



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Benson, Minnesota	Accident Number:	CEN23LA311
Date & Time:	July 14, 2023, 16:30 Local	Registration:	N22FK
Aircraft:	AIR TRACTOR INC AT-802	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Low altitude operation/event	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot reported that on the afternoon of the aerial application flight, the visibility was degrading due to smoke from nearby wildfires. Upon arrival at the target field, he circled twice to study the powerlines and obstacles, where he observed two distantly spaced power poles, and mistakenly thought they were termination points of a powerline. During the low-level aerial application pass, the airplane subsequently impacted a powerline as he flew between the power poles. The pilot returned to the airport and landed without incident. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the right aileron. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to adequately survey a field for obstructions prior to a low-level aerial application pass, which resulted in an impact with a powerline. Contributing to the accident was the degraded visibility due to the smoke in the area.

Findings

Environmental issues	Haze/smoke - Effect on personnel
Personnel issues	Flight planning/navigation - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Loss of visual reference
Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Low altitude operation/event (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	38, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 19, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	May 2, 2022
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 7000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1704.9 hours (Total, this make and model), 6726.5 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 200 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 105.9 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	AIR TRACTOR INC	Registration:	N22FK
Model/Series:	AT-802	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	2022	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	802-0965
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 28, 2023 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	16000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	88.8 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo prop
Airframe Total Time:	486.2 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Pratt & Whitney
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	PT6-67AG
Registered Owner:	Fast Ag Air LLC	Rated Power:	1350 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Agricultural aircraft (137)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KMVE,1034 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	11 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	16:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	222°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	13 knots / 16 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	320°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.76 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	29°C / 15°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Benson, MN (KBBB)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Benson, MN (KBBB)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	16:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Benson Municipal Airport KBBB	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	1039 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Used:	14/32	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4000 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Unknown

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	45.10089,-95.542383(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Galbraith, Damian
Additional Participating Persons:	Gregory Thurston; FAA; Minneapolis, MN
Original Publish Date:	October 17, 2023
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192646

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).