

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Western Pacific Region
Seattle, Washington

October 28, 2010

OPERATIONS GROUP FACTUAL REPORT

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Aleknagik, Alaska
Date: August 9, 2010
Time: 1442 Alaska daylight time (ADT)¹
Aircraft: de Havilland Canada DHC-3T, N455A
NTSB Number: ANC10MA068

B. OPERATIONS GROUP

Chairman: Thomas Little
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

Member: Malcolm Brenner
Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

Member: Robin Broomfield
Aviation Safety Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

Member: William Behnke
Senior Vice President
General Communications Incorporated (GCI)

C. SUMMARY

On August 9, 2010, about 1442 Alaska daylight time (ADT), a single engine, turbine-powered, amphibious float-equipped de Havilland DHC-3T airplane, N455A, impacted mountainous tree-covered terrain about 10 miles northeast of Aleknagik, Alaska. Of the nine people aboard, the airline transport pilot and four passengers died at the scene, and four passengers sustained serious injuries. The airplane sustained

¹ All times are Alaska Daylight Time (ADT) based on a 24-hour clock, unless otherwise noted. Actual time of accident is approximate.

substantial damage. The flight was operated by General Communication, Incorporated (GCI), Anchorage, Alaska, under the provisions of 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 91. The flight originated at a GCI-owned remote fishing lodge on the southwest shoreline of Lake Nerka about 1427 and was en route to a remote sport fishing camp on the banks of the Nushagak River, about 52 miles southeast of the GCI lodge. At the time of the accident, marginal visual meteorological conditions were reported at the Dillingham Airport, about 18 miles south of the accident site; however, the weather conditions at the accident site at that time are not known. No flight plan was filed.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The NTSB Operations Group members convened at Anchorage, Alaska, on August 10, 2010, to conduct the initial field phase of the investigation.

The Operations Group concluded the field phase of the accident investigation in Anchorage, Alaska, on August 18, 2010.

1.0 HISTORY OF FLIGHT

According to GCI Lodge personnel, the purpose of the flight was to transport 8 passengers to the HRM fishing camp, which is located about 52 nautical miles southeast of the GCI Lodge, for an afternoon of fishing, followed by a return flight to the GCI Lodge for dinner. Lodge personnel reported that earlier in the morning after the pilot had returned from Dillingham, he reported that the weather consisted of turbulence and low ceilings and was not conducive for a flight to the fishing camp at that time. However, after finishing lunch, which was about 1400, the pilot informed the lodge coordinator who was in charge of coordinating the flights to the fishing camp, that the weather had lifted and he was comfortable taking a group to the fishing camp if they wanted to go. The coordinator reported that he gathered and organized the guests, making sure that they all had their fishing licenses and gear; he estimated that it took him between 20 to 30 minutes to get the group to the dock. It was also reported that each occupant wore life preservers on the airplane.

Prior to the airplane's departure the lodge manager reported observing the pilot checking the weather several times on the computer. He said that after being informed that the group would be going to the fishing camp, he called the fishing camp to inform them that they had a group who hoped to go fishing; the fishing camp replied, saying that they were speaking with the GCI pilot and that they were ready for the lodge guests.

The lodge manager stated that he proceeded to the dock at about 1430 and helped untie and push the airplane off the dock. He further stated that at the time the Otter took off he could see all of Jackknife Mountain across the lake, which he said is about 2,100 feet high and that it was mostly cloudy but there were some blue patches in the sky. The lodge manager added, "I could see all the way to the end of the lake, so at

least three miles. It was somewhat windy.” In addition, the guest coordinator stated that as far as the weather was concerned, he could see down the Agulowak River to the bend, and in the other direction he could see across River Bay. He said the cloud layer was “clipping” approximately the top 25 percent of the mountain peaks across the River Bay from the [GCI Lodge]. Sky Connect data revealed that the airplane departed the lodge at about 1427. According to the lodge manager, the group was expected back for dinner, which was normally served at about 1900.

The lodge coordinator reported that during the afternoon he was working on his laptop and noticed that it was getting late. He checked the cabins to see if anyone was back and then proceeded to the lodge dining hall, where he noticed by the clock on the wall that it was 1813. The lodge manager subsequently called the HRM fishing camp to inquire about the status of the airplane, at which time he was informed that the airplane had never arrived. He also called the Dillingham Flight Service Station to inquire if they had any information relative to the location of the airplane. The briefer reported that he had not had any contact with the airplane since it had departed earlier that morning.

At about 1830, two residents of the GCI lodge, one of whom was a physician, departed in their private airplane on a search of the area. Shortly thereafter, a GCI technician based in Dillingham, which is located about 23 nautical miles southeast of the GCI lodge, departed the Dillingham Airport (PADL) in a Robinson R-44 helicopter to join in the search of the overdue flight. According to DLG FSS personnel, an Alert Notification (ALNOT) for N455A was issued at 1916. Additionally, 2 Cessna 207 airplanes, which were also operating in the area at the time, joined in the search. At about 1935, the pilot of one of the Cessna 207s reported that he had spotted N455A. Subsequently, FSS personnel provided the pilot of the R-44 with the accident location, which resulted in the pilot landing about 1,000 feet above the accident site. The GCI technician deplaned the helicopter and proceeded to the site of the wreckage. In coordination with the private airplane, which had departed the GCI Lodge earlier to join in the search, the helicopter pilot departed for the Aleknagik Airport, about 10 miles southwest of the accident site, where he rendezvoused with the physician in order to transport her to the accident site.

The GCI technician, who was the first responder, reported that after being dropped off by the R-44 helicopter he proceeded down slope to the airplane wreckage; he estimated this took between 20 to 30 minutes. After arriving at the wreckage the technician remained at the site long enough to identify the survivors and speak with them from outside of the airplane. The technician then proceeded back up to the original helicopter landing zone to meet with and assist the doctor down to the wreckage site; she had just arrived from Aleknagik in the R-44. He stated that at this time the R-44 pilot returned to Dillingham pick up and transport two emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to the accident site.

After a period of time and while at the wreckage site with the doctor, the GCI technician observed the R-44 helicopter returning from Dillingham. Following an unsuccessful attempt to land at the original landing site, the helicopter pilot landed

successfully at an alternative site. After securing the helicopter the pilot and both EMTs proceeded to the wreckage site. Personnel now at the scene of the accident included the doctor, the GCI technician, the R-44 pilot, and the two EMTs from Dillingham.

