

Google Maps Ephraim Shores Resort & Restaurant



On September 18, 2016, my wife Janelle and I were sitting on the dock of the Ephraim Shores Hotel in Ephraim, Wisconsin. We had been to the White Gull Inn for a fish boil earlier that evening. We had brought our cherry pie back to the hotel and had eaten it as we sat on the dock. We were watching the night sky and enjoying the view.

When you sit on the dock at the Ephraim Shores Hotel and look to the south there are three structures toward the top of the hill that are lit with bright, white lights. For me they are an important landmark.

As we were sitting there, we had seen a satellite go by and then we saw an aircraft flying high in the sky. I noticed something to the south and turned my gaze in that direction. I saw a small plane fly in our direction. If it had continued its path it would have come close to where we were sitting. I said to Janelle, "There's something we can look at."

It came toward us passing to the west of the three brightly lit structures. I don't think it made it out over the water. As nearly as I could tell it was over land at all times.

As we watched the plane, it turned to our right – which would have been to the pilot's left. The turn seemed a bit sharp. It was more than a U turn. As the plane was turning it made a wiggle or some kind of an odd movement. As it straightened out, it descended below the tree line. We heard the sounds of a crash. In the early part of the crashing sound, the engine stopped like the propeller had impacted on something solid. The whole time you could hear wood breaking and the sound of metal being mangled. As Janelle said, it sounded like what you would expect an airplane crashing into trees to sound like. It was the cracking of wood and the mangling of metal. I remember that there was one final thud like something had fallen to the ground and then everything was quiet.

We turned to each other and said, "Did you hear what I heard?"

I said, "I think that plane crashed. I think we should call someone." Janelle agreed.

Neither of us could believe what we had just heard. Both of us stood up and started walking back to the hotel across the street.

We told the attendant what we had seen and heard and asked her to help us call someone. She called her manager and the manager told her to call the non-emergency number for the Sheriff. She called and the person said she would check into it. The person said she would send someone to talk to us.

We waited in our room until the front desk attendant called. We went back up to the lobby and met with a person who was an emergency responder. We went across the street to the dock with him and pointed out what we had seen. It was easier to explain standing on the dock. As we were showing him the area where we thought the plane had gone down, two other police cars arrived and two more people in uniforms joined us. I believe one was Officer Smith. He took my contact information. I asked him to call us and let us know what he found out, either way.

We told them that we hoped we were wrong, that it wasn't a crash. They said they were sending someone to the airport to see if a plane had recently landed.

We didn't hear anymore that night except Officer Smith called on my cell phone about 10:35 or so and asked what our room number was at the hotel. I gave him the room number and asked him if they had found the plane yet. He said the matter was still under investigation.

We didn't learn until the next morning that the plane had crashed and that there were no survivors.