

Morpheus project lander roars in free flight test

December 12 2013, by Elizabeth Howell



NASA's Morpheus Project — a prototype for vertical landing and takeoff for other planets — during a free flight test Dec. 10, 2013. Credit: NASA

What an otherworldly experience, without having to leave Earth! The

Morpheus Project wrapped up a successful free-flight test yesterday. That picture above is just to whet your appetite for the actual video, which you can see (and definitely hear) after the jump below.

"WOOOOHOOOOO! How about them apples?!" the [@MorpheusLander Twitter feed](#) said shortly after the test wrapped up with a takeoff, hover and [landing](#) at NASA's Kennedy Space Center. "Successful #FREEFLIGHT @NASAKennedy today!" the feed added later. "Get ready for us to #increasetheawesome as we progress through our tests!"

The team is of course analyzing the data to see how successful this free flight was for the planetary landing prototype that NASA is testing.

NASA's goal with Morpheus is to demonstrate landing technologies at low cost, to possibly bring on to planetary missions in the future—and ultimately, human ones as well.

The project has had some setbacks, with one prototype [crashing and burning last year](#). Redesigns were implemented. One test in June [also saw a "soft abort" as the lander moved out of a safety zone](#), but then a fully successful [test](#) shortly afterwards.

"The Morpheus project and the Autonomous Landing and Hazard Avoidance Technology (ALHAT) project provide technological foundations for key components of the greater exploration architecture necessary to move humans beyond low Earth orbit (LEO)," the [project stated on its website](#).

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