At about 2030, Egli Air Haul of King Salmon, Alaska, was contacted by GCI personnel to transport two EMTs based in Dillingham to the accident site. Subsequently, an Egli Air Haul Bell 206B helicopter departed King Salmon at 2041, and landed at Dillingham at 2118, with the pilot and mechanic on board; the mechanic is also an Alaska certified EMT-3. The EMT/mechanic reported that they departed Dillingham at 2129 and arrived at the accident site landing zone about 2140, where he and the other two EMTs deplaned. The EMT-3/mechanic reported that he and the two EMTs proceeded uphill, thinking this was the correct route to the accident site; however, the location of the accident site from the landing zone was downhill. The EMT-3 said that after about an hour of looking for the wreckage, he advised the two Dillingham EMTs to proceed back down the hill, as that might be the direction of the wreckage. The EMT-3 said that a short time later he too proceeded down the hill, but did not locate the two Dillingham EMTs before he reach the helicopter landing zone. The EMT-3 reported that during this time frame the Bell 206B helicopter pilot had departed the landing zone to search for the crash site, and upon returning picked up the EMT-3 and flew him to an area in close proximity to the crash site; the two Dillingham EMTs had elected not to go on this flight. After landing the EMT-3 proceeded about 100 yards to the crash site, where he rendered aid and assistance to the survivors and remained overnight. The EMT-3 reported that due to the darkness, the fog, and injuries to the passengers, and that removal was impossible at this time, he radioed the pilot of the Bell 206B to return to Dillingham for the remainder of the night.

The GCI technician stated that he had earlier observed the other helicopter (the Bell 206B) land and drop off two EMTs and then saw them proceed up hill, which prompted him and the R-44 pilot to leave the wreckage site to look for them. The technician stated that by the time they did locate the EMTs, it was about 2330, and they were near the landing zone where the R-44 helicopter was located. The GCI technician revealed that the group ultimately decided that it was too dangerous to try and get back down to the accident site, so they departed for Dillingham in the R44. The technician said that he thought it was around midnight when they arrived at Dillingham.

A post accident examination of the wreckage site revealed that the airplane had impacted upsloping terrain with an estimated incline of about 30 degrees. The airplane came to rest on a magnetic heading of 070 degrees at an altitude of about 900 feet, and at coordinates 59 degrees 19.43 minutes north latitude and 158 degrees 23.25 minutes west longitude. The energy path was estimated to cover a distance of about 150 feet. The wreckage site about 18 miles southeast of the GCI Lodge and about 32 miles northwest of the HRM fishing camp.

Search and rescue operations were successful in extracting the 4 surviving passengers from the wreckage site the morning following the accident. Subsequently,

the airplane's wreckage was recovered to a secured facility in Dillingham for further examination.

1.1 Passenger/Survivor interview summaries²

1.1.1 Passenger #1:

Passenger #1 was a 19 year-old male, who remembered that it had been raining all day but that it had let up before the trip to the fish camp. He stated that he sat in the copilot's seat and had his lap belt on but no shoulder harness. He said he had sat in the seat on one other occasion. He reported that the pilot gave the passengers life preservers and told them where the airplane exits were. They departed about 3:00 in the afternoon. He had made the trip to the fish camp five times before and on this trip, the pilot went a different direction during takeoff. The pilot said it was to avoid "wind and weather." He said that they took off over the lake, then after about 10 minutes, turned right and flew over land. He said the visibility was "fine." It was cloudy above with light turbulence. They did not fly into clouds; they kept below them. He noticed water "running across" the outside of the windshield and that there were lighted displays at the top of the airplane "dash." He went to sleep 10 -15 minutes into the flight.

The passenger stated that he thought [the pilot] was a "really good" pilot and a nice guy. He said when he sat up front [the pilot] would point out lakes, mountain ranges, and good places to fish. When he asked the pilot what the altitude was the pilot pointed it out. He said he had heard the pilot call "someone" when they were about to take off and say, "Otter 455 alpha." He said that on the accident flight the pilot was in a friendly mood and alert, and that the pilot was not doing paperwork or reading anything while he was flying.

1.1.2 Passenger #2:

Passenger #2 was a 53 year-old male, and had never met the accident pilot before on previous trips to the lodge, although he had flown with him earlier in the week. He characterized the pilot as a serious, intense man, and was very concerned about, and aware of, weather. Passenger # 2 did not know if the pilot checked the weather before the flight on the internet or by telephone, but the pilot left the room for a while, and when he came back he seemed to have "more information" about the weather. Passenger #2 recalled flying to the fish camp from the lodge previously on this trip, but could not recall the exact date (August 7th or 8th).

Passenger #2 stated that the weather was bad the morning of the accident, so there was no trip to the fish camp. He said at lunch someone said that the weather had cleared enough to fly to the fish camp. Passenger #2 thought that the accident pilot checked weather prior to their departure, but he was not certain. He said no one on the aircraft expressed any concern about the weather immediately prior to take-off or during

² Refer to the Survivor Group Chairman's factual report for the complete interview summaries.

the accident flight. The airplane took off in the same direction as during previous flights – in an approximate 10 o'clock orientation from the dock.

Passenger #2 said he sat in the seat immediately behind the pilot. He said that prior to the flight the pilot had briefed the passengers on the location and use of the emergency exits. Life vests were handed out prior to every trip and all passengers donned the vests. Passenger #2 did not recall how far along they were in the flight when the accident occurred but believes they were 20-25 minutes into a 45-55 minute flight. Passenger #2 was wearing a headset, but he did not participate in any conversation that took place during the flight. He said he was “deep in his own thoughts.” During the flight, the cabin was cool and condensation formed on the inside of his window, so he could not see well through the window. He did not have any indication of weather. The flight was not turbulent, but was not particularly smooth. He sensed no indication of a problem with the flight prior to impact; There was no maneuvering, change in aircraft attitude, change in engine noise, discussion of a problem, expletives, or excited utterances prior to impact.

1.1.3 Passenger #3:

Passenger #3 was a 13 year-old male, who said that he has traveled to Alaska once a year for the past 4-5 years. He has flown in the accident airplane approximately 15 times, but never flew with the accident pilot prior to this trip. He said that during this trip he had flown with the accident pilot twice, but never in the front right seat. The accident pilot flew both of the prior flights to the Nushagak River using the same route and that he noted that the accident pilot would circle the landing zone at the Nushagak River, presumably looking for bears. He further noted that the accident pilot's landings on water were smooth. He said the accident pilot ate dinner with the group on a regular basis and did not seem “weird.” He said he only saw the pilot during meals and during flight operations and that during flights the accident pilot would often joke over the intercom.

Passenger #3 stated that there was fog present on the morning of the accident, and at about 1130-1200 local time, the party decided to not fly to the Nushagak River; however, an hour later the weather cleared, and at approximately 1345-1400 local time, he and his father were summoned from their room. They immediately dressed and went to the aircraft. The accident pilot did not provide a safety briefing before the accident flight or on the previous two flights. He related that previous pilots had mentioned the presence of a first aid kit and a survival kit located in the aft section of the airplane.

Passenger #3 reported that at the time of the departure the weather was “nice,” with no rain and visibility was clear enough to see the mountains. He said the takeoff was normal and that during the flight he could see approximately 50 yards forward. He stated that some fog was present beneath the aircraft, but he could still see water and that he did not think they penetrated any clouds. He said there was minor turbulence, but no rain.

Passenger #3 stated that at the time of the accident he was not wearing his seatbelt and stated that it was common practice to not wear a seatbelt when taking-off and landing on water. He said that the accident pilot did not specifically state this, but it was assumed given his past experiences flying in Alaska. He also said he did not wear a headset.

1.1.4 Passenger #4:

Passenger #4, a 54-year old male, stated that he traveled to Alaska once a year for the past 30 years. He said he had gained a lot of experience flying as a passenger on general aviation aircraft in Alaska and has experienced flight in marginal weather conditions. He reported that on the day of the accident the weather was overcast with rain falling intermittently throughout the morning until about 1300 local time. He said the conditions were similar to those experienced the previous two days at the lodge, and were not remarkable or particularly risky based on his prior experiences flying in Alaska. The passenger said that there is a room at the main lodge where the accident pilot checked weather during the trip, however, he stated that he did not know if the pilot checked the weather before the accident flight.

Passenger #4 said that he had arrived at the lodge on Friday, August 6, 2010. This was his first trip to the Agulowak Lodge, but he has visited other lodges 15-20 miles away. He said that he had never met or flown with the accident pilot before this trip. The accident pilot flew him to the lodge on Friday, and stayed at the lodge the entire trip. He commented that there was one trip made by another pilot, but the accident pilot was with him. He added that he had spent the few days prior to the accident getting to know the pilot, and had dinner with him on one occasion. He characterized the pilot as a seasoned veteran that was prudent, cautious, very quiet, and business like, but not humorless. He said he knew that the pilot's son-in-law was fatally injured in a recent C-17 accident, but the accident pilot never mentioned it. He did not perceive a change in the pilot's personality during the trip.

Passenger #4 stated that prior to the first flight of this trip to the lodge the accident pilot briefed passengers on how to operate the life vest and checked to determine if they were donning the vests properly. He never mentioned a satellite phone or a survival kit during the initial or subsequent safety briefings. He said he flew one trip in the right front seat and characterized the pilot as being attentive to his instruments. He said the pilot utilized a checklist during the flight, but he did not remember the accident pilot referring to a map during the flight. He said it was his impression that the accident pilot had "flown the routes so many times that he had memorized them." He also stated that he flew with the accident pilot from the Agulowak Lodge to the same location on the Nushagak River on Saturday, August 7th and Sunday, August 8th, but does not know if the route was the same as on the accident flight. He said all flights were made below the ceiling; however the accident pilot entered clouds for a few seconds on rare occasions.

Passenger #4 stated that he and other guests had lunch at about 1300 local time and discussed the option to fish at the Nushagak River or remain close to the lodge. He said that there was no pressure placed upon the pilot to make the flight to the Nushagak River, or to depart by a certain time; he said the decision was rather casual. He said it was clear to everyone that the final decision-making authority rested with the pilot. The flight departed between 1500-1530 hours local time, with a ceiling estimated at 1000'.



Kodiak Sectional: Operational area and accident site location

2.0 INJURIES TO PERSONS

Injuries	Crew	Passengers	Total
Fatal	1	4	5
Serious	0	4	4
Minor/None	0	0	0
Total	1	8	9

Table 1 Injuries to Persons

3.0 PILOT INFORMATION

The pilot, Theron Smith, age 62, held an airline transport pilot certificate with ratings for airplane multiengine land, airplane multiengine sea, and commercial privileges for airplane single-engine land, airplane single-engine sea and glider. The pilot possessed airline transport pilot type ratings for Lear Jet, Boeing 737 and Grumman G-111 airplanes. He also possessed a flight instructor certificate for airplane single-engine, airplane multiengine, and instrument airplane, as well as advanced and instrument ground instructor certificates. Additionally, the pilot held a flight engineer certificate for turbojet airplanes, and airframe and powerplant certification.

The pilot possessed a first-class Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airman medical certificate, which was issued on December 1, 2009, with the limitation “Must wear corrective lenses and possess glasses for near and intermediate vision. GCI personnel reported that the pilot was a life-long resident of Alaska, had been raised in an aviation oriented environment, was prominently known in the local aviation community, and had retired from Alaska Airlines in 2007 as the Anchorage, Alaska base chief pilot. A review of pilot employment records supplied by GCI revealed that the pilot had accrued 27,868 hours of flight experience through July 19, 2010, with 35 hours in make and model.

Subsequent to retiring from Alaska Airlines the pilot was employed by Conoco Phillips Alaska as Manager Aviation-Alaska from February, 2008 until July, 2010. According to the current Conoco Phillips Manager Aviation-Alaska, the pilot was instrumental in reorganizing the company’s flight operations department, as well as assisting in the addition of the Boeing 737-700 aircraft to its fleet.

After the pilot’s separation from Conoco Phillips he became a seasonal fill-in contract pilot for GCI, specifically flying support activities for the GCI Lodge, the Agulowak Retreat. The pilot was assigned pilot duties on the de Havilland DHC-3 Turbine Otter, being cleared to fly the DHC-3T airplane as pilot-in-command on July 26, 2010.

3.1 Pilot flight times³

AIRCRAFT MAKE/MODEL	TOTAL HOURS	TOTAL LAST 12 MONTHS	TOTAL LAST 90 DAYS	TOTAL INSTRUMENT	TOTAL NIGHT
DHC-3 Otter	35	0	0	0	9
DHC-2 Beaver	1,215	0	0	65	0
Single-engine amphibian	2,378	22	5	19	650
Multiengine amphibian	6,290	86	31	975	1,120
Boeing 737	17,950	185	27	7,950	9,180

Table 2 Pilot Flight Times

³ Pilot flight times obtained from company records supplied by GCI. The pilot’s personal pilot logbooks were not obtained during the course of the investigation.

