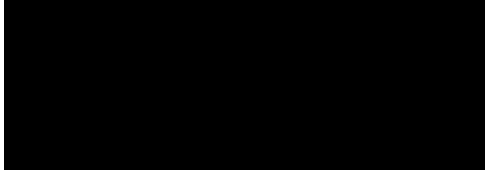




The National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety
Central Region
Memorandum for the Record
First Responder Observations
CEN18FA368
St Ignace Michigan
August 31 2018

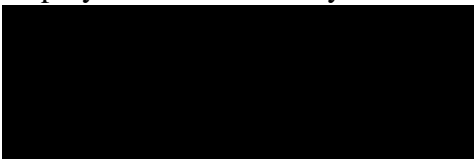
Earnest D Stadlberger
Captain of Saint Ignace Fire Department



Statement taken 9/5/2018

I was dispatched to a plane crash at 2153 hours off the east end of the runway. I drove directly to the scene and arrived at approximately 2200 hours. I pulled off to the east end of the runway with multiple law enforcement units. Visibility on the lake was 0 due to it being so dark. At this time was unable to see any debris or anything on the lake. Upon arrival of our first engine we placed it at the end of the runway to put the light tower up to use it as a landmark for the search. I was still unable to see anything on the lake due to darkness. I felt that the winds were light around 5-10 miles an hour maybe out of the south, I do not remember right where I was standing, but I could briefly hear the Mackinaw City Fireworks. I was unable to see any cloud deck but was also unable to see any stars. The only lights visible were the radio towers in the Hessel Cedarville area besides the shore along the Moran Bay. There was no horizon visible. Once the coast guard started using flares, I noticed it was not calm but a small ripple on the lake. Cleared approximately 143 AM per coast guard command.

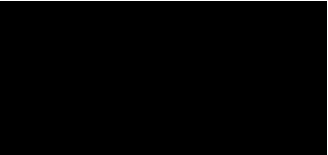
Paul Davis
Deputy Mackinaw County Sheriffs Dept



Statement taken 9/5/2018

We were dispatched at 2149 hours, I responded from our office in town with Sargent Umbarger. We responded by boat. We were the first ones in the area by the airport in the water near the crash site, we were there very quick, unsure of time. About 10-15 minutes after it happened. The waves were coming out of the east to south east and the wind was about 5-10 miles out of the southeast it was about 2-4 foot seas. It was very dark. I could not make out a silhouette of the island, couldn't make out the horizon, I don't know how clear it was but around midnight the moon came out, so it was clearer and brighter for the search. It was only a quarter moon, but it made a big difference in light. I have been on the boat a lot, I'm one of our more experienced boat navigators for our department, but when we were on our way out it was an eerie dark. I could not make out buoys or any navigational markers. I did not notice the sky until the moon came out before that I was just focused on the water. I don't remember the air temperature, but the boat said water temperature was 62 degrees."

Bryan T. Hookana
Deputy Sheriff



Statement from 09/05/2018

I was dispatched at 21:49 hours to the area of Moran Bay at the end of the Mackinac County Airport to take report of a suspected down aircraft. I went to 1505 Shore Drive to speak with the reporting party. I spoke with John and Ellen Bronson who stated they were sitting on their back porch facing the water and witnessed a low flying aircraft taking off from the airport. They stated that the plane was flying extremely low over the water, only about 100 to 200 feet above the surface. They stated that the plane banked to the right and they lost sight of it. Approximately 10 to 15 seconds later they heard what sounded like a crash into the water or an explosion. I went next door to the Harbor Lights Motel and spoke with four subjects that were sitting near the beach who had a very similar report of what had occurred. On my way to St. Ignace from Cedarville I witnessed moderate winds while driving on the highway. I also noticed no moon and slight overcast skies. I noted that the air temperature was approximately 68 degrees. From my point on the mainland, at the east end of Young street, I could still see the airport beacon from Mackinac Island as well as the light at Mackinac Island.

Alexander Lemishko



Senior Air Safety Investigator
NTSB Central Region Aviation