

Massachusetts State Police Airwing takes to the sky to conduct training fighting wildfires

Throughout the month of April, the Massachusetts State Police Air Wing partnered with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to conduct training for 'Bambi Bucket' wildfire fighting.

A 'Bambi Bucket' is a large container suspended under the State Police Aircraft which can pick up water to be dropped on fires in remote areas. When conventional wildfire fighting techniques such as ground apparatus and crews on foot are not capable of reaching the fire, aerial methods become invaluable. The 'Bambi Bucket' holds 85 gallons of water and can quickly be deployed utilizing a pond, or a temporary pool called a "Pumpkin" filled from a hydrant or public water source.

Air Wing Troopers trained at Westover Airport in Chicopee to familiarize themselves with the differing characteristics of their aircraft while carrying the Bambi Bucket. The craft must be stripped of all unnecessary weight to accommodate the more than 700 lbs of water the bucket can hold. This heavy weight suspended under the craft during flight can act as a pendulum and can create a dangerous situation if not properly controlled. When the additional factors of low level or confined flight; close proximity to trees; powerlines; and smoke can create demanding flying conditions for crews.

The continuing training that MSP Air Wing Troopers undertake mitigate the risks involved in this vital partnership between the MSP and DCR. The fighting of fires, and preservation of

varying types of land and terrain throughout the Commonwealth is something the MSP Airwing takes great pride in.

As the air crews of the State Police hone their skills, we remind people to obey local laws regarding open fires, including campfires; carefully dispose of hot charcoal; drown all fires with water; and carefully extinguish smoking materials.

Find more information at <https://www.mass.gov/.../forest-fire-control-prevention>.

Watch the MSP Air Wing in Action with the Bambi Bucket!

All photos by the Massachusetts State Police:

