



MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Accident Case No./Location: CEN13LA356, Golden, Colorado
Investigator in Charge: Dr. David Bowling
Accident Date: June 8, 2013

Subject: Telephone Conversation on June 20, 2013 with Mr. Collin Stallard, pilot of the Ultramagic N-250 Hot Air Balloon involved in the accident

Mr. Stallard said before they flew they looked at the forecast weather. There was a cold front to the north of them. He said he spoke to the other pilots flying that day about the weather. At that time there was some wind, but it subsided about the time they were ready to fly. Everything looked good. But, he also stated that he didn't want to be up too long.

They took off near the foothills. It was about 7:30 a.m. The plan was to drift eastward, but once they were up he noted that they were not going east. He said the winds aloft were tricky. At one point in the flight, they reached 10,000 feet. "The winds were pushing us to the south". Then about 20 to 30 minutes into the flight the wind picked up. The wind was strong and was accompanied with up and down drafts. "We were moving" fast. Mr. Stallard recalled seeing the balloon collapsing on itself. The top of the envelope was not moving, but the bottom was, making it concave, "sort of a question mark shape". The concave shape was causing heat and air to spill out. He said he had to burn a lot to keep the balloon under control.

Mr. Stallard said he then looked at the surface. The trees were rustling. The wind speed was faster than he expected. Mr. Stallard said he watched another person who had been flying his balloon at the same time, land. Mr. Stallard said that person "got dragged pretty good". After seeing that, he decided that he needed to get his balloon down right now. He noted that there were big power lines south of where he was and he was headed that way. He needed to get on the ground before reaching them. He said he didn't have time to worry about where his chase crew was or worry about the noise sensitive areas. His concern at that time was just safety.

Mr. Stallard said he wanted to put down in the biggest place he could find. That was the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge near Golden. He made a high wind landing approach and landed about 8:36 a.m. When he touched down, the basket tipped over and they were immediately dragged. He said he was pulling the vent line to spill the air from the envelope. "I had half of the air out and we were still moving [fast across the ground]". By the time they had come to a stop, he figured that they had covered nearly 200 yards.

Mr. Stallard said after they stopped he checked the passengers before getting them out of the basket. One of the female passengers on board sustained a broken ankle. He said another female passenger received a bloody nose. Mr. Stallard said he got some scrapes, "but all-in-all, we were [all] pretty lucky."

Mr. Stallard said he uses a number of different weather reporting and forecasting resources to plan for his flights. He said he called Lockheed Martin Flight Service and received a briefing from them. He said he also referenced an internet site, [aviation weather.gov](http://aviationweather.gov). He said this was the site he learned to use as he was learning to fly balloons. He said it is the one he trusts the most. Another resource he references, and that a lot of the balloon pilots use is called Blastvalve. He said that none of the resources he used warned him or the other balloon pilots who were involved in high wind landings that day of the high winds they encountered.