

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (N317BA) CRASH *

NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING

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Accident No. CEN8FA217

JUNE 9, 2018

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Interview of: COLLEEN SCHOOLEY

Teton Aviation Center

Teton Aviation Center
Driggs, IdahoWednesday,
June 13, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL J. HODGES, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MATTHEW BLAD, Aviation Safety Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

PETER KLINE, General Manager
Teton Aviation Center

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:01 p.m.)

MR. HODGES: We are recording. We are doing the CEN18FA217 interview in Driggs, Idaho at Teton Aviation Center. Today is Wednesday June 13, 2018. The time is 1401 Mountain Daylight Time. I'm Mike Hodges with the NTSB, investigator in charge.

MR. BLAD: I'm Matthew Bald, Federal Aviation Administration.

MS. SCHOOLEY: Colleen Schooley, director of flight operations at Teton Aviation.

MR. KLINE: Peter Kline, general manager at Teton Aviation Center.

MR. HODGES: And there's anyone have any objections to recording this interview?

MR. BLAD: No.

MS. SCHOOLEY: No.

MR. KLINE: No.

MR. HODGES: Okay. And today will be interviewing Colleen.

INTERVIEW OF COLLEEN SCHOOLEY

BY MR. HODGES:

Q. All right. Collen, how long have you work for Teton Aviation Center?

A. Let's see, I started back at the flight department in 2012. I did work at the front desk before that and then took a break and came back. So --

Q. Okay. And then what did you do prior to working here?

1 A. I'm -- let's see. I worked at Grand Targhee Ski Resort for
2 about 5 years. Then in 2008, I came and worked here for about 5
3 years --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- took a break, came back.

6 Q. Cool. And then, just give me an overview of your aviation
7 background, like just with certificates and ratings --

8 A. Yes, yes.

9 Q. -- and approximate knowledge base?

10 A. I got my private pilot certificate in Deer Park Washington in
11 1998, then I attended Jacksonville University. They were
12 associated with Comair Aviation Academy down in Jacksonville,
13 Florida. Got up through my CFI there. Started instructing in
14 Spokane, Washington where I am from. Along the way added MEI and
15 II, and then moved out here when I graduated in college in 2002.
16 Was a ski bum for a while and then got back into aviation.

17 Q. Okay. And then --

18 A. I guess I also added on my glider certificate in 2015.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I'll have to double check on that, but --

21 Q. Okay, cool. And just roughly total hours for everything?

22 A. About 2200.

23 Q. 2200. Okay, cool. And then, your based just out of Driggs;
24 is that correct?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. And then just for your position as director of flight
2 operations, can you just give me like your day-to-day duties that
3 you do, please?

4 A. Yeah. So I supervise instructors, manage the schedule, keep
5 track of the maintenance requirements on the airplanes, handle
6 the, you know, the paperwork, emailing back and forth, keeping
7 track of -- making sure the documentations for certificates,
8 medicals, things like that for all the employees are in place,
9 manage the training of the new flight instructors. I kind of just
10 supervise the training of rental check-outs, things like that for
11 rental pilots. Do stage checks for the students. Help out
12 anywhere else needed, so -- I also pick up a few students myself.
13 I do tailwheel training, flight reviews, rental check-outs, a lot
14 of things.

15 Q. Okay, cool. And then what aircraft are you qualified to fly
16 here?

17 A. I might fly the Husky, both of the 172s, and the glider at
18 this time.

19 Q. And then when did you officially become the director of
20 flight operations?

21 A. Let's see. I think it was 2015. This is my third summer --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- so end of May -- I want to say end of May 2015.

24 Q. Okay. Okay.

25 MR. KLINE: We can get the exact date.

1 MS. SCHOOLEY: Yes.

2 MR. HODGES: Okay, no worries, no worries.

3 MS. SCHOOLEY: Yes.

4 BY MR. HODGES:

5 Q. And then, do you have any other additional duties here
6 outside of director flight operations? Are you like the site
7 safety manager --

8 A. No.

9 Q. -- do anything else, or just strictly of director of fight
10 operations?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And then do you work part-time in any other
13 organizations?

14 A. I wait tables at Teton Thai occasionally.

15 Q. Okay, okay. All right. Thank you. And then just shifting
16 gears now I want to talking about just the accident pilot
17 background. With the accident pilot, can you kind of describe
18 your relationship with her since you've work here?

19 A. Yes. I mean, Kris has been such a huge part of this
20 organization from the get-go, so I, you know, I knew her,
21 associated with her. I think I first met her when I came out to
22 do a tailwheel endorsement in probably 2003 or 2004, and I thought
23 I was getting in the tow plane to sit in the tow plane, and I
24 ended up on a glider instruction ride instead. So I met Kris
25 then. I've known her throughout my time instructing here, being a

1 rental pilot here, and then she, along with two of the other
2 instructors, was my kind of primary instructor during my glider
3 training myself. She signed me off for my check ride there and,
4 you know, we just worked as co-workers throughout that whole time
5 and then I became her supervisor when I took over the flight
6 department --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- which we've had a good relationship. She's always been
9 open to suggestion, open to change. If there was something that,
10 you know, I thought we could be doing better, she was open to
11 that. As well as she would give me suggestions if there was
12 things that she thought we could do better throughout the time.
13 But yeah --

14 Q. What was she like flying in the cockpit in the glider?

15 A. She was stern, but fun. She didn't let you get away with
16 doing anything that wasn't -- not wrong, but if it wasn't to the
17 best of your ability and the way that it should be done, then she
18 would correct you. But I think she also recognized that at
19 some -- you know, students need to learn from their mistakes a
20 little bit --

21 Q. Sure.

22 A. -- as well, so she will let you get a little off course, or a
23 little out of position on a tow or something like that and let you
24 get it back. But she was always very confident. I always felt
25 safe with her knowing that I'm learning new things and that she

1 would always keep us safe. She was a good person to fly with.
2 I've flown with several different instructors and everybody has
3 different styles, of course --

4 Q. Sure.

5 A. -- and yes, and I would say she was maybe more of the stern
6 type in the cockpit but fun at the same time.

7 Q. Sure.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. All right. Did she have any medical issues to your knowledge
10 that you knew?

11 A. None to my knowledge.

12 Q. Okay, okay. And did she have any issues to your knowledge
13 with like drugs or alcohol or anything of that nature?

14 A. No, she doesn't drink at all.

15 Q. Okay, okay. Did she use tobacco at all to your knowledge?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay. Did she use caffeine?

18 A. I honestly don't know if I have ever seen her drink a cup of
19 coffee.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I don't know.

22 Q. Okay, no worries. And then did she have any sleep issues to
23 your knowledge at all?

24 A. Not to my knowledge.

25 Q. Okay, okay. And then did she ever have any previous

1 violations or incidents or accidents to your knowledge?

2 A. Not to my knowledge.

3 Q. Okay, okay. And then did the company ever take just hiring
4 action against her for anything or --

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. All right. And then just with her working here, can
7 you kind of describe her familiarity with the accident route and
8 doing the sightseeing tour flight, please?

9 A. I don't think there's anyone in the country that has more
10 familiarity with the sightseeing route and the terrain and the
11 mountains in general. As a pilot, I think she has more hours in
12 those mountains over that route than anyone else.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. She taught all of us. When I finished getting my rating, I
15 flew up with her several times through the route just to get
16 comfortable with it myself. And yeah, I don't think there's
17 anyone with more experience.

18 Q. Okay. Now just kind of shifting gears a bit.

19 MR. HODGES: On the day of the accident, you weren't here,
20 correct? You were out --

21 MR. KLINE: I was out of the country.

22 MR. HODGES: Country.

23 BY MR. HODGES:

24 Q. And then were you --

25 A. I was not here.

1 A. You were not here? Okay, okay.

2 Q. Just shifting gears then to the safety program here, or
3 safety culture, if you will, in your organization. Now how would
4 you describe the safety culture here at Teton Aviation Center?

5 A. I feel very safe, like we have an excellent safety culture.
6 In my mind, all of us feel that if we see anything we are going to
7 say something. And I feel that as a management team, that if
8 anyone ever comes to us with something, that it's addressed right
9 away. And then it's in an open environment that we always tell
10 people we want to know if there's something that you think we
11 should be doing better or if you see something unsafe, stop it if
12 you can, if that's within your realm of responsibility, and if
13 not, make sure we know, make sure we know anyways.

14 Q. Uh-hum, okay.

15 A. I think all of us safety -- I mean you -- we say this after
16 an accident but I feel like --

17 Q. Sure.

18 A. -- it is at the top of our mind all the time. We had just
19 had a pilot meeting Friday, where, you know, safety was the topic
20 of the day.

21 Q. Okay. And just from your position as director of flight
22 operations like what are some of the top hazards that the
23 organization faces, would you say?

24 A. Weather --

25 Q. Weather.

1 A. -- big rocks out there. You combine big rocks with weather
2 and I think you need to know what you're doing. And maybe the
3 idea that this is a fairly heavily used, mixed-use airport in an
4 uncontrolled environment, in which you could have a glider and a
5 jet and somebody in an experimental without a radio kind of all
6 coming together.

7 Q. Sure.

8 A. So just being aware; situational awareness is definitely
9 important.

10 Q. Okay. And you kind of mentioned before about you guys had a
11 -- or a meeting recently with all the pilots. How is safety
12 information relayed, communicated to the pilots? Like if you had
13 something, you know, safety-wise you want to communicate to your
14 folks, how do you guys put it out? Is it through meetings or
15 emails or reading files; how do you guys do that?

16 A. Primarily through email and then word of mouth. I would try
17 and talk with everyone specifically about something when I saw
18 them. And if was something that required immediate attention, I'd
19 probably call everyone on the phone and make sure that we talked
20 about it right away.

21 Q. Okay. With the accident aircraft, the LET L-23 glider, what
22 are your overall thoughts of flying that glider?

23 A. I guess it's the only glider that I have ever flown --

24 Q. Okay, okay.

25 A. -- but it -- it's the only glider I have ever flown so I

1 don't know that I can compare it to anything else. It was
2 maneuverable. It felt stable. It was easy to control when we
3 were flying.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Yeah, it being the only one I've ever flown, it's a little
6 hard for me --

7 Q. Sure. No worries.

8 A. -- compare it to anything.

9 Q. Were there any -- flying the glider, were there any like
10 ergonomic issues or problems like with layout of the flight
11 controls or switches or levers, anything of that nature that came
12 to mind?

13 A. Not really.

14 Q. Okay. And then, I don't know if -- pilots operating, I know
15 if it's the correct term for the glider, but do you feel the
16 emergency procedures listed in the manual were clearly
17 communicated for pilots to follow and understand?

18 A. Sure.

19 Q. Okay. And then just kind of conclusion, since the accident
20 occurred, have there been any changes that have occurred here at
21 Teton Aviation Center?

22 A. We've taken a break from flying for the week, at a minimum,
23 to make sure that everybody's got their head in the right place --

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. -- and can focus on the task at hand.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I would say it would be the most immediate thing that we've
3 put in to place. It's only been 2 -- well, 3 days that we've been
4 back, to assess what we could have done differently or what -- if
5 there are things that we need to change. But that would it be an
6 on-going process --

7 Q. Sure.

8 A. -- definitely.

9 Q. Since the accident occurred has there been anything with how
10 you've done things personally around here as in charge of flight
11 operations, anything you've change or done since the accident on
12 your level?

13 A. I mean, it's a little bit hard to say because the accident
14 essentially terminated our glider operation --

15 Q. Sure.

16 A. -- so that's not something that we are going to be doing. I
17 mean, Peter and I had talk about on our scenic flights that, you
18 know, we'll make sure that there's verbal communication with
19 pilots, checking weather and wind aloft, instituting some
20 reporting points as we go through the flight to allow the desk to
21 keep track of us a little better.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But mainly just making sure that our pilots are in a safe
24 head place --

25 Q. Sure.

1 A. -- before we continue operations.

2 Q. Okay. And then, are there any like previous safety concerns
3 related to the circumstances as we know them now from this
4 accident, anything that you can think of?

5 A. Say that again.

6 Q. Like are there any previous safety issues or concerns kind of
7 related to the accident that we know so far that you can think of?

8 A. No. I mean, kind of like you already addressed, in that
9 every day when we go flying in those mountains, the winds and the
10 weather are a concern, and something that we've put practices in
11 place, you know, minimum standards that we follow or maximum wind
12 velocity, things like that. And so, I mean, those risks are there
13 every time we fly and we mitigate them by not flying if we
14 don't --

15 Q. Sure.

16 A. -- think that the risk is -- if the risk is too great. No --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- I guess.

19 Q. Okay. And just from your position, how would you rate the
20 overall employee morale here at the company?

21 A. Ten out of 10.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Yeah, we're a great family. Even when we have issues with
24 one another or someone leaves or someone, you know, is let go --
25 it's good.

1 Q. Sure.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. And then, do you feel the company has adequate
4 personnel, equipment to do the operations here? Like enough --

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. -- enough employees and equipment? Okay. And then from your
7 position are there any safety improvements that you would like to
8 see implemented here, whether it's with, you know, operations,
9 maintenance, you name it; is there anything that you would like to
10 see implemented here?

11 A. No. Peter and I haven't talk about this yet, but I would
12 like us to carry the personal locator beacons on our scenic
13 flights routinely, moving forward.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I don't know if that would have made a difference at all in
16 this situation, but with our airplanes I'd like to see us do that
17 as well as rely -- I mean we have the ELTs.

18 Q. Sure.

19 MR. KLINE: Like the Spidertracks?

20 MS. SCHOOLEY: Yeah. Well, or like the personal locator
21 beacon, the emergency like 911.

22 MR. HODGES: To (indiscernible) or --

23 MS. SCHOOLEY: Yeah, I think we have got some ANRs.

24 MR. HODGES: Okay.

25 MR. KLINE: Do those track?

1 MS. SCHOOLEY: They don't track.

2 MR. KLINE: You have to just --

3 MS. SCHOOLEY: You have to set it off.

4 MR. KLINE: Yeah, I've given thought to Spidertracks or
5 something like that --

6 MR. HODGES: Okay.

7 MR. KILNE: -- but, you know.

8 MS. SCHOOLEY: And I think I'd like to see us move towards,
9 and I think we already will be, the 406 ELTs that'll give an exact
10 location.

11 BY MR. HODGES:

12 Q. You guys just have the 121 ones right now? Okay.

13 A. Yes, we are working on the ADS-B upgrades.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I see that as a safety thing in the near future.

16 Q. So you guys are in the process of getting the ADS-B in and
17 out done on all your aircraft?

18 A. Out.

19 MR. KLINE: One's already done.

20 MS. SCHOOLEY: One's already done.

21 MR. HODGES: Okay, cool.

22 MS. SCHOOLEY: Next year we'll get the next -- the second one
23 done. And I'm assuming Rich is working on the Husky, but --

24 BY MR. HODGES:

25 Q. Okay. Just one quick question before I finish up on my end.

1 With the area you guys flying over the mountains, are there any --
2 I don't know if this is the right term or not, but like remote
3 weather reporting stations up in the mountains?

4 A. I mean, you can look at a web cam maybe at Grand Targhee.

5 Q. Uh-hum.

6 A. There are some wind stations at Grand Targhee but, no.

7 Q. Okay. And then, was there anything that I missed or anything
8 that you'd like to bring up that you feel is important?

9 A. No, I don't think so.

10 MR. HODGES: Okay, all right. Let's kind of go around the
11 table an, Matt, did you have any question for her?

12 MR. BLAD: Yeah.

13 BY MR. BLAD:

14 Q. And I know we haven't covered any of paperwork yet --

15 A. Uh-hum.

16 Q. -- but like for Kris, was any like scheduled recurrent
17 training or anything that you guys do regularly?

18 A. When we get the glider -- because Kris was the only a glider
19 pilot and not a power pilot, when we get the glider out in the
20 spring, as soon as the weather is good enough, we all kind of get
21 -- go out together, get our three takeoffs and landings in. If
22 anybody is interested in any other training or wants to practice
23 some things, then, I mean, quite honestly, she's the one that we
24 go to for that. So just other than the standard currency items.

25 Q. Okay. And then it's -- I know you weren't here, do we know

1 what time she actually reported here for work, to start her shift
2 before the accident?

3 A. About 9:15.

4 MR. KLINE: From LeeAnn's statement.

5 MS. SCHOOLEY: Yeah.

6 BY MR. BLAD:

7 Q. Okay. And then maybe you take us through kind of what's the
8 procedure for taking a passenger -- you know, a passenger shows
9 up, what do you guys do to kind of get everything going, briefing,
10 all that kind of jazz?

11 A. Yeah. So the passenger typically arrives 15 minutes before
12 the flight. So they come up to the front desk and the desk gals
13 have the waivers that they sign. Usually at that time the pilots
14 are pre-flighting the airplanes or getting fuel or setting up to
15 tow down to the other runway, if they need, to with the glider.

16 And then prior to that, when the pilot gets here, they'll
17 usually -- we have paperwork that we have on the costumer with
18 weights and ages and things like that, number of passengers on
19 board. So that the pilot, if they haven't already, because we do
20 have that information also online, but they'll check that out to
21 see who their passengers are, what are the names, how old are
22 they, what are their weights, to make sure that we're within the
23 limits. So usually that's kind of checked out when they get to
24 the airport during their preflight.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Passengers will sign a waiver, pilots will come in say hi,
2 you know, and then head out to the airplane. Usually on the way
3 out to the airplane we'll talk with them, you know, where are you
4 from; have you been in a small airplane before? Just kind of gage
5 their overall history. And I think at that time too, at least for
6 myself, I'm also gaging their comfort level with this whole idea.

7 And so depending on the operation, but for the glider I'll
8 speak to specifically, we'll either load the passenger up right
9 here at the intersection if we're going to launch off of 4, or
10 we'll ride in the golf cart down to 22 if we're going to launch
11 from there. We'll get the passenger into the airplane, and the
12 seatbelts are not entirely intuitive there, so for the most part I
13 tend to buckle the passenger up, show them what I'm doing as I do
14 it, and I show them how to release the buckle in two ways.
15 There's a cord you pull, and then you can also squeeze the buckle
16 on there as well. So I'll make sure to show them that.

17 And then I tend to point -- I go through flight, the
18 different instruments. There's dual controls, so I tell them
19 you'll see the stick moving; there's the rudder pedals up here,
20 you'll see that moving. Point out the different, you know, the
21 release for the glider rope and not to touch that and don't touch
22 this; here's a few things you can touch.

23 And an important thing we make sure we tell them is sometimes
24 it gets a little bumpy up there and, you know, you are going to be
25 bumping around possibly, if you need to grab on to something,

1 you've got your shoulder harness right here. So I make sure I
2 tell them grab the shoulder harness if you need to hold onto
3 something. And at that point I'll also point out there's a canopy
4 release lever there, and I'll tell them we do not touch the canopy
5 release lever. And at the same time I'll show them the tow rope
6 release there, that we don't touch that

7 Then I usually kind of pull the canopy down, show them how
8 the canopy release works. I'll tell them I'll handle this, but just so
9 that you know if you do need to open this canopy, you pull this
10 lever back, push up. I also show them the little -- the window's
11 a little bit weird. It's that slider type with the little insert
12 that comes in and out, so they can open and close that to get air.

13 Let's see. Show them where the sick sacks are, because
14 that's important on a glider. And ask them if they have any
15 questions. I talk a little bit about communication, that we can
16 talk to each other; there's no headsets or anything, we just have
17 to talk a little bit louder. So --

18 Q. Okay. As far --

19 MR. KLINE: I think you might have missed when you, briefing
20 with the tow pilot the --

21 MS. SCHOOLEY: Oh, right.

22 MR. KLINE: -- tow pilot and the glider pilot --

23 MS. SCHOOLEY: Right.

24 MR. KLINE: -- before you get the passengers.

25 MS. SCHOOLEY: Right. Yeah.

1 MR. KLINE: You kind of skipped through that.

2 MS. SCHOOLEY: Yeah. So after typically the glider pilots
3 pre-flighted their plane and the tow pilots pre-flighted their
4 plane, we do get together and we go over emergency procedures,
5 signals, what the plan for the flight is that day. We'll talk
6 about the weather, what the winds are doing, what the winds are
7 doing aloft and what we think our route is going to be, and then
8 if anyone has any questions or concerns, so that both the tow
9 pilot and the glider pilot are on the same page. We also have
10 radio communication between the glider and tow pilot on the Unicom
11 frequency.

12 BY MR. BLAD:

13 Q. Okay. So I'm kind of skipping around a little bit. Going
14 back to the weight and balance for the passenger, so they submit
15 that information. Is there any sort of verification process for
16 you guys specifically for weight?

17 A. We don't have a verification process, but I think in our
18 minds when we meet the passenger that's part of our kind of sizing
19 them up, and we do have a scale. If we do need to verify, then
20 we'll kind of pull a passenger aside and just ask, and most people
21 are fine with that. If we do get weights on here and it is close,
22 or close, if not over, we'll make sure that we verify those
23 weights, both with the passenger and with the scale to make sure
24 that we're within limits.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. But as a routine, we don't weight everybody when they come
2 through the door.

3 Q. Okay. The only other thing -- so do you guys have a regular
4 route that you fly for these, the scenic air tours and the glider?
5 Like is it the same route every time?

6 A. Yes and no. We have kind of two sort of standard tow routes
7 that do stay pretty typical, but that can vary or linger in one
8 place or other, or turn in one place or another, depending on the
9 lift conditions of the day, because we are looking for that rising
10 air, whether it's thermal or terrain.

11 So we have a kind of a general places that we do go, a
12 general route that we follow. Once the glider releases, in
13 general yes, depending on conditions. If conditions are calm,
14 lift is good and they get up higher and have the distance they
15 want to go to, someplace a little longer, they may go a little
16 further. So in general, yes. Specifically it does vary from
17 pilot to pilot, and it varies depending on the conditions of the
18 day.

19 Q. Okay. Was the accident site located in an area that would be
20 considered kind of the general place where you're flying or --

21 A. I mean, the accident site was much closer to the mountains
22 than we would normally be flying, so we don't know how the
23 airplane ended up that close, whether -- it was not outside of the
24 range that I would expected the glider to be, other than within
25 proximity to terrain.

1 Q. Terrain, okay.

2 A. But, yeah, it wasn't outside of the area that I would expect
3 them to be.

4 MR. BLAD: Okay. It's all I have.

5 MR. HODGES: Do you have any questions?

6 MR. KLINE: No.

7 MR. HODGES: Okay. Do you have any questions for any of us?
8 Before we finish up?

9 MS. SCHOOLEY: No.

10 MR. HODGES: Okay. All right. We'll go ahead and stop
11 recording then.

12 MS. SCHOOLEY: Okay.

13 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (n317BA) CRASH
 NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING
 JUNE 9, 2018
 Interview of Colleen Schooley

ACCIDENT NO.: CEN18FA217

PLACE: Driggs, Idaho

DATE: June 13, 2108

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Katia Toniolo
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (N317BA) CRASH *

NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING

* Accident No. CEN8FA217

JUNE 9, 2018

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Interview of: RICH SUGDEN

Teton Aviation

Via Telephone

Wednesday,

June 13, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL J. HODGES, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MATTHEW BLAD, Aviation Safety Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

PETER KLINE, General Manager
Teton Aviation Center

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I N T E R V I E W

(14:43)

MR. HODGES: Okay, we are recording now. We are doing the CEN18FA217 interviews in Driggs, Idaho at Teton Aviation Center. Toady is Wednesday June 13, 2018. The time is 14:43 Mountain daylight time. I'm Mike Hodges with the NTSB, Investigator in Charge.

MR. BLAD: Matt Blad, the Safety Inspector FAA, Salt Lake.

MR. KLINE: Peter Kline, General Manager at Teton Aviation Center.

MR. HODGES: And then, Rich if you want to just introduce yourself, please?

MR. SUGDEN: Rich Sugden and I'm at the owner of Teton Aviation Center.

MR. HODGES: Okay. And then today we are going to interviewing Rich.

INTERVIEW OF RICH SUGDEN

BY MR. HODGES:

Q. Rich, just kind of go over your background first. How long have you owned Teton Aviation Center?

A. You better ask Peter.

MR. KLINE: I think it was '96 or '97? Before me, so.

MR. SUGDEN: Yes, it was a few years before that. I have to, you know, I don't remember of the top of my head but --

MR. HODGES: No worries, no worries. Okay.

1 MR. KLINE: It was early to mid-'90s.

2 BY MR. HODGES:

3 Q. Okay, cool, cool. And then, what did you do prior to owing
4 Teton Aviation Center?

5 A. Well, the same thing I'm doing now, I'm a doctor --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- I was a Navy Flight surgeon and owned the FBO in Jackson,
8 Wyoming Teton Aviation and then --

9 MR. KLINE: Jackson Hole Aviation.

10 MR. SUGDEN: -- we sold that and bought the FBO in Driggs,
11 Idaho which became Teton Aviation.

12 BY MR. HODGES:

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But I'm still a practicing physician.

15 Q. Okay, cool, cool. Can you explain just your aviation
16 background just like with certificates and approximate hours,
17 please?

18 A. I started flying when I was 16, like a lot of people did and
19 went on to get quite a few ratings. I was a flight surgeon in the
20 Navy. Navy takes their flight surgeons up through solo, I was the
21 flight surgeon of the Navy test center in test pilot school for 4
22 years. Have commercial instrument -- glider, rotorcraft, pretty
23 much anything that flies but balloons. A lot of experimental type
24 ratings.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Restored a bunch of ex-military airplanes and about, I think
2 about 11,000 hours.

3 Q. Okay, cool, cool. And then, you're based is out of Jackson?
4 Or Driggs or?

5 A. Driggs.

6 Q. Driggs? Okay, okay. And then, can you just kind of explain
7 like your day-to-day duties as the owner, please?

8 A. My day-to-day duties are just talking to Peter Kline who has
9 all the day-to-day duties.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I don't have any day-to-day duties at Teton Aviation.

12 Q. Okay. And then what aircraft are you qualify to fly here at
13 Teton Aviation Center?

14 A. Pretty much all of them.

15 Q. Okay, all of them? Okay.

16 A. I mean, I don't -- all the ones that I own I'm qualified to
17 fly and, of course, Teton Aviation owns some 172s and gliders,
18 things like that, that I'm also qualified to fly.

19 Q. Okay. And they mentioned before, besides being the owner,
20 you also work as a medical doctor. Did you do any other side of
21 work outside those two functions?

22 A. I own a computer software company and I work with them.

23 Q. Okay, cool, cool. I'm just kind of shifting gears, talking
24 about the day of the accident, can you kind of explain, kind of
25 from your position, like where you were on the day of the

1 accident, kind of what happened that day, please, if you don't
2 mind?

3 A. Okay. Yes, I was at home and I got a call from Peter saying
4 that Kris was out on the scenic glider, did not come back, was
5 about an hour overdue and that he'd notified Teton -- or Teton
6 Aviation notified Teton County Search and Rescue and they'd also
7 notified the Teton National Park Search and Rescue because we
8 weren't sure where the glider -- if the glider gone down -- where
9 it had gone down.

10 And so, I told Peter that I thought it would be a good idea
11 if I went out with the helicopter and looked around, follow --
12 because they don't go very far from Driggs, Idaho. And so I went
13 over and we got the helicopter out, and then Teton County Search
14 and Rescue sent an observer over to fly with me so we could have,
15 you know, two sets of eyes.

16 We took off -- I'd have to go back and looked at the time,
17 but I'm guessing 1:30 something like that, maybe 2:00, and we just
18 followed the -- Peter sent me the route that the Glider normally
19 flies, a map with the route on it, and we just followed that route
20 and went up the various canyons. And at the top of these canyons,
21 there're big open kind of fields. Not fields, but big open areas
22 that the ends of the canyons and we just criss-crossed back and
23 forth, did a search grid across those.

24 And then we got abeam where the Grand Teton, middle and south
25 Tetons are, and dropped over -- there was a small, fairly low

1 ridge there, and the flew around the lake, which is near where the
2 wreckage was found. And the -- it was on the right side of the
3 helicopter and, fortunately, he saw it. I didn't see it because I
4 was looking out at the left side. He saw it, said I see something
5 strange. We circled back. We saw the wing with the Scenic
6 Flights -- it was upside down, so we could read the Scenic Flights
7 so we knew that that was the wreckage.

8 So we circled around; he took some pictures. We tried to
9 call Grand Teton National -- because we were told that Teton
10 County Search and Rescue, before we took off, was not going to
11 launch. They were going to send the Grand Teton National Park
12 helicopter and they said it will be up there in about 30 minutes.
13 They wanted us to call it off. And I said, well, I've got the
14 engine running, it's not going to take me 10, 15 minutes to get up
15 there, I might as well go look.

16 So, I called for the Grand -- called the Grand Teton National
17 Park helicopter multiples times, never could get a hold them. I'm
18 not sure when they came. But once we established for sure that
19 the accident -- that was the accident, there were no survivors,
20 there was no marks in the snow indicating anybody had gotten out
21 of the wreckage, we came back.

22 Q. Okay. And then what kind of helicopter did you fly up there
23 in to the accident site?

24 A. It's called the Soloy, S-O-L-O-Y, Bell 47 and it's a turbine
25 powered Bell 47. It has the same turbine engine as a JetRanger,

1 but it's the old bubble bell, like in M*A*S*H.

2 Q. Okay. Very cool, very cool.

3 A. But it's a high alt, it's a good high-altitude helicopter.

4 Q. Okay. And then when you guys were flying up there could you
5 just kind of explain like what the general weather conditions were
6 like up there, please?

7 A. It was clear, gusty winds. Gusty enough that I was, you know,
8 clearing these ridges by a lot, several thousand feet. We got
9 into some pretty good down drafts but nothing -- no severe
10 turbulence. I'd say it was a lot moderate turbulence, though we
11 stayed away from -- we stayed pretty well away from all the
12 ridges, always stayed on the lee side of the canyons.

13 Q. Okay. So there was no -- I guess you guys didn't experience
14 any controllability issues flying up there, nothing crazy like
15 that then?

16 A. Can you say that again?

17 Q. Just flying up there though I mean, there was nothing bad,
18 nothing where you guys experienced like controllability issues
19 flying the helicopter, or it was?

20 A. No.

21 Q. It was pretty stable then?

22 A. No, but one of the other pilots who flew in that afternoon
23 was flying a T-34, you know, the Beech the Navy mentored, the Navy
24 trainer.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. It looks like a little Bonanza. Flying over the bit holes,
2 he said he had pretty good turbulence. But that's on the other
3 side, that's on the western side of the valley where we are, where
4 Teton Aviation is.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So there were some pretty gusty winds.

7 Q. Okay. Are you able just to estimate roughly wind speed
8 direction when you were up there, or they were just kind all over
9 the place or?

10 A. The winds were pretty much down the runway, I'd have to go
11 back and look, but I guess it was probably 15 knots, gusts in the
12 20s, something like that.

13 Q. Okay, okay. And then just a rough estimate on ceiling and
14 visibility up in that area?

15 A. It was clear --

16 Q. Clear.

17 A. -- I mean -- just scattered clouds, but it was clear visibly
18 probably 100 miles.

19 Q. Okay, okay. And just rough estimate on the temperature up
20 there in that area?

21 A. I never looked.

22 Q. Okay, no worries, no worries.

23 A. At the alt we were at 11- -- I did notice we were between
24 11,000 and 11,500 feet --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. -- when we were flying around higher. We let down a little
2 bit to fly over the crash site. But when we were at the 11,000
3 feet, you know, whatever the temperature's there, was cool. I
4 mean, I had the windows closed.

5 Q. Okay, okay. And then just, you know, being up in that area
6 right after the accident occurred, did you feel the overall
7 weather conditions with what you saw were safe for glider
8 operations up there at the time?

9 A. Yes, I would think so. I'm not that experienced glider pilot.
10 I mean, I only got 25, 30 hours in gliders. So, you know, the
11 fact that Kris was a highly experienced glider pilot and
12 instructor felt comfortable, I -- comfortable -- you know, I
13 probably wouldn't have done it because I'm not that experienced --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- but I think somebody with her experience, and she is very
16 cautious. If she felt comfortable, then I'd feel comfortable
17 having her do it.

18 Q. Okay. Just shifting gears, just kind of talking about Kris
19 now. Can you just kind of give us an overall description of your
20 relationship with her since you've known her and kind of what
21 interactions with her have been like, please?

22 A. Yes. It was strictly social. I've never flown with her.
23 I've only met her just around the FBO, talked to her. She comes
24 to some of the dinners and things, aviation things. We used to
25 have some fly-ins; she would come to that. But I don't know her

1 -- I really would say I know her socially but not professionally.

2 Q. Okay, okay. And then did she have any medical issues to your
3 knowledge?

4 A. None that I know of.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Again, I never saw her medically as an AME.

7 Q. Okay, okay. And then --

8 A. I wouldn't tell you anyway.

9 Q. Do you know if she used tobacco or caffeine at all from with
10 your experience with her?

11 A. I would bet you a million dollars not, but I don't know for
12 sure.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Not when she was with me, no.

15 Q. Okay, okay. And then, did you -- any known issues with drugs
16 or alcohol use, that you knew of?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay, okay. Did she have any sleep issues to your knowledge?

19 A. Any what?

20 Q. Any sleeping issues at all to your knowledge?

21 A. No, no.

22 Q. Okay, okay.

23 A. You guys never give up on the sleep apnea. You know, we
24 talked you out of all this stuff as AMEs.

25 Q. Just shifting gears, kind of just talking about like the

1 safety program and the safety culture here at the organization,
2 how would you describe the overall safety culture here at Teton
3 Aviation Center?

4 A. I think it's excellent. I mean, I think that I know that --
5 well, from what I did observed that it's excellent. And I think
6 that I've always pushed that, you know, we do everything -- safety
7 is paramount, even more important than, you know, satisfying the
8 customers.

9 Q. And then from your position as the owner, I know you've got a
10 lot of aviation experience, what are some top hazards you feel
11 that the company faces here?

12 A. No difference than any other FBO flying airplane. I mean, we
13 trying mitigate everything. I mean, it's probably more dangerous
14 to drive to the airport than to fly out of the airport.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And Peter can outline that. I mean, he's the general
17 manager. He's the one that is all delegated to, if you will.

18 Q. Sure, sure. And then if an employee here found a safety
19 issue, whether it's with, you know, operational procedures or
20 maintenance, whatever, do you feel that that employee can bring it
21 up to management team members and the issue will get address in a
22 timely fashion?

23 A. Absolutely.

24 Q. Okay, okay. I'm just kind of concluding here. Have there
25 been any changes at the organization since the accident has

1 occurred?

2 A. Since the accident have occurred?

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. Nothing that I'm aware of.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. You know, I know we are not doing any soaring gliding, you
7 know, soaring scenic flights until we get all the stuff straight.

8 Q. Okay. And then how would you rate the overall employee moral
9 here at the company?

10 A. I think it's excellent.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. We have very few people leave. Some occasionally will
13 retire. We have a waiting list of people that want to work there.
14 I think it's excellent.

15 Q. Okay, okay. And then do you feel the company has adequate
16 personnel and equipment to do the operations here? Enough, you
17 know, pilots, enough airplanes, equipment et cetera, to do the
18 mission?

19 A. I do, but you better ask Peter.

20 Q. And are there any safety improvements you'd like to see
21 implemented here at the company, whether it's with operations,
22 maintenance, equipment, anything of that nature?

23 A. No, I can't think of any. I mean, I certainly would approve
24 anything that Peter suggested. But I think he's on top of the
25 ball and I can't think of anything offhand.

1 Q. Okay, okay. Just for me on my end out, was anything that I
2 missed during the interview that you'd like to bring up that you
3 feel is important?

4 A. No, nothing that I can think of.

5 MR. HODGES: Okay. Let's go around the table now.

6 Matt, did you have any questions for him?

7 MR. BLAD: I don't have any questions for Rich.

8 MR. HODGES: Do you have any questions, Peter?

9 MR. KLINE: No questions.

10 MR. HODGES: Okay. Rich, did you have any questions for me
11 or for anybody else before we finish up?

12 MR. SUGDEN: Yeah, I do. I liked to know what was found at
13 the crash site, because all we could -- all I could see was a wing
14 and I'm not sure the other debris that was in that picture was
15 even from the aircraft. What was found? I mean, obviously the
16 wing was upside down in the snow field, but what else?

17 MR. HODGES: I tell you what, we can go ahead and conclude
18 the interview, we'll stop recording. and then we can talk about
19 the recovery stuff once we're done with the interview. Would that
20 work for you?

21 MR. SUGDEN: It's fine with me. Yeah.

22 MR. HODGES: Okay, okay. I'll go ahead and stop recording
23 now.

24 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (N317BA) CRASH
NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING
JUNE 9, 2018
Interview of Rich Sugden

ACCIDENT NO.: CEN18FA217

PLACE: Via Telephone

DATE: June 13, 2108

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Katia Toniolo
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (N317BA) CRASH *

NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING

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Accident No. CEN18FA217

JUNE 9, 2018

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Interview of: MARK HERVIG

Teton Aviation Center
Driggs, IdahoWednesday,
June 13, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL J. HODGES, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MATTHEW BLAD, Aviation Safety Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

PETER KLINE, General Manager
Teton Aviation Center

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:09 p.m.)

MR. HODGES: All right. We are recording. We are doing the CEN18FA217 interviews in Driggs, Idaho at Teton Aviation Center. Today is Wednesday, June 13th, 2018. The time is 1509 Mountain Daylight Time. I'm Mike Hodges with the NTSB, investigator in charge.

MR. BLAD: Matthew Blad, safety inspector, FAA.

MR. HERVIG: Mark Hervig, line pilot.

MR. KLINE: Peter Kline, general manager of Teton Aviation Center.

MR. HODGES: And then does anybody have any objections to recording this interview?

MR. BLAD: No.

MR. HERVIG: No.

MR. KLINE: No.

MR. HODGES: Okay. And today we're going to be interviewing Mark.

INTERVIEW OF MARK HERVIG

BY MR. HODGES:

Q. Mark, just staring off with your background, how long have you worked for Teton Aviation Center?

A. Sixteen years.

Q. Sixteen. Okay. And then what did you do prior to working here?

1 A. It's not my primary job.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. So I'm a scientist by trade.

4 Q. Oh, cool. Cool. Okay.

5 A. So it's a part-time job.

6 Q. Okay. Can you just kind of give me just a brief overview of
7 your aviation background, like what certificates and ratings and
8 approximately hours?

9 A. I have commercial glider and commercial power, about 600
10 hours in glider, and 500 in power.

11 Q. Okay. Cool. Cool. And then you're based -- you're right
12 out of Driggs then?

13 A. I -- and I live in Driggs.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay. And then if you'd just kind of just give me a brief
17 overview of your, I guess, day-to-day duties as a line glider
18 pilot here.

19 A. So my role as a glider pilot would be to fly scenic rides,
20 and really that was it. I also tow gliders.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And then did scenic rides in Cessna Skyhawks.

23 Q. Did you do any flight instruction for gliders, or --

24 A. I'm not an instructor.

25 Q. You're not an instructor. Okay. And then for the aircraft

1 you're qualified to fly besides the glider, it's which other ones?

2 The Husky?

3 A. Skyhawk and the Husky.

4 Q. Okay. Okay. And then outside of being a pilot here, do you
5 have any other additional duties like, you know, safety
6 representative, or anything --

7 A. Uh-uh.

8 Q. -- that -- you just strictly just do pilot?

9 A. Strictly flying.

10 Q. Pilot. Okay.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay.

13 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: I want your job.

14 MR. HERVIG: Just show up.

15 BY MR. HODGES:

16 Q. And then shifting gears, just talking about the accident
17 pilot, can you just kind of describe your relationship with her
18 since you've worked here at Teton Aviation Center?

19 A. So I've known Kris as a friend and a, I guess, a work
20 colleague for 16 years.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Seventeen. And she instructed me for my commercial glider
23 rating. So that was my first real serious aviation interaction
24 with her.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And she was an excellent instructor.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And I have flown with her since as an employee, and she's
4 always thorough and generally fun to be around.

5 Q. Okay. Just kind of working with her and flying with her, did
6 she have any medical issues to your knowledge, anything of that
7 nature?

8 A. None that I knew of.

9 Q. Okay. And then did she have any, you know, abuse issues at
10 all with drugs or alcohol to your knowledge?

11 A. Not at all. She actually did not drink.

12 Q. Okay. Did she use like tobacco or caffeine at all, or --

13 A. She didn't drink coffee and she did not use tobacco.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. She's kind of a straight arrow.

16 Q. Did she have any sleep issues to your knowledge at all?

17 A. Not that I know of.

18 Q. And then can you just kind of just give me, you know, a brief
19 explanation -- I know you said she's maybe been here a long time
20 and done a lot of flight operations, just with her familiarity, I
21 guess, with the accident flight route, of what her knowledge is of
22 that area?

23 A. State that again.

24 Q. If you can explain like Kris's familiarity with the accident
25 flight route, of doing the scenic tour flights, of

1 just --

2 A. Oh, she was highly familiar. We tended to do a repeatable
3 route on glider scenics.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Which was, you know, basically up Darby Canyon, kind of
6 towards Table Mountain, and then back by Teton Canyon. It was
7 kind of a little horseshoe pattern that most scenics followed that
8 route. And I would say she -- I don't know how many times, but
9 certainly hundreds of times on that route, in that airplane.

10 So --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I would say very familiar.

13 Q. Just with -- kind of shifting gears now to, you know, the
14 safety program and the safety culture here at the organization.
15 How would you describe the overall safety culture here?

16 A. I would say it's very conscientious.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. We have routine pilot meetings. We have written procedures.
19 And it's a small group, so we always talk and interact.

20 Q. Okay. And then from your, you know, perspective working
21 here, what are some of the top hazards you feel that the
22 organization faces?

23 A. In this environment, maybe weather.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. But, you know, that's manageable because you don't fly in bad

1 weather.

2 Q. And then do you feel if you or another employee here found a
3 safety issue, whether it's with maintenance or procedures,
4 equipment, whatever, do you feel that you could bring it up to
5 your management team members and that they would address the
6 issue?

7 A. Absolutely.

8 Q. Okay. And then, from your perspective as a line pilot here,
9 how is safety information relayed to you guys? Like, if Peter
10 wanted to put something out, or Colleen wanted to put something
11 out to you guys safety-wise, how is that conveyed down to your
12 guys' level?

13 A. I mean, typically like a company-wide email would be a
14 typical example.

15 Q. Okay. Just shifting gears to the -- is it LET, or LET as you
16 guys pronounce it?

17 A. LET.

18 Q. LET. Okay.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. LET L-23 glider --

21 A. More commonly known as a Blanik.

22 Q. Blanik. Okay. My background's helicopters, so this is all
23 new to me with gliders. Just flying that glider, what are your
24 overall thoughts on the glider?

25 A. It's easy to fly. It's well behaved. Well, what more can

1 you say?

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Okay. Just with flying the glider, are there any, I guess,
5 ergonomic issues with the glider that you know of such as like
6 layout of the flight controls or locations of switches, or that,
7 or anything that comes to mind if -- from an ergonomic --

8 A. No.

9 Q. -- aspect with it?

10 A. I mean, it was all well laid out.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And, you know, I'm 6 foot 2, and it was comfortable for me.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. So --

15 Q. And then, you know, the various emergency procedures that
16 are, you know, published in the POH, if you will, are they pretty
17 clear, easy to follow for pilots, do you feel?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Definitely.

21 Q. Just kind of concluding here. Since the accident occurred
22 here, have there been any changes here at the organization that
23 you've seen at your level, anything that has changed since the
24 accident?

25 A. Since Saturday?

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. Not to my knowledge.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I think we might be on a temporary stand-down.

5 Q. Okay. And then, from your position here, how would you rate

6 the overall employee morale since you've been working here?

7 A. I would say very high.

8 Q. Very high. Okay.

9 A. It's like a big family.

10 Q. And then do you feel the organization has enough, you know,

11 adequate personnel to do its mission here?

12 A. Easily.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Extremely well-staffed.

15 Q. And then are there any safety improvements that you'd like to

16 see implemented here, whether it's with operations, equipment,

17 maintenance? Anything you'd like to see implemented here?

18 A. I mean, really nothing comes to mind.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I would say, you know, we have a maintenance shop right down

21 the row, and every time I say something about an aircraft, they

22 come back the next day and it's fixed.

23 Q. Cool.

24 A. So it's -- I've never noticed an issue.

25 Q. Okay. I'm just kind of finishing up on my end. Was there

1 anything that I missed during this interview that you feel like
2 you'd like to bring up as important? Anything that I didn't
3 mention or go over?