3.2 Pilot Airman Certificates and Dates of Original Issue⁴

Airman Certificates	Original Date of Issue
Student pilot certificate	March 6, 1967
Private pilot certificate	May 19, 1967
Commercial pilot certificate (ASEL, ASES)	August 24, 1967
Multiengine rating (AMEL)	September 28, 1967
Instrument rating	November 16, 1967
Flight Instructor rating (Airplane)	March 21, 1968
Flight Instructor rating (Instrument)	May 23, 1968
Ground Instructor rating (Advanced & Instrument)	May 23, 1968
Airframe and Powerplant certification	August 11, 1970
Flight Engineer rating	May 23, 1979
Airline Transport pilot certificate (AMEL)	November 22, 1972

Table 3 Airman Certificate Information

3.3 Pilot Employment History

3.4 Summary of pilot's employment history⁵

1973 - 1974	ERA Helicopters
1974 -1978	Aeroamb, Inc.
1978 -1979	Management Jets International
1979 - 2007	Alaska Airlines
2008 - 2010	Conoco Phillips Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska (B-737 equipment)
7/10 to 8/10	GCI Lodge, Aleknagik, Alaska (DHC-3T Turbine Otter contract pilot)

Table 4 Summary of Pilot's Flying History

3.4.1 GCI Lodge (Agulowak Retreat) employment

The GCI chief pilot reported that the lodge had been trying to get the accident pilot to fly for them for many years in more than a relief capacity. The chief pilot added, "We talked to Mr. Smith in May, June and July of this year, and when we really needed him, it came together." He further added that their insurance requires a lot of Alaska time, amphibian time, and Garrett engine time, and that it was very easy to get Mr. Smith accepted on their insurance. On the insurance application provided by GCI, Mr. Smith listed total time in make and model for the DHC-3T Turbine Otter as 35 hours.

When the chief pilot was asked about the training⁶ that Mr. Smith had received prior to assuming pilot-in-command authorization in the DHC-3T airplane, he stated that Mr. Smith had requested to observe the operation for a week "to see the program." The

⁴ This information was provided by the Federal Aviation Administration.

⁵ This information was obtained from GCI, Conoco Phillips, and the pilot's airman medical applications.

⁶ GCI operates in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) Part 91, which requires no formal pilot flight training program. Pilots are required to maintain recent flight experience in accordance with FAR 61.57, Recent Flight Experience: Pilot in command.

chief pilot reported that Mr. Smith flew with another lodge pilot, Virgil Peachey, on the following occasions: July 26th, during which Mr. Smith logged 6 landings and Mr. Peachey logged 4 landings, and July 28th, during which Mr. Smith logged 6 landings and Mr. Peachey logged 3 landings. The chief pilot reported that he flew with Mr. Smith on August 4th, which included takeoff and landings, and steep turns. He added that he was impressed with his ability to handle the airplane and his “sharp skills” on both land and water.

3.4.1.1 GCI flight summary: pilot’s DHC-3T activity between 8/4 and 8/9 2010⁷

Wednesday – August 4th

Sky Connect Flight #	Departure	Destination	DEP Time	ARR Time	En route Time	Purpose of Flight
2079	GCI Lodge	Dillingham	0911	0937	26 min	To pick up passengers arriving from ANC. T. Smith among passengers (H. Kinzie PIC/company chief pilot)
2080	Dillingham	GCI Lodge	1039	1059	20 min	Transport passengers to GCI Lodge. (H. Kinzie PIC/company chief pilot)
2081	GCI Lodge	Dillingham	1442	1457	15 min	Transport H. Kinzie to Dillingham for return flight to ANC. (T. Smith PIC – some training from H. Kinzie, chief pilot)
2082	Dillingham	Lake Aleknagik	1613	1628	15 min	Return flight to GCI Lodge. (T. Smith PIC)
2083	Lake Aleknagik	GCI Lodge	1629	1634	5 min	Local for unknown reason, but likely touch and go landing and takeoff. (T. Smith PIC)

Table 5 Pilot’s DHC-3T flight activity for August 4, 2010

Thursday – August 5th

Sky Connect Flight #	Departure	Destination	DEP Time	ARR Time	En route Time	Purpose of Flight
2084	GCI Lodge	HRM	no Sky Connect data	no Sky Connect data	no Sky Connect data	Transport passengers to HRM for fishing trip. (T. Smith PIC)
2084	HRM	Dillingham	1344	1401	17 min	Reposition to pick up a GCI Lodge employee (T. Smith PIC)
2085	Dillingham	GCI Lodge	1455	1514	19 min	Transport employee to GCI Lodge. (T. Smith PIC)
2086	GCI Lodge	HRM	1634	1702	28 min	Reposition airplane to HRM to pick up passengers. (T. Smith PIC)
2087	HRM	GCI Lodge	1720	1746	26 min	Transport passengers to GCI Lodge. (T. Smith PIC)
2088	GCI Lodge	Dillingham	1811	1827	16 min	Supply flight for GCI Lodge (T. Smith PIC)
2089	Dillingham	GCI Lodge	1851	1907	16 min	Supply flight for GCI Lodge (T. Smith PIC)

Table 6 Pilot’s DHC-3T flight activity for August 5, 2010

⁷ This information was obtained from Sky Connect data and GCI company personnel.

Friday – August 6th

Sky Connect Flight #	Departure	Destination	DEP Time	ARR Time	En route Time	Purpose of Flight
2090	GCI Lodge	HRM	0919	0948	29 min	Transport passengers to HRM for fishing trip. (T. Smith PIC)
2091	HRM	Lodge	1326	1357	31 min	Transport passengers to GCI Lodge. (T. Smith PIC)

Table 7 Pilot's DHC-3T flight activity for August 6, 2010

Saturday - August 7th

Sky Connect Flight #	Departure	Destination	DEP Time	ARR Time	En route Time	Purpose of Flight
2092	GCI Lodge	Dillingham	0857	0926	29 min	To pick up passengers arriving from ANC. (T. Smith PIC)
2093	Dillingham	GCI Lodge	1117	1133	16 min	Transport passengers to GCI Lodge. (T. Smith PIC)
2094	GCI Lodge	HRM	1310	1347	37 min	Transport passengers to HRM for fishing trip. (T. Smith PIC)
2095	HRM	Dillingham	1402	1419	17 min	Reposition airplane to Dillingham to pick up passengers from ANC. (T. Smith PIC)
2096	Dillingham	GCI Lodge	1547	1604	17 min	Transport passengers to GCI Lodge. (T. Smith PIC)
2097	GCI Lodge	HRM	1622	1646	24 min	Reposition airplane to HRM to pick up passengers. (T. Smith PIC)
2098	HRM	GCI Lodge	1710	1740	30 min	Transport passengers to GCI Lodge. (T. Smith PIC)

Table 8 Pilot's DHC-3T flight activity for August 7, 2010

Sunday – August 8th

Sky Connect Flight #	Departure	Destination	DEP Time	ARR Time	En route Time	Purpose of Flight
2099	GCI Lodge	HRM	1505	1544	39 min	Transport of passengers to HRM for fishing trip. (T. Smith PIC)
2100	HRM	Dillingham	1835	1854	19 min	Transport of passengers back to GCI with intermediate stop at Dillingham for pilot rotation back to ANC. (T. Smith PIC)
2101	Dillingham	GCI Lodge	1951	2015	24 min	Transport of passengers back to GCI. (T. Smith PIC)

