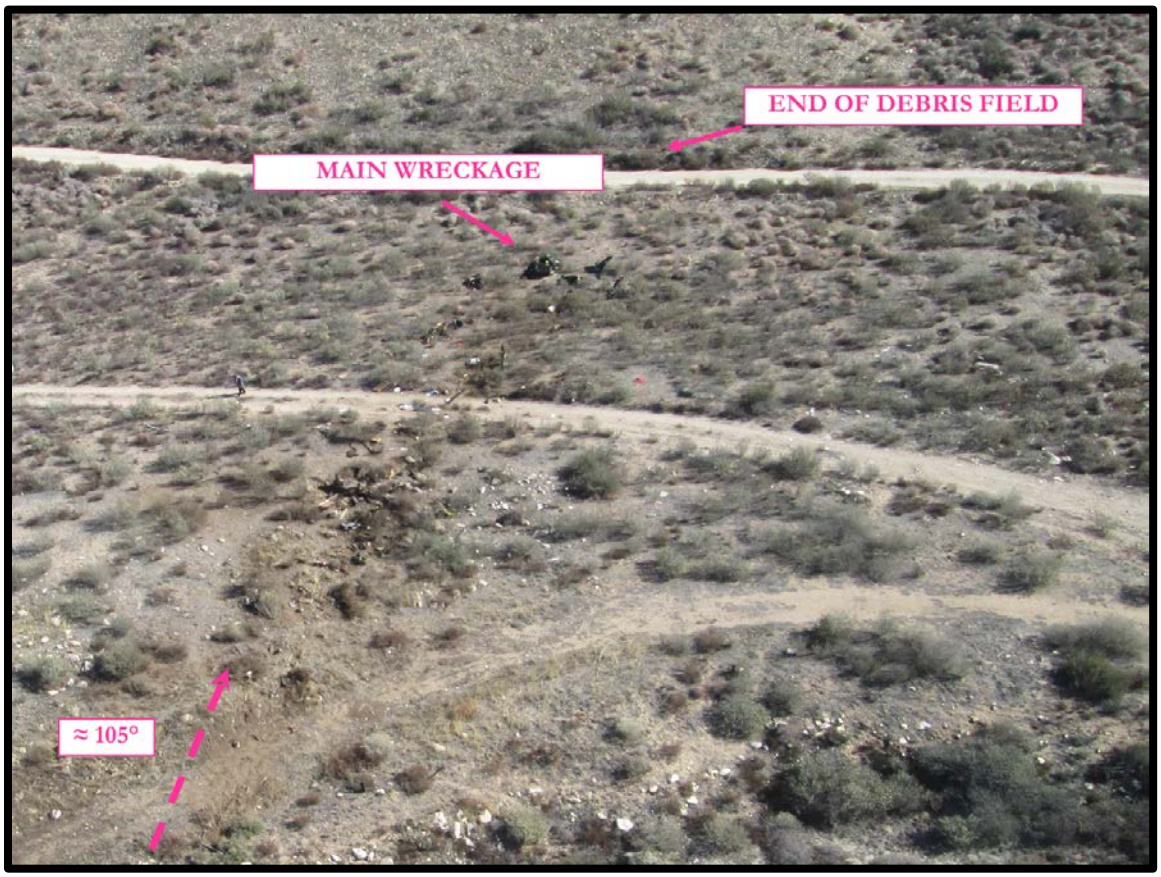

Figure 6: The wreckage from initial impact to end of the debris field.