4 A. Nothing comes to mind.

5 MR. HODGES: Okay. Just kind of go around the table now.
6 Matt, did you have any --

7 BY MR. BLAD:

8 Q. Yeah. Mark, when was the last time you flew this glider?

9 A. It was probably about a month.

10 Q. Okay. When you flew it, any abnormalities or anything
11 strange with it?

12 A. It seemed fine. I flew it three times on one day, and it was
13 -- behaved normally.

14 Q. Okay. Were there any, like, repeated like squawks or
15 maintenance discrepancies that would come up with it?

16 A. Nothing comes to mind.

17 MR. BLAD: Okay. That's all I had.

18 MR. HODGES: Pete, do you have anything?

19 MR. KLINE: No. Nothing.

20 MR. HODGES: Do you have any questions for us before we
21 finish up?

22 MR. HERVIG: I guess not.

23 MR. HODGES: Okay.

24 All right. We'll go ahead and stop recording now.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

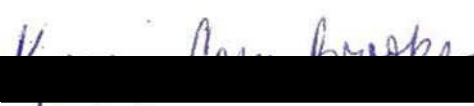

IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (n317BA) CRASH
NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING
JUNE 9, 2018
Interview of Mike Hodges

ACCIDENT NO.: CEN18FA217

PLACE: Driggs, Idaho

DATE: June 13, 2108

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Karen Coen Brooks
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (N317BA) CRASH *

NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING

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Accident No. CEN8FA217

JUNE 9, 2018

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Interview of: WILLIAM SAM LEA

Wednesday,
June 13, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL J. HODGES, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MATTHEW BLAD, Aviation Safety Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

PETER KLINE, General Manager
Teton Aviation Center

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:22 p.m.)

MR. HODGES: Okay. We are recording. We are doing the CEN18FA217 interviews in Driggs, Idaho at Teton Aviation Center. Today's Wednesday, June 13th, 2018, and the time is 1522 Mountain Daylight Time. I'm Mike Hodges with the NTSB, investigator in charge.

MR. BLAD: Matthew Blad, safety inspector, FAA.

MR. LEA: And William Sam Lea, commercial glider pilot and commercial airplane pilot.

MR. KLINE: Peter Kline, general manager of Teton Aviation Center.

MR. HODGES: And then, does anybody have any objections to recording this interview?

MR. BLAD: No.

MR. LEA: No.

MR. KLINE: No.

MR. HODGES: Okay. Do you go by -

MR. LEA: Sam.

MR. HODGES: Sam. Okay. So we'll be interviewing Sam today.

INTERVIEW OF WILLIAM SAM LEA

BY MR. HODGES:

Q. And last name is L-e-e?

A. L-e-a.

Q. L-e-a. Okay. And then, Sam, can you just kind of go over

1 your background, how long have you worked for Teton Aviation
2 Center?

3 A. Approximately 10 years.

4 Q. Okay. And is this a full-time job for you or is it part-
5 time?

6 A. It's very part-time.

7 Q. Part-time?

8 A. Yeah. Actually, it's more like 14 years.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Okay. And then what do you do, I guess, in your other
12 employment outside of --

13 A. Real estate sales.

14 Q. Real estate. Okay. Yeah. Cool. And can you just kind of
15 give me just an overview of your aviation background with
16 certificates and approximate hours, please?

17 A. Sure. So I acquired my airplane private pilot license in
18 2003. And in 2004, I trained with Kristine Ciesinski and acquired
19 my private glider license. And then, a year later, graduated to
20 commercial, and then flight instructor, all within a 2-year
21 period, from start to finish. Then in 2008, I acquired my
22 instrument rating and powered aircraft; and 2009, my commercial
23 rating; and 2010, multi-engine instrument.

24 Q. Okay. Cool. And then you're based out of Driggs, correct?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. And then could you just kind of just kind of go over
2 your day-to-day duties as either, you know, a glider instructor or
3 a --

4 A. Sure.

5 Q. -- pilot, please?

6 A. Sure. So if I was a glider, if I was doing a glider scenic
7 or glider instruction, I would arrive a half an hour early for
8 work, pre-flight the glider, either for myself and the passenger,
9 or pre-flight it with a student. And take the glider out of the
10 hangar, pull it down to the correct runway, depending on winds,
11 meet with the tow pilot. If I was unfamiliar with flying with
12 that tow pilot we would have the safety briefing. We didn't have
13 it every single time if we were together a lot. Launch the
14 glider, perform a 1-hour scenic, longer if the passenger was into
15 it and there was nobody behind them waiting. If it was
16 instruction, our instructional rides generally lasted about
17 anywhere from 1 to 2 hours.

18 Q. Okay. And then what are all the aircraft that you're
19 qualified to fly here?

20 A. The Both Wind 72s, the Aviant Husky, any glider that we have.
21 We have -- had the one glider, and if we had a multi-engine
22 airplane -- so.

23 Q. And then outside of being a scenic tour pilot and flight
24 instruction, do you have any other additional duties here that you
25 do?

1 A. Tow pilot.

2 Q. Tow pilot.

3 A. I also tow gliders.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And do scenic airplane rides.

6 Q. Okay. And just switching gears, just talking about the
7 accident pilot now, Kris, can you describe your relationship with
8 her since you've worked here?

9 A. Sure. I have -- I knew Kris prior to learning to fly. She
10 took me on my first glider ride.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And that was probably 20 years ago. I met Kris outside of
13 aviation. We have been -- I wouldn't say best friends; we've been
14 very good friends for the last 20 years. We've traveled together
15 in the airplane and been flying -- flew together in glider many
16 times.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Probably, if I had to add up the hours, we probably have 60
19 hours of flying together.

20 Q. Okay. Cool. And the how would you describe her abilities as
21 a glider pilot in the cockpit?

22 A. Very safety conscious. Very by the book when it comes to
23 flying gliders.

24 Q. Okay. And then just with your interactions with her over the
25 years, did she have any medical issues to your knowledge?

1 A. No. And she would have shared that with me.

2 Q. Okay. And did she have any substance abuse issues of drugs
3 or alcohol to your knowledge?

4 A. No. Kris, in fact, being an opera singer, she did not drink
5 alcohol. She did not use tobacco.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And would not drink coffee. So --

8 Q. Did she have any sleep issues to your knowledge?

9 A. Not to my knowledge, no. I do know she worked hard.

10 Q. Okay. And then can you just kind of explain Kris's
11 familiarity with the accident flight route? You know, doing that
12 scenic tour flight in that area?

13 A. I would say that back in the area she has probably been in
14 that area well over 1,000 times.

15 Q. Okay. Just kind of shifting gears now to like a safety
16 culture, safety program here at the organization. How would you
17 describe the overall safety culture here at Teton Aviation Center?

18 A. I would say it's above average based on the fact that we've
19 all lost friends over the years, and not here but in other
20 locations. And it's been good learning experience for us and it's
21 made us all aware of our fragility.

22 Q. Okay. And just from your position and experience, what are
23 some of the top hazards you feel that the organization faces here?

24 A. Hazards to flight?

25 Q. Yeah. Just, you know, whether it could be --

1 A. The -- because we're in the Northern Rockies, drastically
2 changing weather conditions, number one. You can't see what the
3 weather's going to do 30 minutes from now in the summertime. High
4 altitude, so we're dealing with reduced performance. Obviously
5 terrain.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Yeah. Aside from that, we have a pretty safe operation here.
8 We manage to keep a very tight ship when it comes to flying the
9 traffic pattern with visiting airplanes and our own airplanes.

10 Q. Okay. And do you feel if an employ found a safety issue
11 here, whether it's with, you know, operational procedures,
12 maintenance, you name it, do you feel that they could bring that
13 safety issue up to management and that management would address
14 that issue?

15 A. Yes, I do.

16 Q. And then with your position here as a line pilot and glider
17 instructor, you know, if Peter or Colleen wanted to put out safety
18 information to you, how would you receive that? Is that through
19 email, or --

20 A. Generally it's -- we'll receive it twice: through email and
21 then a paper handout at one of our pilot meetings.

22 Q. Okay. And then how often are those pilot meetings held?

23 A. I would say three to four times a year.

24 Q. Okay. And then just shifting gears, talking about the glider
25 itself, what are your -- from a glider pilot's perspective, what

1 are your thoughts on the L-23, just overall perspective of it?

2 A. It's a well-built ship. It's tried and tested. It's been
3 around for 30 years or longer. Very few accidents associated with
4 that glider. The Air Force uses it. They trust it. It has no
5 evil characteristics. You know, it spins well, you know, if you
6 have to spin it; it recovers from the spins well. It is hesitant
7 to stall. It more -- generally mushes more than stalls. So no --
8 I'm trying to think of the word that we use when you describe the
9 characteristics of an airplane. It has no dangerous
10 characteristics that I'm aware of.

11 Q. Okay. And then just with the general layout, from a pilot's
12 perspective, are there any ergonomic issues with the glider
13 like -- such as the layout of the control switches, levers,
14 anything of that?

15 A. The only ergonomic issue with that glider is if you have long
16 legs and you are in the front seat, it's difficult to operate the
17 stick and the dive brakes at the same time when you have a
18 passenger up there because their knee will get in the way, so you
19 have to say pull your knee in, pull the dive brakes out, okay,
20 move your knee so I can move the stick. And so it's tight with a
21 larger person up front.

22 Q. Okay. And then with the glider POH, if you will, did you
23 feel that the emergency procedures that are written, they are
24 pretty clearly communicated, easy to follow as a glider pilot?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. And then just kind of shifting gears, concluding now.
2 Since the accident occurred, have there been any changes here at
3 the organization since the accident occurred on Saturday to your
4 knowledge?

5 A. Changes to -- I'm sorry -- to our organization?

6 Q. Yeah. To just overall operations, anything that's changed
7 since then?

8 A. Well, the only change I'm aware of is we're not flying for
9 the next few days.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Until we come to terms with the loss of Kris.

12 Q. Okay. And then since the accident occurred, has there been
13 anything with you personally with how you do your duties at all,
14 or anything you've changed at all since the accident on your own?

15 A. Not -- no. Not really. No. This was such an anomaly that
16 it -- I don't know what we could have done differently to prevent
17 this.

18 Q. And then just from your position, how would you rate the
19 overall employee morale here at the organization?

20 A. Post the crash or pre-crash?

21 Q. Or just -- yeah.

22 A. Or just in general?

23 Q. Just in general.

24 A. You know, to be fair, overall morale, I'd say 9 out of 10.

25 Q. Okay. And then do you feel the organization has enough

1 personnel and equipment to do its mission here, enough, you know,
2 pilots and aircraft and such to do its operations here?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. And then just from your experience and perspective,
5 are there any safety improvements you'd like to see implemented
6 here, whether it's with operations, maintenance, equipment,
7 anything you'd like to see implemented here?

8 A. No. I mean, if I did, I would have already asked him to do
9 it.

10 Q. Okay.

11 MR. KLINE: Yes. He would have. Sam's not shy.

12 BY MR. HODGES:

13 Q. Just kind of finishing up on my end, was there anything that
14 I missed during the interview that you'd like to bring up that you
15 feel is important?

16 A. I -- yeah. I will. I feel that the situation that Kris
17 found herself in was most likely due to an extreme change in
18 weather, in winds, unforeseen and unexpected.

19 MR. HODGES: Okay. We'll just kind of go around the table
20 now.

21 Matt, do you have any questions for him?

22 MR. BLAD: I don't.

23 MR. HODGES: Peter, do you have any questions?

24 MR. KLINE: No.

25 BY MR. HODGES:

1 Q. Do you have any questions for me before we finish up?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay.

4 MR. HODGES: All right. We'll go ahead and stop the
5 recording at this time.

6 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (n317BA) CRASH
 NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING
 JUNE 9, 2018
 Interview of William Sam Lea

ACCIDENT NO.: CEN18FA217

PLACE:

DATE: June 13, 2108

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Karen Coen Brooks
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (N317BA) CRASH *

NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING

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Accident No. CEN8FA217

JUNE 9, 2018

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Interview of: TODD BURLAGE

Teton Aviation

Teton Aviation Center
Driggs, IDWednesday,
June 13, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL J. HODGES, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MATTHEW BLAD, Aviation Safety Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

PETER KLINE, General Manager
Teton Aviation Center

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:48 p.m.)

MR. HODGES: Okay, we are recording. We are doing the CEN18FA217 interviews in Driggs, Idaho at Teton Aviation Center. Today is Wednesday June 13, 2018 and the time is 1548 Mountain Daylight Time. I'm Mike Hodges with the NTSB. Investigator in Charge.

MR. BLAD: Matthew Blad, Safety Inspector FAA.

MR. BURLAGE: Todd Burlage, Maintenance Manager Teton Aviation.

MR. KLINE: Peter Kline, General Manager Teton Aviation.

MR. HODGES: And then, there's anyone have any objections to recording this interview?

MR. BLAD: No.

MR. BURLAGE: No.

MR. KLINE: No.

MR. HODGES: Okay. Today we are being interviewing Todd.

INTERVIEW OF TODD BURLAGE

BY MR. HODGES:

Q. And Todd, just kind of starting off with your background. How long have you been worked for the Teton Aviation Center?

A. Twenty years.

Q. And then what did you do prior to that?

A. In aircraft maintenance I was -- I graduated in 1991, so I worked at various aircraft maintenance jobs until I started here.

1 Q. Okay, cool. And can you just kind of just explain your
2 maintenance background, you know, any PIA, which -- any factory
3 training you've received on the airframes or engine, anything of
4 that nature?

5 A. Not on this glider, but I have been -- I do have my A&P and
6 IA --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- but no factory training on this particular glider.

9 Q. Okay. And then you're just strictly based here in Driggs
10 then; am I correct?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And can you just kind of give me your day-to-day
13 duties as the maintenance manager, please?

14 A. I still try to keep my hands in maintenance as much as
15 possible. I get all of the duties of A&P. I take care of
16 multiple different airplanes and I also direct a crew of about six
17 other mechanics.

18 Q. Okay, okay. And then when did you -- so the whole time you
19 worked here you've been maintenance manager? Have you worked your
20 way up from just a line mechanic?

21 A. No, I just -- started as a mechanic. I just took over as
22 manager about a year and half ago.

23 Q. Okay, okay. And then do you have any other additional duties
24 besides maintenance manager? Do you do anything else outside of
25 maintenance manager? Like are you like a safety representative or

1 anything like that or you just do strictly just maintenance
2 manager?

3 A. I am involved with the avionics repair station --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- so I'm a -- general manager of the avionics repair
6 station. But other than that -- and I'm also the parts and
7 receiving manager. So --

8 Q. Okay. And then, do you work part-time at any other
9 organizations?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay. Just switching gears talking about the accident pilot
12 Kris, can you describe your relationship with her since you've
13 started working here at Teton Aviation Center?

14 A. My relationship with Kris is mostly social, at company
15 parties. Being in the maintenance department, we're somewhat
16 separated from --

17 Q. Sure.

18 A. -- from the day-to-day interaction with the most of the
19 pilots. The -- what is Colleen's title?

20 MR. KLINE: Head of the, well --

21 MR. BURLAGE: Flight Department?

22 MR. KLINE: Flight Department --

23 MR. HODGES: Yeah.

24 MR. BURLAGE: Yeah, flight department lead usually schedule
25 all the stuff with the maintenance department, so I didn't have a

1 lot interaction with her as -- you know, inside the company-wise,
2 but I met her and I knew her.

3 BY MR. HODGES:

4 Q. Okay. Just kind of shifting gears, let's talking about the
5 maintenance program here. Can you just provide a general overview
6 of how the maintenance program is structure here at Teton Aviation
7 Center, please?

