NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Washington, D.C. 20594

January 18, 2018

Radar Study

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

ANC16FA023

Table Of Contents

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Skagway Alaska
Date: May 6, 2016
Time: 1855 AKD
0255 UTC
Airplane: N94TH, Airbus, AS350B2

B. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL INVESTIGATOR

Andy Olvis
Group Chairman
Operational Factors Division (AS-30)
National Transportation Safety Board

C. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

A request to review available ATC data pertaining to the subject accident was made by the investigator in charge. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) radar data was not available for review due to data retention guidelines. The only available ATC data for review was obtained from Harris OpsVue, a commercially available, web enabled, computer program that produces track data. OpsVue has access to nationwide FAA NextGen surveillance data. The program synthesizes the multiple surveillance sources and displays the data onto a variety of different maps.

D. SUMMARY

On May 6, 2016, about 1855 Alaska daylight time, an Airbus AS350B2 helicopter, N94TH, collided with snow-covered terrain while en route to Skagway, Alaska, about 4 miles southeast of Skagway. The commercial pilot sustained fatal injuries, and the helicopter sustained substantial damage. The helicopter was registered to, and operated by, Temsco Helicopters, Inc., Ketchikan, Alaska, as a day, visual flight rules (VFR) flight under the provisions of 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 135 on-demand charter flight. Marginal visual meteorological conditions were reported on the Denver Glacier at the time of the accident, and company flight following procedures were in effect. The flight originated from the operator's heliport in Skagway, about 1840.

E. FACTUAL INFORMATION

A review of OpsVue track data was conducted during the timeframe of 1815 to 1915 AKDT. The OpsVue data indicated the accident aircraft was making multiple 360° turns before turning to the north and east and continuing to make turns. As the aircraft was tracking toward the east, the altitude was trending up in a slow climb before descending near the accident site (see figure 1).

There are periods where there is no track data available and the flight track of the accident aircraft cannot be determined; those periods are annotated on the graphic with “No Track Data Available”. The OpsVue altitude data cannot have an altimeter applied by location so

the program applied an estimated national correction. While the altitudes are a close depiction of the accident aircraft, the displayed altitudes should only be used to indicate climb or descent trend data and should not be used as actual hard altitudes.

F. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 is graphic illustrating the track data obtained from the Harris OpsVue program.

Submitted by:

_____

Andy Olvis
Senior Air Traffic Investigator

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK