

News Release

National Interagency Fire Center
3833 S. Development Ave.
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<http://www.nifc.gov>



For Release: April 17, 2025

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Annual aerial wildfire suppression training taking place next week in Southern California

Boise, Idaho, April 16, 2025 – The USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and other federal wildland fire agencies will conduct annual training for Modular Airborne Firefighting Systems (MAFFS) personnel at Channel Islands Air National Guard (ANG) Station in Port Hueneme, Calif., April 22-26.

The training will include personnel from the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Airlift Wing, the Nevada Air National Guard's 152nd Airlift Wing, the Air Force Reserve's 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson Space Force Base, Colo., and the host unit, the California Air National Guard's 146th Airlift Wing. Eight military C-130 Hercules aircraft as well as several lead planes from the Forest Service, State of Alaska and CAL FIRE will be utilized during the training.

The recertification training includes classroom sessions, flying and ground operations for Air Force aircrews, civilian lead plane pilots and support personnel from the Forest Service and other federal and state agencies.

"The MAFFS program is an important supplement to our national airtanker capacity," said Sarah Fisher, Director of Fire and Aviation Management for the USDA Forest Service. "The program is a tremendous example of how the federal and state wildland fire agencies work cooperatively with the military."

"Airmen from the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve have been supporting our civilian wildland firefighting partners for 52 years, and our citizen Airmen are grateful for the opportunity to support our neighbors in their times of need," said Col. Thomas Gagnon, Commander of the 153rd Tactical Fire/Wildland Firefighting MAFFS Air Expeditionary Group. "Through combined training efforts like this one in California, the MAFFS community is able to ensure a unified response when called upon to protect lives, property, critical infrastructure, and natural resources, often in the same communities where we live and work."

MAFFS-equipped aircraft were activated in January and provided aerial firefighting support to both the Palisades and Eaton Fires in the Los Angeles area.



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The eight C-130 Hercules aircraft that are part of the program are equipped with the Forest Service's MAFFS, which can drop up to 3,000 gallons of fire retardant in less than 10 seconds across a quarter-mile line. The system slides into the back of the military aircraft, and retardant is released through a nozzle on the rear left side. MAFFS-equipped aircraft can be activated to provide a critical "surge" capability to help slow or stop the spread of wildland fires. MAFFS aircraft are only activated when all commercial airtankers that are part of the national airtanker fleet are fully committed or not readily available.

As part of the training, practice water drops will be conducted in designated drop zones within the northwest portion of the Angeles National Forest in Los Angeles County. The drop zones are all in remote areas. Residents and visitors in those areas may see low-flying C-130 aircraft and smaller lead planes throughout the week.

For more information on the MAFFS program, visit: www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/planes/maffs.

For background photos and videos of the program, visit: www.dvidshub.net/feature/MAFFSAEG.

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The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), located in Boise, Idaho, is the nation's support center for wildland firefighting. Nine different agencies and organizations are part of NIFC including, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Defense, U.S. Fire Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, National Association of State Foresters, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Park Service.

