



Ground Operation Personnel Interview

Peter Wentz
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: October 18, 2019
Person Contacted: Forrest Kaufman
Contact # [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20FA012

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

According to Mr. Kaufman, the aerial spray team consisted of the pilot who operated the helicopter and two ground operation personnel (GOP) that operated the mobile truck. The GOP provide support to fuel the helicopter and replenish chemicals throughout the day. On the day of the accident Mr. Kaufman (lead GOP) stated that the pilot performed a preflight inspection of the helicopter about 0745 for a day of aerial application, with no anomalies noted. The team had sprayed numerous applications in the local area that morning, then relocated to the accident field. The truck had been relocated to the northwest corner of the field to be sprayed and waited for the helicopter to approach and land. He stated the helicopter approached from the north heading south and over flew the field before landing and refilling the chemical reservoir. Then through hand signals he dispatched the helicopter for about the 22nd aerial application of the day. He stated the pilot departed to the north and made a left-hand turn to a southerly heading, then tracked south on the west side of the field. Mr. Kaufman had dispatched the helicopter while another GOP had unhooked the supply trailer and was departing the area. He stated hearing a "pop" of the wire and turned around to witness the helicopter travel about 30 yards before impacting terrain. He ran toward the crash site which measured about 545 feet to the southeast and called the other GOP to return to the field. He approached the helicopter and noticed the pilot was unconscious, while checking his pulse he noticed the pilot's arm was trapped under the helicopter. He stated the helicopter engine was on fire, so he ran back to the fuel truck to retrieve a fire extinguisher, then returned to the accident site and extinguished the fire. He checked the pilot's pulse a second time, then pulled all the collared circuit breakers and disconnected the battery. The other GOP had returned to the field and call 911, then he ran towards the road to assist EMS personnel with the location of the accident site. The figure below shows the accident site, the location of the fuel truck, witnesses location and powerlines.

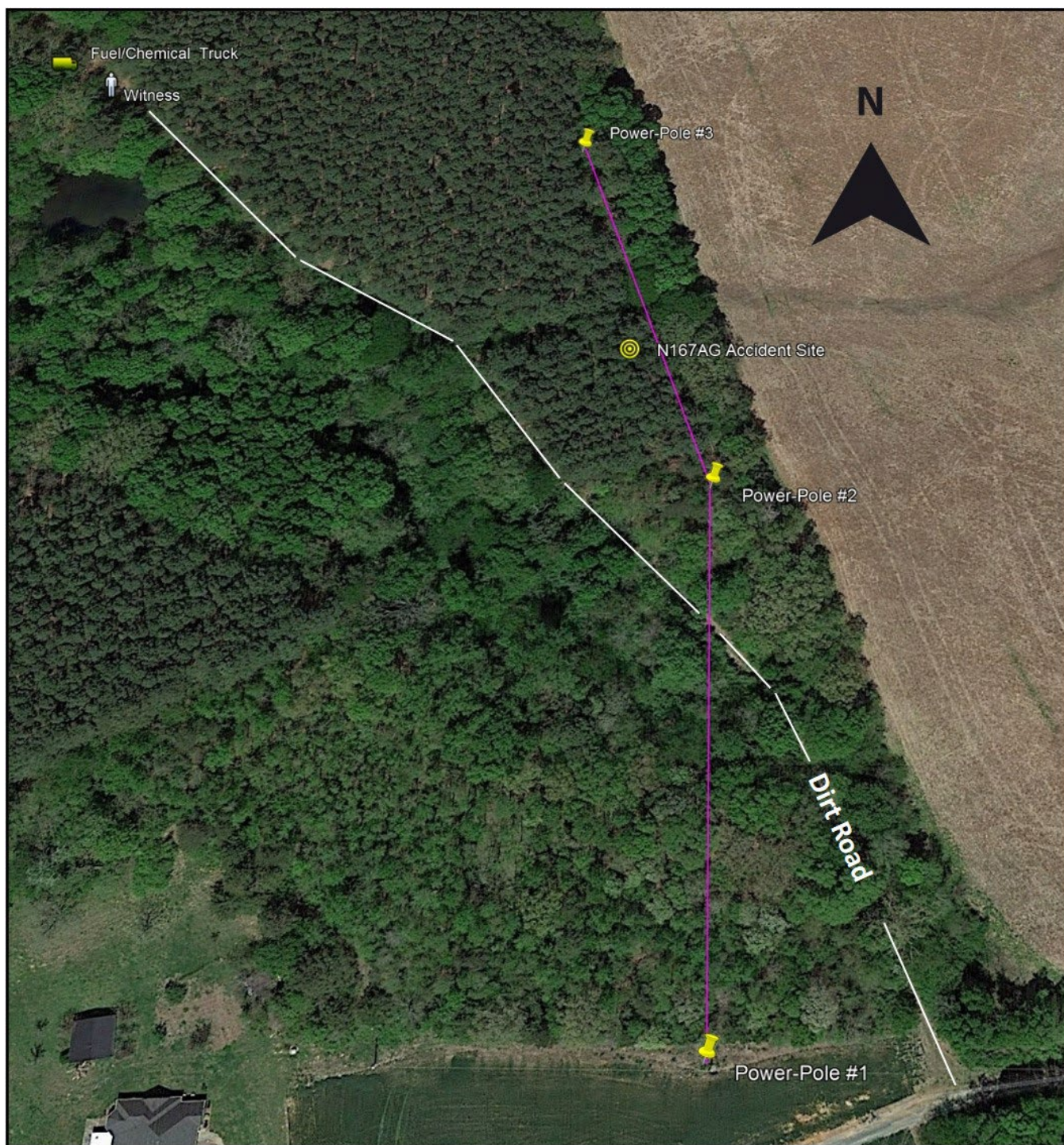


Figure 1 - Accident site, fuel truck and witness's location¹.

¹ Reference the GPS Coordinates document for actual coordinates.