Table 9 Pilot's DHC-3T flight activity for August 8, 2010

Monday – August 9th

Sky Connect Flight #	Departure	Destination	DEP Time	ARR Time	En route Time	Purpose of Flight
2102	GCI Lodge	Dillingham	0902	0929	27 min	Transport of pilot to Dillingham for return flight to ANC. (T. Smith PIC)
2103	Dillingham	GCI Lodge	1059	1120	21 min	Return flight to GCI Lodge with no passengers on board. (T. Smith PIC)
2104	GCI Lodge	HRM	1427	NA	15 min	Transporting passengers to HRM for fishing trip. (accident en route - T. Smith PIC)

Table 10 Pilot's DHC-3T flight activity for August 9, 2010

3.4.2 ConocoPhillips Alaska employment

According to documentation provided by ConocoPhillips, the pilot, Mr. Terry Smith, was made an offer of employment on January 23, 2008, for the position of “Manger Aviation – Alaska”, location being Anchorage, Alaska. The desired reporting date was noted to be February 1, 2008.

The current ConocoPhillips “Manager Aviation – Alaska”, Mr. William C. Weiss, who was the company’s chief pilot during Mr. Smith’s employment with ConocoPhillips, stated in an interview that Mr. Smith had initially come on board with the company to reorganize the aviation department and to help bring on the 737-700 aircraft, which [Mr. Smith] thought would take of couple of years, and then it would be time to move on; that this would fit into his life’s future. Mr. Weiss further stated that Mr. Smith had accomplished his goals and that he had made the decision to leave the company. Mr. Weiss said that management’s and Mr. Smith’s “management perspectives” were different, but that Mr. Smith had left the company with no hard feelings.

Mr. Weiss was asked if he had noticed any difference in Mr. Smith’s behavior recently, to which Mr. Weiss replied that Mr. Smith was in great spirits since his Conoco retirement, had been happy to move on, that he was moving on in life, and that he was basically happy and jovial.

When asked if there was anything detected relative to Mr. Smith’s alertness, Mr. Weiss responded, “No. None whatsoever.” When asked if Mr. Smith ever talked about his sleep patterns, Mr. Weiss responded, “No. He never did.” And when asked about Mr. Smith’s memory, Mr. Weiss commented that Mr. Smith impressed him with his memory items and that his knowledge of the 737 was very impressive, that he thought he had a high intelligent quotient (IQ), and that he thought he was on the order of a “genius.”

Mr. Weiss was asked about the stroke Mr. Smith had experienced and how it might have affected him. He replied that it was hard for him to say, but that you could tell that he was coming back from it. He said that while at Conoco Phillips he would say that Mr. Smith was the pilot he was before the event (the stroke). Mr. Weiss also commented about observing Mr. Smith after he had had the stroke, and that he could tell [Mr. Smith] had experienced an event by an eye twitch, and that his demeanor wasn’t quite like it was before the event. He said Mr. Smith was a little slower and hesitant in doing things.

In an interview conducted with Mr. Paul Kewin, the Director of Pilot Training for Conoco Phillips, Mr. Kewin related that he had been employed by Conoco Phillips as a line pilot, chief pilot, and training captain for about 27 years prior to retiring, but came back to the company during the summer of 2008 as a B-737 simulator instructor. Mr. Kewin reported that he had known Mr. Smith since about 1993, during the time when he was the chief pilot for Conoco Phillips when the company was operating Boeing 727 aircraft. He said he knew Mr. Smith through the company’s association with Alaska

Airlines, as they operated the same type airplane. Mr. Kewin revealed that it was also in 1993 that the company replaced the B-727 with B-737 aircraft.

It was noted during the interview that Mr. Kewin had administered Mr. Smith's pilot proficiency check (PC) on March 12, 2010, which was Mr. Smith's most recent PC prior to the accident. Mr. Kewin said there were no issues during the PC, and that as a pilot Mr. Smith was very experienced, had good situational awareness, and had a lot of experience. He added that relative to the pilot's situational awareness, Mr. Smith never had tunnel vision, he used the crew, and he knew "what was coming" and would be able to deal with it.

In an interview with a ConocoPhillips part-time 737 line pilot, Mr. Ross Clement, Mr. Clement reported that had known Mr. Smith since when he hired on with Alaska Airlines, and that Mr. Smith has been the base manager at Anchorage since 1988. Mr. Clement said that he retired from Alaska Airlines about 5 years ago when he reached age 60, and then subsequently was hired him to fly the B737-200 aircraft. He said that Mr. Smith flew as a line pilot with ConocoPhillips until May, 2010, and that he flew as captain about once per week. Mr. Clement said that according to his personal pilot logbook he had flown with Terry Smith twice while at ConocoPhillips, once on July 21, 2008, and the second time on March 31, 2010. He did not recall any details about either flight.

Mr. Clement described Mr. Smith as a visionary who had a long-term view with stable growth for the operation (ConocoPhillips). He said that Mr. Smith wanted to build weather ports (hangars) to shelter all of the airplanes and believed it would save money in the long term. He said that Mr. Smith approved the projects funding but that a Houston manager disagreed. He said that Mr. Smith separated from the company effective May 1, 2010.⁸

Mr. Clement stated that he last saw Mr. Smith on July 24, 2010, at his daughter's wedding. He said that Mr. Smith was fine and very eloquent, that he "looked fine." He also said that he had seen Mr. Smith and his wife on and off all summer, and that he was always himself, that he was very upbeat, and that he loved to discuss ideas, rather than other people or events. He also stated that Mr. Smith seemed fine medically. He also stated that after the event (stroke) in the spring of 2006, that Mr. Smith did not fly again for Alaska Airlines, and may have remained base manager. He said Mr. Smith tried to get his medical certification back, but retired in 2008 from Alaska Airlines on a medical retirement.

Mr. Clement said that Mr. Smith was not bitter about his separation from Conoco, and that on June 1, 2010, they held a goodbye party for him, during which they gave out bright orange ties in recognition of Mr. Smith's emphasis on safety. Mr. Clement said that Mr. Smith always indicated that "we are not going to go if it isn't good," and would

⁸ Mr. Smith's letter of resignation to ConocoPhillips states that he intended to resign from his position as Manager Aviation Alaska effective July 1, 2010.

not be pressured into an unsafe situation. He said that Mr. Smith never flew below minimums.

When asked if Mr. Smith ever “busted minimums,” Mr. Clement stated that he had never done that.