8 A. Well, we do have multiple mechanics. We all work under our
9 A&P certificates. We are not a repair station --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- so generally any incoming maintenance, any requests come
12 through me, and then I detail mechanic to attend to it. It
13 depends on what the job is, of course, who I'm going to detail to
14 it. We had -- we keep three IAs on staff right now and we have a
15 couple of guys that are A&Ps and without their IA.

16 So we do a lot of annual inspections, a lot of line
17 maintenance, things that -- you know, tires, brakes, all that kind
18 of stuff. We do some structural repair, some aircraft
19 modification, just general airport A&P maintenance.

20 Q. Okay. And you've mentioned, out of all your mechanics, how
21 many have their IA, again? I'm sorry.

22 A. We currently have three IAs on staff, yes.

23 Q. Okay. And then, do you also send your guys out for any sort
24 of factory training at all? Is that a common thing for you guys
25 to do here for?

1 A. We do.

2 Q. You do, okay.

3 A. We've had -- in the last couple of years, we've sent a guy to
4 Rotax school; we've sent a guy to parachute rigging course; we've
5 sent both of our avionics techs off to Garmin training and AEA
6 training. Yeah, we try to, as we can, send people out.

7 Q. Okay, okay. And then do you also employ like mechanic
8 assistants here, anything like that?

9 A. We have a shop assistant whose duties are mostly cleaning and
10 fetching. He doesn't do a lot of aircraft work.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Occasionally we'll have him, you know, open panels or put
13 panels back on under the supervision of a mechanic, but --

14 Q. Can you give me just an overview like maintenance training
15 program here, how you guys have it structured with, you know,
16 training your guys with just the way you do things here at this
17 organization?

18 A. Well, it's all pretty much on the job. When we have -- like
19 our three IAs currently, are my three senior mechanics. When we
20 get the younger guys that we have working right now that are just
21 A&Ps, most of the time they are assigned to work with one of the
22 more senior mechanics. So they get all their hands-on, on-the-job
23 training. We don't have a formal process for, you know, bringing
24 mechanics up. We try to -- generally we try to hire guys that
25 have some experience, but that's not always the case, you know.

1 Q. Okay. You just kind of led to my next question. You know,
2 hiring you guys here like as a mechanic, what are some things you
3 kind of just look for, just like base qualifications, experience
4 you guys look for, for mechanics for hiring?

5 A. Well, it depends on the mechanic that we're hiring. I mean,
6 we have Todd Plocher is one of my IAs and he is pretty much the
7 Warbird lead. So anything that goes into to that Warbird shop,
8 he's leading the way on that stuff, and they follow what he has to
9 say.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I'm pretty much the general aviation lead. So anybody in the
12 GA shop, I'm watching over them. We -- you know, our division of
13 duties is pretty much we try to bring our mechanics along so
14 everybody is capable of taking care of any problem that comes up.
15 And they know that we maintain a library just -- you know, a
16 library of all the maintenance documentation that we need and if
17 guys have questions, you know, it's an open forum down there for
18 questions and answers, so -- and we do a pretty good job of
19 inspecting each other's work when it's done. So, like I said, we
20 never had a problem like this in the past, so --

21 Q. Sure. You guys don't have like a separate like quality
22 inspectors here or you're all just considerate just --

23 A. No under the A&P system, you know, there is no --

24 Q. Quality inspector.

25 A. -- quality inspector. We are not a repair station. A repair

1 station operates differently than people working under their A&Ps
2 certificate.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So the stuff that is signed off in a logbook is signed off
5 under our individual certificate numbers, not under the umbrella
6 of Teton Aviation.

7 Q. Okay, okay, cool. Just kind of shifting gears here, I know
8 you mention you guys aren't a 145 repair station. Kind of just
9 going over the FAA, and I don't -- if I'm saying this incorrectly,
10 please correct me. Do you guys have like a principal maintenance
11 inspector, if you will, that's kind of assigned to you guys that
12 comes and checks on you?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. You do?

15 A. Ken Joyce.

16 Q. Ken Joyce.

17 A. From the Salt Lake City FSDO.

18 Q. Okay. And how long has he been your guy's as PMI, if you
19 will?

20 A. Two or 3 years.

21 Q. Two or 3 years, okay.

22 A. Maybe a little more than 3 years.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I don't exactly remember --

25 Q. Okay, no worries.

1 A. -- when he came to work there.

2 Q. Okay. And then how often do you guys interact with him?

3 A. Frequently.

4 Q. Frequently, okay.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Is it monthly? Weekly? How, I mean --

7 A. Well, you know, we have an avionics repair station and he's

8 the PMI on our avionics repair station, so we see him here on-site

9 at least once a year, usually two or three times a year, and we

10 interact with him on the telephone pretty much monthly, I believe.

11 Q. Okay. How would you describe your relationship between you

12 guys and him as the PMI?

13 A. I think we have a very good working relationship.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And not only with him, but with all the guys in Salt Lake

16 FSDO.

17 Q. Sure. Do you feel that the PMI provides adequate oversight

18 assistance to you guys with your operations?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. Can you recall any specific recent inspections done by

21 the PMI on any aircrafts or mechanics or records or anything of

22 that nature? Can you recall anything recently he's done?

23 A. Well, yes. They were just out last month to do our annual

24 inspection for our repair station.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And -- Ken was here and Paula. I can't remember Paula's last
2 name.

3 MR. BLAD: Behrend.

4 MR. BURLAGE: Ken and Paula were both here.

5 BY MR. HODGES:

6 Q. Is she like the assistance PMI or --

7 A. I think she's more on the avionics side.

8 Q. Okay. Avionics inspector, okay.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay. And then have you had any coverage gaps at all with
11 your assigned PMI? Were -- before he took over was there like a
12 coverage gap or you always had a continues inspector assigned to
13 you at all times?

14 A. No, we've always had pretty continuous. If there was not a
15 specific person that we were talking to, it was always Eric McRae,
16 that we would call and talk to it if we needed anything or they
17 will check up on us in between people. Eric McRae, I think is the
18 manager down there, and he's always been there for if we needed
19 anything. So --

20 Q. Okay, okay. Now just kind of shifting gears and talking
21 about the safety program here. How would you describe the overall
22 safety culture here at Teton Aviation Center?

23 A. You know, in the maintenance department we are definitely
24 safety conscious and we've -- in the last couple of years we wrote
25 a safety manual for the avionics repair station and several of our

1 people have been through the different safety courses that were
2 part of that, myself included, through, you know, Pipeline and
3 Hazardous Materials Administration safety courses, human factor
4 safety courses. And we definitely keep that in the forefront of
5 what we are doing down there.

6 Q. Okay. And just from your perspective, what are the some like
7 the top hazards you feel that Teton Aviation Center faces?

8 A. The top hazards?

9 Q. Yeah, aviation hazards, if you will, would you feel?

10 A. You know, I think with -- as with every industry there's a
11 renewed focus on human factors, and mitigating human factors in
12 maintenance especially is a challenge always.

13 Q. Uh-hum.

14 A. And I think with the policies that are in place here for time
15 off, for flexibility, for people to be able to -- if they need to
16 take a day, to give them a day off, we try to maintain that
17 flexibility at all times. We want people that are well rested --

18 Q. Yes, got you.

19 A. -- and sharp in what they are doing. Those items, those
20 factors are always the biggest factors in any maintenance
21 organizations, I think --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- having people that are aware and alert and conscious of
24 safety from the beginning to the end of the project. So --

25 Q. Okay, cool. And do you feel that if an employee here found a

1 safety issue, whether it's with maintenance or equipment,
2 whatever, do you feel that they can bring that up to management
3 here and that issue will get address quickly or a timely fashion?

4 A. Yes, I believe so.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. We've had a couple of items, you know, with equipment around
7 that -- not necessarily safety, but that the equipment is not up
8 to our standards and we always address it as soon as possible.

9 Q. Okay. And then, just with sharing safety-related information
10 with the mechanics, you know, if Peter or Colleen found a
11 maintenance issue or you found something you wanted to share with
12 your guys, how do you -- is that through an email or meetings?
13 How do you guys share safety information out to the line
14 mechanics?

15 A. That would be meetings.

16 Q. Meetings? Okay.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Just kind of concluding up, have there been any changes on
19 your end with maintenance since the accident occurred, any changes
20 that you guys implemented since the accident occurred?

21 A. No. We haven't made any changes to our maintenance
22 department.

23 Q. Okay. And then how would you rate the overall employee
24 morale around here at Teton Aviation Center?

25 A. Overall good.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And do you feel Teton Aviation Center has adequate personnel,
4 equipment, to do its mission here? Enough, you know, resources
5 for maintenance and operations and such?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay, okay. And then, are there any safety improvements that
8 you would like to see implemented here, whether it's with ops
9 maintenance, equipment training, anything of that nature?

10 A. You know, if I notice a safety item, I bring it up right
11 away. It's not something that we are going to wait on. So I
12 would have to say no, you know, there's nothing current. If
13 there's an item that I see as unsafe, tell somebody to get off
14 that ladder and go get the scissor lift and do it correctly, you
15 know. We'll do that right away.

16 Q. Okay. Just kind of finishing up on my end, was there's
17 anything that I missed during this interview that you'd like to
18 bring up that you feel is important?

19 A. No, I don't think so.

20 MR. HODGES: Okay. We'll just kind of go around the table
21 now. Matt, do you have any questions for him?

22 BY MR. BLAD:

23 Q. So with this tail number 217-Bravo-Alpha, this type of
24 aircraft, is it relatively easy to work on, I imagine?

25 A. Gliders are generally pretty simple. They're -- you know,

1 their design and function is much less labor intensive than a
2 powered airplane. So yes, they are fairly simple.

3 Q. Was there anything tricky or unique about this specific type
4 of glider? When it comes to maintenance, obviously.

5 A. No. Actually some of the other gliders that are here are
6 more involved. The Blanik is a very simple, very basic trainer,
7 very basic glider. We have other gliders on the field that we
8 take care of that are much more advanced than the Blanik.

9 Q. Did it have any recurrent squawks or issues that you'd see
10 pop up repeatedly?

11 A. Let me think. You know, in general, I think it was fairly
12 trouble-free. The only recurring thing that I can think of is
13 there's an AD on the control bridge, and airworthiness
14 directive ---

15 Q. Uh-hum.

16 A. -- that is repetitive. And so you're -- it seems like we are
17 always inspecting the control bridge.

18 MR. BLAD: Okay. That's all I have.

19 MR. HODGES: Okay. Do you have any questions?

20 MR. KLINE: No, I don't have any.

21 MR. HODGES: Do you have any questions for any of us before
22 we finish up?

23 MR. BURLAGE: No.

24 MR. HODGES: Okay. I'll go ahead and stop recording then.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (n317BA) CRASH
 NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING
 JUNE 9, 2018
 Interview of Todd Burlage

ACCIDENT NO.: CEN18FA217

PLACE: Driggs, Idaho

DATE: June 13, 2108

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


(Katia Toniolo)
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (N317BA) CRASH *

NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING

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Accident No. CEN18FA217

JUNE 9, 2018

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Interview of: PETER KLINE

Teton Aviation Center
Driggs, Idaho

Wednesday,
June 13, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL J. HODGES, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MATTHEW BLAD, Aviation Safety Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

PETER KLINE, General Manager
Teton Aviation Center

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:10 a.m.)

MR. HODGES: Okay, we are recording now. We are doing the CEN18FA217 interviews in Driggs, Idaho at Teton Aviation Center. Today is Wednesday, June 13, 2018 and the time is 1632 Mountain Daylight Time.

I'm Michael Hodges with the NTSB, investigator in charge.

MR. BLAD: Matthew Blade, safety inspector, FAA.

MR. KLINE: Peter Kline, general manager Teton Aviation Center.

MR. HODGES: And does anybody have any objections to recording this interview?

MR. BLAD: No.

MR. KLINE: No.

MR. HODGES: Okay. Today, we're going to be interviewing Peter.

INTERVIEW OF PETER KLINE

BY MR. HODGES:

Q. Peter, just starting off with your background, how long have you worked for Teton Aviation Center?

A. Since 2001.

Q. Okay. And then what did you do prior to Teton Aviation Center?

A. A few different -- different careers, but I've been flying -- I started flying in, let's see, '89. Got all of my ratings in

1 multi engine instrument. Flew corporate for a year or so. Took a
2 hiatus from aviation. Got back involved in the late '90s. Got my
3 helicopter rating -- helicopter instructor rating. Then I got
4 involved out here with Richard Sugden, who owned Teton Aviation,
5 he was looking for someone to run and manage the business, so I
6 came, got involved with him. Got involved in the Warbirds and all
7 of his aircraft. So I fly pretty much all the aircraft that we
8 have here, amongst all the jet Warbirds, the piston engine
9 Warbirds, seaplanes, floatplanes, gyrocopters, glider.

10 Kris was one of my instructors back in 2001. So, yeah,
11 that's pretty much what I've done in aviation.

12 Q. Okay. And then do you do any flight instruction at all?

13 A. I do.

14 Q. You do, okay. What flight instruction do you do for which
15 aircraft?

16 A. I do mostly advanced flight instruction, but for Teton
17 Aviation I do tailwheel.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I'm not a glider instructor, but I do --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- I do tailwheel. I do some stage checks every now and
22 then, when Colleen shorthands. Pretty much I'm cross-trained in
23 everything. Most of the time I'm in the office, but if she's
24 shorthanded, needs something, I'll do it.

25 When it comes to the Warbird stuff, I'm an instructor in all

1 the Warbirds. 135 line pilot for the Kodiak that we have, not our
2 certificate but someone else's certificate. I do instruction in
3 all the military aircraft from an Albatross HU-16 to the MiG-15 to
4 -- yeah.

5 Q. Cool. And just roughly how many total hours? So if you have
6 just a rough estimate?

7 A. About 5,000.

8 Q. 5,000, okay. And you're just totally based out of Driggs
9 then?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. And could you just kind of just give your
12 day-to-day duties you do? Kind of like a normal day what you do
13 around here?

14 A. Yeah. Yeah, it's -- I -- it can be -- it can vary, but
15 generally I spend about half of my time in the office and the
16 other time I'm either flying or I'm out and about. But my day-to-
17 day duties are just day operations. I do everything from budgets
18 to financials. I don't really micromanage all the departments.
19 I've got my departments heads, whether it's the line, whether it's
20 Leeanne on the front desk or Todd down in maintenance or Colleen
21 in the flight department.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I pretty much manage them. And then from there, I run, you
24 know, whatever needs to be attended to. You know, everything from
25 a sign out front blowing down in the wind to talking to a

1 customer, you know, and making arrangements for hangar or fuel
2 discounts or all that sort of stuff.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Typical FBO stuff.

5 Q. Okay. And then when did you officially become the general
6 manager?

7 A. 2001.

8 Q. 2001, okay. And then outside being general manager, do you
9 have any other additional duties you do? Like are you the safety
10 head or anything like that? Or you just, you --

11 A. No.

12 Q. It's just general manager then?

13 A. General manager pretty much sums it all up.

14 Q. And then do you work part-time at any other organizations?

15 A. I do some -- I do. I do some contract flying, as well for
16 other entities.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. So there's some military contract flying stuff that I do --

19 Q. Cool.

20 A. -- with the Warbirds, and also with the Kodiak because it's
21 on Precision Aviation's 135, even though the aircraft is owned by
22 my boss, it's leased to them, so I actually am a line pilot for
23 that organization.