3.4.2.1 Pilot Training (ConocoPhillips)⁹

DATE	Training Received
5-28-2008	Emergency Equipment Training
6-24-2008	Boeing 737 Recurrent Training
6-24-2008	Boeing 737 Proficiency Check
6-27-2008	Boeing 737 Familiarization
11-6-2009	In-Flight Security Coordinator and Crewmember Training
11-6-2009	Will Not Carry Hazardous Materials Training
11-19-2009	Part 125.287(a) Oral and Written Examinations
11-19-2009	LOA CO78, Lower Than Standard Takeoff Minimum Training
11-20-2009	Boeing 737 Recurrent Training
11-20-2009	Boeing 737 Proficiency Check
11-20-2009	Letter of Competency (competent to perform PIC duties per FAR125.291)
12-8-2009	Part 125.287(a) Oral and Written Examinations
12-8-2009	Letter of Proficiency to perform flight duty per FAR 125.285(c)
2-9-2010	Boeing 737 Line Performance Report
3-12-2010	Boeing 737 Recurrent Training
3-12-2010	Boeing 737 Proficiency Check
3-12-2010	Letter of Competency (competent to perform pilot-in-command duties per FAR125.291)
3-28-2010	2010 Initial and Recurrent pilot testing: FAR 125.287(a) 1-9 written test

Table 11 Pilot Training (ConocoPhillips)

3.4.2.2 Crewmember Activity Summary (Conoco Phillips)¹⁰

According to documentation provided by Conoco Phillips, the pilot’s crewmember activity summary spanned a period from June 28, 2008, through April 27, 2010. During this period it was revealed that the pilot flew a total of 59 flights in Boeing 737 aircraft, all of which were in the crew capacity as pilot-in-command.

⁹ Pilot’s training records furnished by ConocoPhillips and Higher Power Aviation.

¹⁰ Refer to Attachment 6 for a detailed summary of the pilot’s crewmember activity.

Flight Activity	Total Hours Accumulated
Total time	93.31
Pilot-in-Command (PIC)	93.31
Pilot flying (PF)	63.24
Pilot not flying (PNF)	30.07
Night time	16.57
Actual instrument time	13.36
Precision approaches	12
Non-precision approaches	18
Takeoffs – day	30
Takeoffs – night	12
Landings – day	31
Landings – night	11
Total number of flights	59

Table 7 **Crewmember Activity Summary**

3.4.3 Alaska Airlines Employment

According to the pilot’s resume submitted to Conoco Phillips, as well as the insurance application submitted for GCI flight crewmember approval, the pilot was employed by Alaska Airlines from 1979 through 2007, at which time he retired. The pilot indicated on his resume that he was a Boeing 737 Captain, Instructor, Check Airman, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Designee, and the Anchorage base Chief Pilot from 1985 thru 2007. The pilot indicated that his total flight time in the Boeing 737 aircraft was 17,950 hours.

3.5 Pilot’s 72-Hour History

There was little information available relative to the pilot’s non-work activities in the 72 hours prior to the accident.

3.5.1 Pilot’s 72-hour work history

On Friday, August 6, 2010, the pilot transported GCI Lodge guests to the HRM fishing camp, departing the lodge at 0919¹¹ and arriving at the fishing camp at 0949, for an en route flight time of 30 minutes. The pilot remained at the fishing camp until departing at 1326 for the GCI Lodge, arriving back at the lodge at 1357, for an en route flight time of 31 minutes. The pilot conducted no other flights for the remainder of the day. The pilot’s total flight time for the day was 1 hour and 1 minute.

On Saturday, August 7, 2010, the pilot flew 7 legs in N455A. The pilot’s first flight of the day was from the GCI Lodge to the Dillingham Airport, which departed the lodge at 0857, arriving Dillingham at 0926, for an en route flight time of 29 minutes. The purpose of the flight was to pick up guests that had arrived in Dillingham from Anchorage and transport them to the GCI Lodge, which would be the second flight of

¹¹ Departure and arrival times provided by the onboard Sky Connect system.

the day. This flight departed Dillingham at 1117 and arrived at the lodge at 1133, for an en route time of 16 minutes. The pilot subsequently flew the next flight, the third leg of the day, from the GCI Lodge to the HRM fishing camp, the purpose of which was to transport lodge guests to the fishing camp. The flight departed the lodge at 1310 and arrived at the fishing camp at 1347, for an en route flight time of 37 minutes. After deplaning the passengers, the pilot departed on the fourth flight of the day, repositioning the airplane to the Dillingham Airport for the purpose of picking up another group of guests for transport to the GCI Lodge. The pilot departed the fishing camp at 1402 and arrived at the Dillingham Airport at 1419, for an en route flight time of 17 minutes. The pilot's next flight, the fifth leg of the day, departed the Dillingham Airport at 1547, and arrived at the GCI Lodge at 1604. The en route flight time for this leg, which was for the transport of guests to the lodge, was 17 minutes. The pilot's sixth flight of the day was for the purpose of picking the guests who had been flown to the fishing camp earlier in the day, and returning them to the lodge. This flight departed the GCI Lodge for the HRM fishing camp at 1622, arriving at the fish camp at 1646, for an en route flight time of 24 minutes. The return flight, which was the pilot's 7th flight of the day, departed the HRM fishing camp at 1710, and arrived back at the GCI Lodge at 1740, for an en route flight time of 30 minutes. The pilot's total flight time for the day was 2 hours and 50 minutes.

On Sunday, August 8, 2010, the pilot flew 3 flights in N455A. The first flight of the day involved the pilot flying a group of guests from the GCI Lodge to the HRM fishing camp, which departed the lodge at 1505 and arrived at the fishing camp at 1544. The en route flight time was 39 minutes. The pilot remained at the fish camp until the group was ready to return to the lodge. The return flight to the lodge included an intermediate stop in Dillingham to let one of the passengers off, who was returning to Anchorage. The flight departed the fishing camp at 1835 and arrived at the Dillingham Airport at 1854, for an en route flight time of 19 minutes. After it was determined that there were no seats available for the passenger's return flight to Anchorage until the next morning, the passenger boarded the flight for its return to the GCI Lodge. The flight departed Dillingham at 1951, arriving back at the GCI Lodge at 2015. The en route flight time for the third leg was 24 minutes. The pilot's flight time for the day was 1 hour and 22 minutes.

On Monday, August 9, 2010, the pilot flew 3 flights. The first flight of the day was for the purpose of transporting the passenger who had been unable to secure a flight to Anchorage from Dillingham the previous evening, back to the Dillingham Airport. The flight departed the GCI Lodge at 0902 and arrived at the Dillingham Airport at 0929, for an en route flight time of 27 minutes. After dropping the passenger off the pilot returned to the GCI Lodge, departing the Dillingham Airport at 1059 and arriving back at the lodge at 1120, for an en route flight time of 21 minutes. The third flight of the day, which was the accident flight, was for the purpose of transporting lodge guests to the HRM fishing camp. The airplane departed the GCI Lodge at about 1427 and the time of the occurrence was at about 1442, for an en route time of 15 minutes. The pilot had accumulated a total flight time for the day of 53 minutes.

During the 72-hour period preceding the accident, the pilot flew 15 flights. His total accumulated flight time for this period was 3 hours and 6 minutes.

3.6 Accident/Incidents

September, 2009: dual engine failure on a Grumman Widgeon near Ravendale, California. Landed on a gravel road with minor damage and no injuries.

April, 2009: complete power loss on PA-18A near Hanner Springs, South Island, New Zealand. Landing gear, propeller, and lower fuselage damaged in forced landing. No injuries.

September, 1973: PA-12 damaged on off-airport landing. Airplane repaired and flown out the following day. No injuries.

3.7 Medical Information

The pilot held a First Class airman medical certificate dated 12/01/2009 with the limitation that “holder shall wear lenses that correct for distant vision and possess glasses that correct for near and intermediate vision.” The pilot’s near vision was listed for each eye as 20/70 corrected to 20/40; intermediate vision for each eye as 20/60 corrected to 20/40; and distant vision as 20/100 for right eye and 20/70 for left eye corrected to 20/20. The pilot’s height was listed as 5’8” and weight as 173 pounds.

The pilot was denied his airman medical certificate for a required 24-month period following a cerebral vascular event on 3/22/2006. On 4/9/2008, the pilot was advised that he was again eligible for first class medical certification with a stipulation that “operation of aircraft is prohibited at any time new symptoms or adverse changes occur.”

The NTSB Medical Officer extracted the following information from the pilot’s medical records, which showed a medical history of neurological disease with a comment: “3+ year’s status post minor stroke. Fully recovered. No further problems.” It was also noted in the review of the pilot’s medical records under the Family History section, “There is an extensive history of intracranial hemorrhages at young ages in the patient’s father and several other family members. ...”

An autopsy on the pilot was performed on August 11, 2010, at the Office of the State Medical Examiner, Anchorage, Alaska. The cause of death was listed as “multiple blunt force injuries of the head, neck, trunk, and extremities.

Forensic toxicology was performed on specimens from the pilot by the FAA Bioaeronautical Sciences Research Laboratory, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The toxicology reported stated that no carbon monoxide detected in the Blood, no cyanide detected in the Blood, no ethanol detected in the Vitreous, and no drugs detected in the Blood.

4.0 AIRPLANE INFORMATION

N455A, a DHC “Otter” airplane, is an all-metal, high wing monoplane powered by a single Honeywell (Garrett) TPE331-10R-511C engine driving a 4-blade Hartzell constant speed, full-feathering, reversing propeller. The aircraft is designed to carry a pilot and from six to fifteen passengers; the accident airplane was configured with 9 passenger seats and two pilot seats. The airplane may be used for liaison duties, ambulance and rescue operations, forestry, border and coastal patrols, spraying, dusting, skydiving, aerial surveying, photographic operations, or cargo transportation. The aircraft is divided through partitions into a cockpit, a cabin and a baggage compartment. As well, an optional bleed-air heater may be installed.

N455A underwent a conversion to a DHC-3T (“Turbine Otter”) at the facilities of Kal-Air Repair, LTD, of Vernon, British Columbia. At the time of the conversion the airframe total time was listed as 7889.9 hours, total time on engine since new of 7,262.8 hours, and the new Hobbs meter indicated 0.0 hours. Following an annual inspection, which was dated April 26, 2005, the airplane was certified as being in airworthy condition.



N455A: de Havilland DHC-3T

The airplane’s most recent annual inspection was completed on May 15, 2010, at a total time on airframe of 9,372.3 hours, total time on engine of 8,745.2 hours, and a total time on the engine since new of 1482.4 hours. Maintenance records also indicated that at the time of the annual inspection the engine has accumulated 2,116 total cycles since new.

5.0 METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

At 1422, the Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) at the Dillingham Airport (DLG), Dillingham, Alaska, located about 20 miles south-southwest of the accident site, were wind from 170 degrees at 10 knots with gusts to 17 knots, visibility 3 miles, light rain, mist, scattered clouds at 800 feet above ground level (agl), overcast clouds at 1,300 feet agl, temperature 11 degrees Celsius (C), dew point 9 degrees C, and altimeter setting of 29.57 inches of Mercury.

At 1455, the DLG AWOS indicated wind 180 degrees at 12 knots, with gusts to 23 knots, visibility 3 miles, light rain, mist, scattered clouds at 600 feet agl, overcast clouds at 1,000 feet agl, temperature 11 degrees C, dew point 9 degrees C, and altimeter setting of 29.57 inches of Mercury. Remarks indicated clouds were scattered to broken.

6.0 COMPANY, LODGE, and FLIGHT OPERATION INFORMATION

6.1 The Company

According to GCI personnel, General Communication, Inc. (GCI) was incorporated in 1979 by two Alaska entrepreneurs, Bob Walp and Ron Duncan and is primarily a holding company, and together with its direct and indirect subsidiaries, is a diversified communications provider in Alaska. The Company provides facilities-based local and long distance voice services, cable television, data and Internet access to residential and business customers across the state under its GCI brand. In addition, it also provides wireless telephone services over its own facilities under the GCI, Alaska DigiTel and Alaska Wireless brand names. The Company operates in five business segments: Consumer, Network Access, Commercial, Managed Broadband and Regulated Operations services.

6.2 The Lodge

According to information provided by GCI personnel, GCI's lodge, which is known as the "Agulowak Retreat," is located 320 miles southwest of Anchorage in the Wood-Tikchik State Park, which is the largest park in the United States, covering more than 1.6 million acres. The park is about 40 miles wide and 70 miles long, and includes 15 major lakes and numerous smaller lakes and ponds. The regional hub town of Dillingham is located about 30 miles south of the retreat.

The retreat consists of guest facilities, staff quarters, and various shops and storage buildings, and is situated on the shore of the Agulowak River. Guest transportation is provided via company owned and operated aircraft, or by scheduled air service between Anchorage and Dillingham. Guests travel between the retreat and Dillingham in the company's amphibious, float-equipped aircraft.

The retreat has full-time guides who can each take two or three guests fishing at a time. The retreat also uses a river based camp for guiding services on the Nushagak River during the King and Silver Salmon seasons.

Guests are taken on fly-out fishing and sightseeing trips as often as aircraft availability and weather allow or when fishing at the lodge is not an option. Frequent changeover of guests, the need to transport freight and fuel and the vagaries of southwest Alaska weather are limiting factors.

Information provided by the retreat advises guests that the average temperature for the month of August is between 50 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit, that there are 14 hours of daylight, and that rain can fall at any time and that they should remember to bring their raingear.