24 Q. Okay. Cool.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Cool. Just kind of just shifting gears, talking about Teton
2 Aviation Center, can you just kind of describe the overall
3 business structure of Teton Aviation Center, what you guys do
4 here, please?

5 A. Yeah. Well, you know, primarily we are an FBO, and I think
6 we all know what that is. But we provide maintenance, we provide
7 an avionics facility, fuel, hangaring. We have a flight
8 department. We have a restaurant that I'm somewhat indirectly
9 involved with. We tie down airplanes, you know, manage the ramp
10 for the city. So that's pretty much what we are.

11 Q. Okay. And then just the -- I think you kind of mentioned
12 this before, but just the aircraft that Teton Aviation operates
13 and uses, which ones are those?

14 A. Um-hum. The aircraft that we operate for Teton Aviation, we
15 have the two Cessna 172s, we have the glider, we have the Husky.
16 We also have the Kodiak if it's here. Sometimes it will be off on
17 charter, but we can use that for scenics within, you know, part
18 91, the 25 statute. We also have the N3N, which is a biplane with
19 standard category, normal category that's also on the LOA. But
20 that pretty much just stays at about 1500 feet here in the valley.
21 We just do a few of those in the summer.

22 So those are the aircraft that I operate for Teton Aviation.
23 Those are the entity's aircraft.

24 Q. Okay. Cool.

25 A. Or leased to Teton Aviation.

1 Q. And then who do you report to in your position as the general
2 manager?

3 A. I report directly to Mark Lajohn and he is the owner's,
4 Richard Sudgen's, manager of all of his companies.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Richard Sugden, on the interview mentioned the Teton Data
7 Systems.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. He's got multiple companies and Rich is the owner, kind of,
10 up in this tier. Mark Lajohn, I answer to him. But in effect,
11 I'm directly involved with Rich. I fly with Rich regularly. We
12 do airshows together. We do training events together. You know,
13 we do our recurrency in the Citation together.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So we're involved in -- so indirectly I do answer obviously
16 to him, but my charge is a gentleman by the name of Mark Lajohn.

17 Q. Does Mark have an aviation background?

18 A. No.

19 Q. No, okay.

20 A. No, he's just -- he's his business manager.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Manages all of his business.

23 Q. Okay. Okay.

24 A. And that's Teton Management.

25 Q. Okay. And then for Teton Aviation Center, the only facility

1 you guys have are just strictly here, just at Driggs; am I
2 correct?

3 A. Yes. Correct.

4 Q. Okay. And then you kind of mentioned this before, you have
5 the Kodiak that operates 135, but that's on a different
6 certificate, though, it's not a Teton Aviation Center certificate;
7 correct?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Yeah, the owner wanted to have a 135 operation available to
13 customers. I mean, as you can see from the facility, he wants to
14 be a well-rounded facility and offer as much as we can. And I
15 kind of dodged the -- having to bring on a 135 certificate by
16 finding a gentleman in Twin Falls by the name of Mark Doerr,
17 Precision Aviation, spotless record, super first class 135, so we
18 were -- we went ahead and -- so the aircraft is leased to
19 Precision Aviation. Sometimes it's based here; sometimes it's
20 based there depending, on fire. It does a lot of fire work for
21 NPS, for flying in equipment and radios to locations.

22 Q. Sure.

23 A. But that's the relationship there. So, me being one of the
24 pilots, I then fall under his -- as an employee. So, I am
25 familiar with 135 from that standpoint.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But we do not hold a 135 certificate.

3 Q. Okay. And just, you kind of mentioned this, so I understand,
4 what was the reason for using that gentleman, as opposed to you
5 guys having your own 135? What was the rationale for going that
6 route, if you don't mind me asking?

7 A. Yeah, just the headache and the startup costs of doing 135.

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. And quite frankly, from where I'm sitting, and it's proven to
10 be true, we just don't have a business to support bringing on a
11 full-time employee that just does paperwork and 135 work.

12 Q. Okay. Okay.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. And then how many total employees does Teton Aviation Center
15 have? Just a rough estimate.

16 A. Yeah, it flexes a little bit, but I would say full-time
17 somewhere in the range of 20 to 23 full-time. And in the summer
18 with pilots, because we have such a seasonal summertime business
19 for pilots, we'll grow to, you know, maybe 30ish. That's not
20 including the restaurant.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. That's kind of a whole separate entity over there.

23 Q. Okay. And then outside or underneath those total employee
24 numbers, how many are actually pilots?

25 A. Line pilots you're talking about, or pilots within the

1 organization? Because I've got some pilots that are mechanics but
2 they --

3 Q. I guess pilots in the organization that fly for you guys.

4 A. That fly for us?

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. Let's see, I would say permanently, myself and Colleen; we do
7 have Sam and Mark that are pretty much on year-round, and so
8 there's four. Then we grow by another three to five in the --

9 Q. Okay. And how many of those are glider pilots?

10 A. Well, we had -- well, there's five total glider pilots. Or
11 there were five total glider pilots. Colleen and I will stand in
12 for any scenic flights that we can't cover.

13 Q. Okay. Okay. And then do you guys have like an operations
14 manager position, or is that basically what you do then?

15 A. Yeah, general operations management is myself.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. In the flight department it is Colleen.

18 Q. Okay. Okay. And then just overall with the organization
19 itself, have there been any significant changes over the last year
20 or so? Anything, you know, different aircraft or change in
21 operations? Anything major?

22 A. No. We've been -- no, we've been operating the same
23 aircraft. We've been -- you know, the glider has been the same.
24 As he mentioned, he's never -- or Colleen's never flown a
25 different glider. We had another Blanik that was actually an

1 aerobatic version, the same glider, just different wings and wing
2 tips, but we sold that. We just had no use for two gliders. But
3 no, we've had the same two gliders; the Husky and the two
4 trainers, which we just did new paint and new engines on a couple
5 years ago, so we've had the same aircraft for -- since I've been
6 here in '99.

7 Q. Okay. Cool. Cool.

8 A. You know, other than paint and engines, that's pretty much
9 what we have.

10 Q. And then the employees that work at the front desk, what is
11 their like, I guess, title or position called?

12 A. Yeah, they're receptionists.

13 Q. Receptionist.

14 A. They're customer service representatives.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So, a typical FBO. Somebody's going to run in, they want a
17 rental car, they're organizing fuel, they're organizing catering,
18 they're fielding calls. Whose -- you know, you've met, is LeeAnn,
19 she manages that side of things.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So she hires and manages all the people at the front desk.
22 They also obviously handle the Unicom. You know, we're not
23 required to provide weather or Unicom services, but we do. You
24 know, we'll usually give them a traffic advisory when somebody
25 calls in.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Welcome them into the valley. Give them the weather, not
3 that they can't get it off of the AWOS, but that's sort of stuff.
4 You know, hey, we got a glider up, we've got traffic in the
5 pattern or whatever.

6 Q. Do you guys have like a training program for the front desk
7 employees that goes over, you know --

8 A. Yeah, it's about this stuff.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. If you want to look at it, I'll be happy to --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Yeah, it goes over pretty much everything.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But yeah, when it comes to, you know, emergency response or
15 just day-to-day operations, all that sort of stuff.

16 Q. Okay. Okay. Cool.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. So, just kind of going over -- switching gears, talking about
19 the accident, my understanding when the accident happened, correct
20 me if I'm wrong, that you were out of the country at the time; is
21 that correct?

22 A. Yeah. I was on vacation. I was out of the country.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And then the owner, Rich, was also out of state, too; is that

1 correct?

2 A. Well, he lives in Jackson.

3 Q. Jackson.

4 A. So, it's about a -- he's about a 40-minute drive.

5 Q. Forty-minute drive, okay. And then Colleen, the director of
6 flight operations, she wasn't here that day either, correct?

7 A. No, she was in the area, but she was in the back-country
8 camping with her husband and children, so she was out of cell
9 phone range.

10 Q. Okay. On the day of the accident, who was -- since you were
11 gone and Colleen was on -- Colleen was gone, I guess, who was the
12 person then, I guess, running like operations, if you will, with
13 both you and Colleen out?

14 A. Right. Well, as far as -- it would be LeeAnn, who was the
15 front desk --

16 Q. Leeanne.

17 A. -- you know, the front desk manager or the overseeing
18 manager.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And then also I have a head of line, which is -- he's -- his
21 name is Dave Franklin.

22 Q. You mean like line services?

23 A. Yeah, like line service. But as far as management goes, I
24 had -- that day, it was a Saturday, so I had two department heads
25 here.

1 Q. Okay. Okay.

2 A. Yeah. Which is pretty common on the weekends.

3 Q. Okay. Okay. And then with the accident flight, the
4 passenger, what was his purpose for going on a sightseeing tour
5 flight?

6 A. From what I understand, and from what was written on the
7 documentation, it was a surprise birthday gift from a friend or
8 from a group of buddies from down -- from Salt Lake.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So, they came up to surprise him for his 65th birthday.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Booked the flight in advance, came up and went flying.

13 Q. Okay. Just switching gears and talking about glider
14 operations now. Can you just kind of give me just an overview of
15 how the glider program is structured here with doing flight
16 training and the scenic tour flights, please?

17 A. Yeah, the -- well, the training is pretty much al-a-carte,
18 depending on what people want. Some people will come out here
19 with glider ratings already, but they have no experience in the
20 mountains; it's all flatlands. So -- or it'll be from beginner to
21 a private license, commercial add-on, so we get a, like I said, a
22 variety of different people. Some people doing commercial
23 add-ons are already pilots to start with, or some young teenage
24 kids that, you know, they can start flying gliders before they can
25 start flying fix wing or powered aircraft.

1 As far as the scenic stuff, you know, this is -- the glider
2 operation has been here. This airport was a lot smaller many,
3 many years ago, and the gentleman that Richard Sugden bought the
4 operation from, Eric Soyland, had a glider operation here with a
5 partner of his for, I don't know how many years before that. I
6 don't know what gliders they were operating, but it had always
7 been kind of a glider port, glider operation doing glider scenic
8 and instruction.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So, we've -- I guess I inherited it when I came on board.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. And then you guys have always just used the L-23? Or -- at
14 your guys' location?

15 A. Yeah. Well, that's the only glider that I've known.

16 Q. And then do you guys have like a separate company manual that
17 goes over the glider flight training operations?

18 A. We have a general manual that covers everything from flight
19 operations with the 172s, the environment, the mountains, the
20 oxygen requirements, so a lot of that translate over. And then we
21 have, part of that manual, there are some specifics pertaining to
22 the glider.

23 Q. Okay. Okay. Cool. Cool. And can you just kind of give me
24 just an overview of like, for the glider sightseeing tour flights,
25 kind of just how they work? Just an overview of --

1 A. Yeah. The overview is, you know, we've got, you know, the
2 Teton Mountains just here to the east of us. Very easy glider
3 from the Tetons back here to the airport at Driggs. So, we take
4 off, we usually gain lift between here and the edge of the
5 foothills. So we've got the flat valley here, and we tow up with
6 a Husky. That's our current tow plane. We've had different tow
7 planes in the past. That was quite a long time ago. We had Call-
8 Air and we had a AgCat briefly, but the Husky's a very good
9 capable airplane for towing up.

10 So, we -- so we'll take a passenger, tow him up. The tow
11 usually -- they're usually on tow for generally at least half the
12 ride, so 30 minutes -- 30 to 40 minutes is all below 12-5 on the
13 process of staging up to the edge of -- not the edge of the park,
14 but about a mile from the edge of Grand Teton National Park, over
15 the areas that we kind of designate. At that point they'll
16 release the glider. Depending on the conditions, if the
17 conditions are thermaling or we've got good ridge lift, the glider
18 will be able to maintain, will stay up for a certain amount of
19 time, and then head back. The glider ride's usually about an
20 hour.

21 Sometimes, depending on the conditions, and I think as one of
22 the guys stated before, if the -- if there's no one right in the
23 glider ride after them and they don't have any plans, they'll give
24 the passenger an extra ride, extra-long ride if they're enjoying
25 it, you know, an extra 10 or 15 minutes. It's not unusual for a

1 glider ride to be an hour and a half.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. It would be to be 2 hours. But that being said, even if it
4 is, we're never above 12-5 for more than 30 minutes due to the
5 oxygen requirements. So we have that kind of ceiling.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And then they, yeah, they bring them back here and land.
8 We've -- you know, as I mentioned before, we've never had a glider
9 have to land out; that the glider has always come back and landed
10 on the field here at Driggs.

11 Q. Okay. And can you just kind of give me just a walk-through
12 like through the pre-flight planning process, like being in the
13 shoes of a glider pilot, kind of what they do when they come into
14 work with -- in your pre-flight --

15 A. Sure.

16 Q. -- weather, weight and balance, all that kind of stuff that
17 you normally do?

18 A. Yeah. Yeah, well, I'm one of the pilots, so if I get called
19 in -- and this is the way everybody operates -- you know, weather
20 -- usually starts the day before, if not, then you know, the
21 morning of, but generally the day before you're -- already know if
22 it's going to be a relatively good day or not. You'll look at the
23 weather, whether it's, you know, on Foreflight or whether it's
24 just looking out and seeing what you've got, you know, checking --
25 you know, check winds aloft. That's a definite. Pre-flight the

1 glider. Roll it out. Get with the tow pilot. All -- as you've
2 kind of heard, everybody's been around for a long time, so we
3 don't generally have new faces, but we still talk about, you know,
4 the general briefing, which is emergency procedures, rope break on
5 tow, can't get off tow, having to -- have to release signals, and
6 then just general weather, okay, what do we got?

7 And the glider pilot is the directing pilot, if you will, so
8 not just to sit back there and follow the tow plane, but say, hey,
9 it looks like it's going to be good here, so I would like you to
10 go ahead and, you know, maybe push a little bit further south to
11 start with in the valley. We'll find some thermal and we'll lift
12 up there, climb up. Or I think it's going to be better over by this
13 ridge, you know, and that sort of thing. So, talk about the
14 route. But it's always in the same area. It may be slightly
15 different. You know, we may be taking off a different runway or
16 we may be thinking that there's more lifting air in one place or
17 another, but it's always the same area.

18 And we'll do the control checks on the glider. We'll get the
19 passenger strapped in. We'll give them the safety brief. If you
20 want, I can you give that. Again, I know Colleen kind of spelled
21 it out there. Do you want the safety brief again or --

22 Q. No, that's fine.

23 A. Yeah, so --

24 Q. I think she went over it.

25 A. -- the safety brief with the customer. Definitely talk to

1 them about, you know, whether they've been in a small aircraft
2 before, how they feel about it. You know, usually you can tell if
3 someone's feeling anxious. But if they're feeling anxious, you
4 know, that sort of thing because it's a lot of -- you know, the
5 visibility is huge. And also, you're being, you know, in an
6 airplane without a motor, which is always very exhilarating for
7 people. So, we just talk them through it and get everybody
8 comfortable and ready to go.

9 And yeah, brief them on egress and ingress and make sure
10 they're clear, no questions. Then the big thing is really with
11 the -- during the brief is when they're in the cockpit, and that's
12 usually where we do it, is it's best instead of discussing it
13 outside, to get them inside and let them see things and say, okay,
14 the stick's going to be moving like this, and this is that, so
15 they can get a good visual instead of doing it prior to.

16 Yeah, launch out. And, you know, do the flight. And really,
17 we're catering to them. I mean, if it's -- you know, some people
18 they like to, you know, do a lot of turns, and if it's thermaling,
19 that's the only way to get up, so, you know, you have to turn.
20 Some people are like, yeah, I just like to -- you know, can we
21 level out the wings and go smooth? So we kind of cater to the
22 customer that way.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Depending on if they want to, you know, if they want to just
25 level out, or some people, I mean, we'll get off tow and, that was

1 great; let's go back. You know, so it really depends. So we
2 cater to the customer. And we, as far as the -- as far as, you
3 know, the length of the ride, I guess, if you will.

4 Q. Okay. And we talked about this before, but when you guys are
5 doing the glider sightseeing tour flights, the front desk
6 personnel basically maintain radio contact with them at all times?

7 A. Um-hum. Yeah, we have two radios on board the glider. Or
8 there should be. We always carry a handheld as a backup.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Because we've got the battery that's -- that charges the
11 aircraft radio, and if that loses charge, we've had issues, so we
12 always carry two radios on board. But throughout the flight, no
13 matter where we are at our assigned safe altitudes, we have line
14 of sight back to the field. So we generally always have radio
15 communication.

16 But we've had radios in the past go dead or not get charged
17 or something of that nature, and so it's not unusual to not have
18 communication with a glider for a period of time or for part of
19 the flight.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. But yeah, and the front desk, they know when to expect the
22 glider back. You know, there's not any specific time reporting
23 points, but from the time that the glider's released, the front
24 desk -- person at the front desk hears that call, then obviously
25 then the Husky comes back in. He comes in, checks in the

1 aircraft, says yeah, I released the glider here. And that's when
2 we know, okay, well, that glider ride's about halfway over.

3 Q. Okay. Okay. Now, with the glider sightseeing tour flights,
4 these are all done under Part 91?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And do they fall under an FAA letter of authorization?

7 A. No.

8 Q. No.

9 A. Because it's non-powered.

10 Q. Non-powered, okay. Okay. You mentioned before that you guys
11 can only go within 25 statute miles or nautical miles?

12 A. Statute. So the Part 91 for scenic flight operations, you
13 have to takeoff and land at the same airport.

14 Q. Okay. Okay.

15 A. And you have a 25 statute mile circle.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So with Part 91 you can go ahead and do scenic flights or
18 photo flights in that area. So we operate under that.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Over certain air only. You know, 9 miles at the farthest
21 with the glider.

22 Q. Just doing the sightseeing tour flights over Grand Teton
23 National Park, are there any, I guess, unique environmental
24 challenges with flying over that area at all?

25 A. Well, I mean, it's -- you know, I've been flying out here

1 since -- well, before I started here in '99, and yeah, I mean
2 they're big mountains. It's mountain flying.

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. So, the biggest challenge is they are big mountains. We are
5 located on -- for the predominant wind direction, we're located on
6 the upwind side of the mountains. This operation would not be
7 feasible if we were in Jackson, on the downwind side. So, \ much
8 of what we are flying is ridge lift with thermal added into that.

9 Q. Okay. Okay. And then for the glider pilots, like when they
10 do a sightseeing tour flight, how are they compensated? Is it
11 just per flight they're compensated? Or is it just --

12 A. Uh-huh. Yeah, they're paid for the hour.

13 Q. Hour.

14 A. Yeah, if they want to go over 15 minutes and give the
15 customer an extra good ride, which will usually bring them a nice
16 tip, they'll go over, but they're paid for the hour.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. The tow pilot's paid for an hour.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yeah. So, that's the way that works.

21 Q. And just doing like a sightseeing tour, front-end glider, how
22 much roughly is it for a passenger, like if you want to go on, how
23 much is it just roughly?

24 A. I think we -- the rates changed either last year or this
25 year; I think it's about 350 bucks --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- or \$320.

3 Q. Okay. And then on the accident glider, I mean, you guys had
4 insurance on those through Kern & Wooley; is that correct?

5 A. Kern & Wooley is the claim adjuster. Is actually -- the
6 underwriter is D. Brown.

7 Q. W. Brown, okay. Okay, and with W. Brown, did they, I guess,
8 impose any restrictions or requirements on you guys as a company
9 for doing glider operations with the glider? Or nothing unique or
10 different on that?

11 A. Not that I know of.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I mean, we've been with them forever, and the glider
14 operation's been under them forever.

15 Q. Okay. Okay. And then for your glider pilots here, do they
16 participate in any sort of alcohol or drug screening program?

17 A. Yeah. That -- we have a drug program and everyone is on the
18 random screening.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And everyone had a standard FAA -- all of our mechanics and
21 all of our pilots are on the drug program.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. So they have a pre-screening prior to employment, and then if
24 that's clear then they are put into the random pool.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A Yeah, with a lot of our summertime pilots, we actually have
2 to -- we take them off active during the winter, so they don't get
3 screened in the winter, and then we bring them back on. We make
4 the unactive in the winter and then bring them back on for active
5 in the summer.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And they have to go over and do a new pre-screening --

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. -- almost like it's a new employee.

10 Q. Okay. Okay. And then are the glider pilots here, are they
11 required to have a medical certificate to do operations?

12 A. No.

13 Q. No, okay. I think we kind of briefly touched upon this
14 before, just kind of going over the actual L-23, what flight
15 instrument displays does -- did that glider have installed in it?

16 A. Flight instrument displays had the standard: it had a
17 variometer, had an altimeter, had airspeed indicator, turn and
18 bank and ball.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. And then with the radio, it just had a normal VHF radio, and
22 then also a backup handheld, you said?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Okay. And then did the glider have any previous mechanical
2 issues to your knowledge? Any previous issues with it from a
3 maintenance aspect? Or --

4 A. No. Any issues that we have are addressed either immediately
5 or during 100-hour or annual inspection upon the findings.

6 Q. Okay. Now, is the glider -- do you guys always keep it in
7 like a ready accessible flight status or do you guys keep it
8 disassembled? Or how do you guys kind of keep it stored?

9 A. Yeah, we leave it together all year round.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. You know, we have the space. We've never broken it down even
12 in the winter, and we certainly don't in the summer. It's always
13 together.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. When we had two gliders, I think one of the gliders, we would
16 take the wings off, but that was over 6 years ago.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Just to make more space. But now with the space and the fact
19 that it's low and the wings are -- the wings are low, it's never
20 been a space issue, so we don't --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- we do not assemble [sic] it and reassemble it.

23 Q. Okay. Okay. And then for the glider itself for pilots, do
24 you guys use the manufacturer's checklist for that glider or do
25 you guys have your own that you've created?

1 A. The manufacturer's checklist.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And I think we've -- we may have some additional items that
4 we added to that checklist.

5 Q. Okay. Okay.

6 A It's pretty straight forward being a glider.

7 Q. Are there any SEC's installed on that glider? Anything --

8 A. Not that I know of. Unless, I believe the wingtips, I
9 believe those are manufactured. They are manufactured products,
10 so it has a wing ticket -- wingtip extensions on to give it a
11 little bit more glide ratio and lift. But no, not that I know of.

12 Q. Okay. And then I think we talked about this before, but when
13 you guys do the tour flights, you guys always have the passenger
14 up front just for enhanced visibility, if you will? Just to see
15 more things and --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah. In the back it -- if you put a person in the back, the
19 wing -- your eye is basically right at the edge of the wing.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And there's kind of this little hatch top. The canopy closes
22 here, but because the wing is here, there's a -- there's an
23 additional small canopy over your head, so you close the small
24 canopy and then the main canopy closes in front. So this is like
25 a little clamshell.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So, from the back it can be a little claustrophobic for a
3 passenger, and that's not the objective of a glider ride.

4 Q. Okay. And then did you guys have an ELT installed on the
5 glider?

6 A. We did not.

7 Q. Okay. And we talked about this before, but you guys didn't
8 have like a flight tracking system, like Spidertracks, on it?

9 Okay.

10 A. We did not.

11 Q. And then you guys -- for glider operations, do you guys like
12 use flight helmets or parachutes at all here for gliders, or --

13 A. No, it's non-aerobatic and we do not exceed the limitations
14 of the aircraft.

15 Q. Okay. Okay. And then do you guys use any sort of like
16 supplemental oxygen systems or oxygen pre-reading before you do
17 any glider flights here?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay. Okay, just shifting gears and talking about the
20 accident pilot, can you describe your relationship with her since
21 you've started working here, please?

22 A. Yeah. I've known Kris since I started. She was here -- you
23 know, she's been in the valley for a lot longer than she's worked
24 here. But she started about the same time that I did, maybe the
25 spring -- I started in the fall and I think she started the next

1 spring, but she had always been a glider pilot around, so I knew
2 her very, very lightly on a social engagement and as an employee.
3 Didn't really know her hugely. We didn't go to social events
4 together. But just knew her. Flew with her, not a lot, but a few
5 times. Definitely with all the pilot meetings and the times that
6 I was always around her, you know, she was very professional.

7 She, I think she -- when I was -- I got my glider --
8 commercial add-on rating in 2000, and I think she was my
9 instructor, and at the time there was a gentleman who was -- so I
10 believe she signed me off. I would have to go back through my
11 logbook, but I remember her giving me spin training in the glider
12 and just her -- yeah, she was very -- her instruction was good.
13 And she -- yeah, she was very good.

14 Q. Okay. And then she just flew just the L-23 aircraft? That
15 was the aircraft she flew for you guys?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay. And then did she have any medical issues to your
20 knowledge, at all?

21 A. No, she didn't.

22 Q. Any substance abuse issues with drugs or alcohol to your
23 knowledge?

24 A. No, she didn't.

25 Q. Did she use like tobacco or caffeine at all to your

1 knowledge?

2 A. Not that I know of.

3 Q. Any sleep issues that you knew of? Okay.

4 A. Not that I know of.

5 Q. Roughly, how far away did she live from Teton Aviation
6 Center?

7 A. I think about -- she lived -- I think their house is a mile
8 and a half off the approach end of Teton.

9 Q. Okay. So, pretty close then. And then just her personal
10 life, married? Children at all?

11 A. Married. She's an opera singer. That is her primary
12 profession. She's a work renowned opera singer, and she's
13 married.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. No children.

16 Q. And then since she's been working here, did she have any, you
17 know, previously violations or incidents or accidents that you
18 know of?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. And did you ever take disciplinary action against her
21 for anything?

22 A. No, I did not.

23 Q. Okay. Just for new hires here, switching gears, if you were
24 looking to hire like a new glider pilot here, what are some things
25 you look for in a new glider pilot with, you know, hours and

1 experience? What do you look for?

2 A Yeah, the biggest thing is mountain experience.

3 Q. Uh-huh.

4 A. You know, if someone showed up from the East Coast that had
5 been mostly flying smaller terrain and flat terrain, just
6 thermaling, probably would not give them a job. I shouldn't say
7 probably; we wouldn't offer them the job. They would need to be a
8 local pilot for quite a while before they would be qualified to be
9 flying in the mountains.

10 That being said, it -- with the appropriate amount of
11 mountain experience elsewhere, if someone came from Alaska and
12 they had a lot of time flying fixed wings and they were familiar
13 with micrometeorology and, you know, updrafts and downdrafts and
14 rotors and crossing ridge lines and all that sort of stuff, they
15 would be probably faster to bring up than a glider pilot that was
16 just flying flatlands. So, really the flying of a glider is not
17 really the biggest thing we would look at. But yeah, we would --
18 they would need a -- I mean, we don't really have a set minimum
19 hours because we just don't hire glider pilots, because we have --

20 Q. Sure.

21 A. -- glider pilots that have been with us for 10 years plus.
22 So, that's never really come up.

23 But, for instance, like myself and Colleen, we're the least
24 experienced glider pilots that fly, and we both have in excess of
25 75 hours in this glider and the training, but we both have in

1 excess of thousands of hours in the mountains and locally, so you
2 know, that really is -- you know, reading the conditions and
3 knowing mountain flying is the biggest factor that would determine
4 whether they're capable of doing the job.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. If that's what you're asking?

7 Q. Yeah. Thank you for that.

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. Just kind of shifting gears and going over the flight
10 training program here, I think we kind of talked about that
11 briefly before. You know, doing flight training in the L-23, just
12 roughly, how long does that take to do from start to finish?

13 A. It varies from one customer to the next. I mean, like I
14 said, it's very much al-a-carte, so we don't -- it's not like we
15 have a string of people that have no flight experience.

16 You know, you have a -- I don't even -- you know, I'm not a
17 glider instructor, so I can't quote the minimum amount of takeoffs
18 and landings, but I believe it's you -- you know, if you're a
19 commercial add-on, I think you need at least 20 takeoffs and
20 landings. And with a glider, that's kind of a lot because you --
21 you know, you're having to hook up to -- it's not like you can do
22 touch and go's, right.

23 Q. Yeah. Yeah.

24 A. So, generally I think people will get their ratings somewhere
25 in the range of, you know, 40 hours, would be my guess. And that

1 would mean that they would be capable and safe of flying within
2 the valley area, not venturing very deep into the mountains --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- you know, as a -- you know, a license to learn is
5 basically all you get when you get your license.

6 Q. Okay. And just from what you've seen here, just on the L-23
7 itself, how would you rate the ability of pilots to kind of
8 transportation into it, get used to it? Is it pretty --

9 A. Yeah, it's a primary trainer.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I mean, it's what -- as Colleen, I think, mentioned or who
12 was it? Somebody mentioned, you know, I mean the Air Force uses a
13 primary trader. It's got no -- it's got absolutely no poor
14 handling qualities.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. It's a great trainer. Very docile.

17 Q. Okay. And how often, with the pilots that you employ here,
18 how often are they administered check rides by, you know, Colleen
19 or -- do you guys do any sort of like check rides, if you will,
20 with them?

21 A. Yeah, we do. We do a -- you know, in the spring we do our
22 spring training. So we bring everybody back in, you know, we --
23 you know, like we pointed out, it's kind of like a family. We get
24 back together, usually have lunch, talk about all the procedures
25 and safety and things, and talk about anything that might have

1 come up over the winter. And then we go out and everyone get
2 recurrent, because we've got quite a bit of cross-trained pilots,
3 you know. Most of the pilots can either fly the tow plane or they
4 can fly scenics, and a couple can provide instruction.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So usually the instructors will go ahead and do, you know, we
7 do check rides amongst our self. There isn't -- it's not 135
8 where you have one designated check pilot.

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. But everybody goes out and over the course of, it's usually a
11 week, gets their currency. It's usually three takeoffs and
12 landings, and then they'll -- at some point, they'll fly with one
13 of the other pilots, if they're doing a VFR or a light, you know.

14 Q. Okay. And then do you guys do any sort of air medical
15 training here for the pilots on stuff like drugs and alcohol or
16 fatigue or hypoxia? Do you guys have any air medical training you
17 do here on that kind of stuff?