6.3 Flight Operations

The GCI flight operations department consists of two (2) airplanes, an Astra SPX, N89HS, which is leased from the 560 Company, and a de Havilland DHC-3T airplane, N455A, which is owned by GCI. The department is overseen by the chief pilot, who also functions as the Astra Program Manager. The Astra is used for corporate business functions, while the DHC-3T airplane was used to transport guests to and from the GCI Lodge (also known as the "Agulowak Retreat").

The chief pilot stated in an interview with the Operations Group that he is tasked with hiring all pilots for GCI, and that the Otter operates from June 1 through October 15 each year. He further reported that the Otter is based at the Agulowak Lodge during this time frame and is parked in Anchorage for the remainder of the year, and there are no winter operations involving the Otter. The chief pilot said that he provides support for the airplane and flight crews from Anchorage and talks to the pilot "every day or so." He said in May the pilots "get the plane and their skills up to speed." The chief pilot said he had visited the GCI lodge operations between 15 to 20 times this year.

A Senior GCI Vice President, to whom the company chief pilot reports, stated that at the beginning of the 2010 season, which would have run basically from mid-May through Mid-October, a pilot had been hired to fill the company's Turbine Otter (N455A) pilot slot. However, the pilot departed the company unexpectedly during the early part of July, which necessitated the hiring of additional pilot staff for the 2010 season. To resolve this issue the Senior Vice President said that he and the chief pilot agreed to hire 3 contract pilots for the 2010 season, leaving the crew scheduling up to them. He also said that one of the pilots had previously flown the Otter for the lodge about 4 or 5 years ago. The second pilot was scheduled to fly for Freshwater Adventures of Dillingham, however, the airplane he was assigned to fly had been involved in a recent accident, which resulted in his availability for the summer; the second pilot signed his offer letter on July 22, 2010. The third pilot, Terry Smith (the accident pilot), was contacted by GCI with an offer to fly for the lodge for the 2010 season. Mr. Smith

agreed to the offer of employment, however, he had not signed his contract offer at the time of the accident.

The chief pilot reported that the Otter is flown between 0 to 3 hours per day and that maintenance is done in Anchorage every 100 hours or less. The primary function of the airplane during the summer is to remain in Dillingham and is used to pick up guests there and to transport them around the area during their stay. He said that fuel is available in Dillingham, King Salmon, and at the lodge, where it is above ground and stored in a 2,000 gallon tank.

The chief pilot stated that during the summer season there is usually one main pilot and a couple of relief pilots to fly the Otter. He said that he is very selective in hiring pilots and prefers that the pilot remains at the lodge, although he will keep the pilot and plane in Dillingham until there is no risk of ice damage at the lake.

The chief pilot reported that the lodge has the internet and telephones, which can be used to call other lodges in order to determine the local weather. He said there were also weather cams at several locations that can be viewed on the internet. He also revealed that if a pilot elected to go to another location he could call the lodge to report in. He said there is a remote communications outlet (RCO) north of the area at Kemuk Mountain, but it has been out of service all summer.

The Senior GCI Vice President who oversees the flight operations department reported that maintained a supply of rain repellent products at the GCI Lodge. He stated that three (3) products were available for the pilots to use, which included Plexus Plastic Cleaner, Rain-X, and Prist Acrylic, a plastic and glass cleaner for aircraft. He further stated that of the three, they had more Prist on hand (one-half case). The Senior Vice President reported that neither the chief pilot nor other lodge employees mentioned anything about the pilot requiring any other type of window cleaner or rain repellent. The chief pilot added that he did not instruct the pilot on how to clean the windshield. He said that from his experience, most pilots at the lodge used soap and water to clean the windscreen. The Senior Vice President added, "We don't know what Terry used to clean the Otter windshield. I am relatively certain that Terry would have told [the chief pilot] if he wanted to order something special to clean the Otter windshield."

In describing the operation to the HRM fishing camp, which was frequented regularly during the summer fishing season by lodge guests, the chief pilot stated that GCI Lodge personnel would usually call the HRM camp the night before an intended trip to check availability. He added that on the day of the accident he thought "...if the weather had been nice, then HRM might have been more alarmed, but with the 'crummy' weather they may have made assumptions about the plane coming."

The chief pilot said that he does not micromanage the Otter flight operations from 300 miles away in Anchorage. He said that the pilots are compensated for their services by the day, not by the flight hour, which removes the incentive of flying regardless of the

conditions. He added that if there's anything questionable, the pilot can call him for assistance. "He (the pilot) can just stop."

The following outlines the aircraft complement used by the flight operations department from 1996 to the present:

- De Havilland DHC-2 MK3(Turbine Beaver), Amphib Floats Leased 1996-2000 N4478
- De Havilland DHC-2 MK3 (Turbine Beaver), Amphib Floats Owned 2000 - 2005 N4478
- Cessna 550 (Citation V) Leased 2001 - 2005 N560ER
- Piper Cheyenne II - Leased 2000 - 2001 N555PM
- Piper Cheyenne IIIA Leased 2001 - 2003 N440CA
- Piper Cheyenne IIIA Owned 2003 -2004 N440CA
- Cessna Caravan Owned 2003 - 2005 N604MA
- De Havilland DHC-2 Beaver, Straight Floats Owned 2004 - 2005 – Acquired w/ Property Transaction – Never Flown.
- De Havilland DHC-2 Beaver, Straight Floats Owned 2004 - 2005 – Acquired w/ Property Transaction - Never Flown.
- De Havilland DHC-3 Otter (Texas Turbine Conversion) Owned 2004- N455A
- Astra SPX Leased, 560 Company 2005 - N89HS

Prior Accident History

On August 28, 2002, a General Communications Incorporated (GCI) de Havilland DHC-2 MK 3 amphibious float-equipped airplane was substantially damaged when it nosed over after landing with its wheels extended on Lake Nerka, about 15 miles northwest of Aleknagik, Alaska. The airline transport pilot received fatal injuries, one passenger received minor injuries, and the remaining passenger was not injured. On April 18, 2003, The National Transportation Safety Board determined that the probable cause of the accident was "The pilot's failure to use a checklist to ensure the airplane was in the proper landing configuration, which precipitated an inadvertent water landing

on amphibious floats with the wheels extended. A factor contributing to the accident was the pilot's failure to secure the cargo in the aft cabin."¹²

7.0 LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Record of Interviews

Attachment 2 - Record of Statements

Attachment 3 - Sky Connect flight data (8-1 to 8-9 2010)

Attachment 4 - Pilot Employment/Training Records (ConocoPhillips)

Attachment 5 - Satellite map

Attachment 6 - Flight track maps of PIC (Terry Smith's flights) 8/4 to 8/9 2010

Attachment 7 - Weight and Balance Data

Attachment 8 - DLG Audio Highlights August 7 and 9

Thomas M. Little
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

¹² NTSB accident number ANC02FA106.