18 A. No, nothing standard.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. We don't have a standard program for that.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But it's -- we -- I mean, if I look in here, again I'm not --
23 as far as -- let's see. Yeah, I mean, in our new hire training,
24 you know, kind of going over some of the things, yeah, just
25 talking about authorizations. I mean, our program covers both

1 powered and glider.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And within there are the rules and the regs on oxygen,
4 overflight of the Grand Teton National Park for powered, you know,
5 and just kind of covers all that sort of stuff. But we don't have
6 a environmental -- I mean, hypoxia, we -- it's, as far as if
7 you're talking about how can you recognize hypoxia and that sort
8 of thing, that sort of program, we don't have anything in writing.
9 It's discussed and certainly it's something that is -- that
10 they've all been flying here long enough that they're familiar
11 with. They're familiar with the conditions.

12 Q. Do you guys have like a formal, like, crew resource
13 management training program here? Anything of that nature?

14 A. Crew resource?

15 Q. Yeah, CRM?

16 A. Yeah, no because we generally don't fly together as a
17 two-pilot operation. So, yeah, no --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- not a crew resource.

20 Q. And then do you guys -- you or anybody else do any sort of
21 like auditing of the training programs you have here? Do you or
22 Colleen do anything of that nature?

23 A. Yeah, Colleen and I get together whenever she makes any sort
24 of changes. I mean, the program that we have, you know, she came
25 on a few years ago, took over the department, and everyone has,

1 you know, reviewed what was there before. Lisa, before her, Lisa
2 Pearson (ph.) was the head of the flight operation and she was
3 very diligent and good on syllabus and procedures and documenting
4 everything. So, we'll -- if we add or subtract to that, we bring
5 it up. We'll -- we review. She and I will have meetings at least
6 once a month just on how everything's going -- how's everything
7 been going, and then if she has any additions or subtractions --
8 generally not subtractions, but usually additions to the policy
9 and procedure, we go over those. We talk about them.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And then they're added into the documentation that we have.

12 Q. Just kind of shifting gears and going to the safety program
13 here, how would you describe the safety culture here at Teton
14 Aviation Center?

15 A. I think it's very high. I don't -- if I could make it -- if
16 I had a knowingly -- knowing way to make it better, I would have
17 at this point. I think our safety record to this point speaks for
18 itself for the amount of glider flights that we have done, amount
19 of fixed wing flights we've done.

20 You know, we're in a very unique area. We have a unique
21 airport where we have everything from gliders to large corporate
22 aircraft to Warbirds to training in this area, and, I mean, that's
23 one of the unique enjoyable things about the airport. But you
24 know, we -- yeah, if I knew ways to improve the things that we're
25 doing now, I think I would have prior to this. But as I said, a

1 lot of this documentation, a lot of the policy and procedure is --
2 came from the pilot involved in this accident.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And there's really not anyone in -- that I know, other than
5 her, that had more experience in these mountains and in that
6 glider.

7 Q. Okay. All right, just from -- I know you kind of mentioned
8 this before about, you know, about improving safety stuff, but
9 just from what you've seen here, I know you've -- a lot here --
10 what are some of the top hazards that you've see here?

11 A. I think -- are we speaking specifically glider? Are we
12 speaking overall?

13 Q. Just overall aviation here, whether it's --

14 A. You know, certainly weather conditions.

15 Q. Weather.

16 A. Density altitude is always an issue for people that aren't
17 familiar with high terrain. But weather conditions, weather
18 mountain flying.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. And do you feel like if, you know, any sort of employee here,
22 they've had any kind of safety issue, that they can bring that up
23 to you or another manager and it would get addressed?

24 A. Absolutely.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah, my door's always open and I think if you talk to anyone
2 that everybody feels comfortable. And if they don't, which I
3 haven't heard anyone that hasn't, they'll speak to someone who
4 does feel comfortable and it will get to me or it will get to
5 their department head.

6 Q. You guys have like a formal safety program? Or like a safety
7 management system program here for Teton Aviation Center?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay. So, for like, I guess, all the safety stuff, is that
10 kind of like your function then, for safety things to do then? Is
11 that -- or do you have a separate person that does safety
12 functions here?

13 A. Safety functions, when it -- I mean, we have -- for instance,
14 for the linemen, they have their own safety protocol. They watch
15 their videos. They discuss any issues or safety hazards related
16 to that.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. The flight department kind of does the same thing. I'm
19 involved kind of in the -- all of the different areas.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Just like any sort of safety issues that might arise down in
22 maintenance, so --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- it's not like I -- I guess I oversee and am involved in
25 all of them, but we don't have really one overlying --

1 Q. Okay. Okay. And do you guys have like a formal, like,
2 internal review process by senior management if an event occurs?
3 Like, for example, you know, a mechanic left a tool on an
4 airplane?

5 A. Absolutely. We had a --

6 Q. Would you guys --

7 A. We have a write-up process. We have documentation. We
8 basically write up the event, depending on, you know, whatever it
9 is, and whether it's a tool or whether it's an interaction with a
10 customer or whether it's, you know, something that we deem not at
11 our level --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- or acceptable, we write them up. We talk to them. We
14 give them options to correct -- corrective measures, suggestions.
15 We have them sign the document. It's documented. And it's kind
16 of a -- depending on -- you know, as long as it's not a safety --
17 a flight issue or safety issue, we don't have a one strike you're
18 out policy. We would work with them. If it's something that
19 comes up again, we sit back down, we pull back out their file and
20 say, look, here's -- we've had this discussion before --

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. -- and this isn't going to work out.

23 Q. Do you have a formal like downed aircraft plan here? Like
24 if, you know, one of your aircraft has an accident, do you guys
25 have like a formal process or checklist for an accident or downed

1 aircraft for employees?

2 A. We have the procedures of what happens at the front desk.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. This is the first time we've had a downed aircraft, but when
5 our aircraft leave the local training environment, with the
6 powered aircraft, we have survival kits on board.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. We also make sure, other than the survival kit with
9 everything necessary in there, we also make sure that the pilot --
10 the student pilot and the instructor pilot have their own bag of
11 survival equipment, especially if it's in the winter. You know,
12 they're just warm clothes and that sort of stuff.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. So, as far as that goes. Also, we have this -- well, we used
15 to use SPOTS, and now Colleen just got a new type of device, so
16 they do have a way other than the ELT if they need emergency help.
17 Its satellite based, immediately calls 9-1-1, brings someone to
18 the coordinates.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And we fly with those when we leave the area.

21 Q. Cool.

22 A. But again, those are powered --

23 Q. Sure.

24 A. -- for the powered aircraft.

25 Q. Do you have like a -- like a formal aviation safety council

1 here or pilots and mechanics that meets on a regular basis that
2 goes over safety issues or topics or --

3 A. No, we don't.

4 Q. Okay. Are all the pilots here required to utilize like a
5 formal pre-flight risk assessment for every flight they do? Like
6 a risk assessment sheet or, you know, of that nature that you're
7 required to use?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay. And then, from a fatigue aspect, do you guys track
10 pilot's duty times and flight times here?

11 A. We don't track them because we never come close to an 8-hour
12 flying --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- 8 hours of flight time.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So, it's -- yeah. And if -- yeah. We never come to --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Never come close to that.

19 Q. Okay. Okay.

20 A. But we do, for instance, with Colleen, because the day's very
21 long and if we have a student that's starting to do their night
22 cross-countries, we would never have -- the pilot that's going to
23 be dealing with their student, because the night cross-country's
24 going to start at 10-ish in the evening, they would not be on
25 during that day.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. They would not fly with other students.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. If they did, they might come in the afternoon, fly with one
5 student, but they would -- normally they're just off the whole
6 day. They would come in at 10. But Colleen kind of organizes
7 that with them.

8 Q. Okay. And then if -- you know, for example, you found a
9 safety issue, whatever topic, how do you communicate that with all
10 your pilots? Do you guys do that through meetings or emails or --

11 A. Yeah. Well, I -- it -- you know, if I see a safety issue, I
12 deal with it immediately. If I see something that just needs
13 corrective action, I'll go ahead and relay that to Colleen. But I
14 do that -- I usually do that through the department. I
15 immediately get a hold of my department head and then they
16 communicate through their best means of communication.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Like, the line guys are -- you know, best way with them is
19 telephone. So, and if she needs to bring them in, have a sit-down
20 and talk about it. All the pilots have emails and so --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- so that's the way she communicates. The mechanics kind of
23 the same thing. If it's a companywide, I usually do it department
24 by department so I don't have to pull in a group of 30 people.

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. I find that to be the best way to get the word out.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And I don't hesitate to shut down operations when anything
4 comes up that's a safety issue.

5 Q. Okay. Just kind of shifting gears and going over FAA. I
6 know you mentioned that all the ops you guys do here, with the
7 exception of the Kodiak, you guys do Part 91. And for the power
8 airplanes it's done under a letter of authorization, whereas the
9 glider is not under letter of authorization. Do you guys have
10 like a principal operations inspector that works with you or
11 that's assigned to you guys at all for your operations here?

12 A. Yeah. The LOA, I get a call from a gentleman, and I think
13 his -- I think his name's on here, and he calls and just asks if
14 there's any changes to the letter. And I forget who the gentleman
15 is that called this year. But yeah, I'd -- off the top of my
16 head. So his name's on this one. Yeah, I don't know his name off
17 the top of my head.

18 Q. No worries. We can look it up later.

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. Do you know just roughly how long he's been here, I guess,
21 POI, if that's the correct term then? Or is -- has it been
22 different folks in the past?

23 A. Yeah, I -- I'm pretty sure it's been the same gentleman for
24 at least the last 4 years or so.

25 Q. Four years, okay. And you kind of said before, how often

1 would you interact with him? Just --

2 A. Usually just the one time a year that he'll call and --

3 Q. Just once a year. Telephone call?

4 A. Yeah. And see if we have any different aircraft or is
5 everything still in place for the letter.

6 Q. How would you describe your relationship between you guys and
7 him with previous --

8 A. Yeah, with -- you know, Salt Lake City FSDO, we've always had
9 a very good relationship with everyone down there, whether it's
10 airworthiness or you know, training, whatever.

11 Q. And do you feel that they provide pretty good support to you
12 guys with assistance and oversight?

13 A. Yeah. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. Okay. And then has this POI, has he actually come out
15 here to Driggs and done any sort of inspections on aircraft or
16 records or anything of that nature?

17 A. Not for this that I know of, no.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. But he may have been here for other reasons involved in the
22 maintenance department. I don't -- I can't recall.

23 Q. Okay. But nothing for the letter of authorization? Nothing
24 for the glider operations he's been out here for?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay. Okay. Have there been any coverage gaps with this
2 assigned POI to your knowledge? Or it's been the same guy for the
3 last couple years, like you said?

4 A. Not that I know of.

5 Q. Okay. Okay. Is there also an assistant POI that you know of
6 or it's just the one gentleman?

7 A. I don't know.

8 Q. Okay. Okay. And like you said, he's never been involved
9 with doing anything with the glider operations to your knowledge?

10 A. Uh-uh.

11 Q. Okay. Okay. Just kind of shifting gears and going over --
12 just the program, overall program here. Do you guys have any
13 external audits? Like do you have any third-party companies that
14 come here and audit you guys, any consulting aviation folks at
15 all? Or you guys just do like your own internal audits?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Okay. Okay. Are you guys, Teton Aviation Center, are you
18 guys a member of any aviation industry groups? Do you guys --

19 A. NBAA.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. You know, kind of in and out, depending on -- if we keep
22 renewing our, you know, schedulers, dispatchers, you know, the
23 department down -- avionics is part of the -- I forget the
24 avionics anacronym, but --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. -- the avionics stuff.

2 Q. And do you guys work at all with the Soaring Society of
3 America? Do you guys do anything --

4 A. We're a member with them. Just a member, but we don't really
5 do a whole lot with them.

6 Q. Okay. And then just kind of switching gears to the L-23
7 glider here. I know we talked before it's a good glider for
8 training and issues with it, but just with your experience has
9 it -- have there been any, from what you've seen, any ergonomic
10 issues with like, you know, the flight controls or switches? It's
11 all pretty straightforward to you?

12 A. No, it's all very straightforward.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And I haven't experienced any issues with someone in the
15 front seat with what Sam had mentioned.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. But --

18 Q. Okay. And then with the various emergency procedures that
19 are put out in the POH, they're pretty easy for pilots to follow
20 and they're pretty clear and concise?

21 A. Yeah, they're pretty straightforward.

22 Q. Okay. All right. Just in conclusion here, since the
23 accident occurred, have there been any changes here at the
24 organization since the accident occurred? Or --

25 A. I've just suspended all flight operations.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Till we see how everybody's heads are doing and see how is --
3 everyone's feeling. And then we'll bring our powered aircraft
4 back on line.

5 Q. Okay. Has there been anything different with the way you've
6 done your duties as GM since the accident occurred? Any different
7 changes or --

8 A. No. I've just been focused on trying to get ready for this,
9 to give you --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- get the information together that you and the FAA needs.

12 Q. Okay. Cool. Cool. And then, you know, kind of, are there
13 any previous safety concerns related to the circumstances that we
14 know so far for the accident? You know, anything previous
15 outstanding issues related to the accident that you can think of
16 or no?

17 A. I have not.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. No.

20 Q. How would you rate the overall employee morale here at Teton
21 Aviation Center?

22 A. I think it's very high. Yeah, I think -- I mean, yeah
23 after work, people tend to not rush home. A lot of times they'll
24 hang out and visit and --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. -- all the parties are -- and the get-togethers are well
2 attended.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Yeah. I think everyone enjoys it. People have been here a
5 long time.

6 Q. And just from your position as GM, do you feel you have
7 adequate personnel and equipment to do the overall mission here?

8 A. Yeah, I believe so. I mean, we always like to have shiny new
9 things, but I think overall we have the equipment that we need,
10 and it's maintained and certainly more than adequate to do the job
11 that we ask it to.

12 Q. Okay. Are there any safety improvements that you would like
13 to see implemented here in your level?

14 A. Not at this time. I think after we review everything, I can
15 imagine that, you know, as Colleen mentioned, that I think, you
16 know, Spidertracks, the tracking device on the scenic aircraft
17 would be a good addition. I think verbal checkpoints would be a
18 good addition, things like that, because all the scenic flights
19 are within radio communication and we have someone at the radio
20 during every flight. So those would be the only things that I can
21 think of. Would that change the course of this event? No. But
22 it would give us more of a continued tracking that maybe if there
23 was a possibility of survival, we might be able to get there
24 sooner.

25 Q. Sure.

1 A. Or get rescue people there sooner.

2 Q. Okay. Just kind of finishing up on my end, was there
3 anything that I missed during this interview that you would like
4 to bring up that you feel is important?

5 A. I don't believe so.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. No.

8 Q. All right.

9 MR. HODGES: Matt, did you have any questions for him?

10 MR. BLAD: No.

11 MR. HODGES: Do you have any questions for me at all or --

12 MR. KLINE: (No audible response.).

13 MR. HODGES: Okay. We'll go ahead and conclude and we'll
14 stop recording now.

15 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL LET L-23 GLIDER (n317BA) CRASH
NEAR MOOSE, WYOMING
JUNE 9, 2018
Interview of Peter Kline

ACCIDENT NO.: CEN18FA217

PLACE: Driggs, Idaho

DATE: June 13, 2108

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Elaine M. LaRosee
Transcriber