



Memorandum for Record

Fabian Salazar
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety – Western Pacific Region

NTSB Accident Number: WPR19FA256
Aircraft Registration & Make/Model: Piper PA32-300
Accident Location: La Grande, OR.
Accident Date: September 8, 2019

Witness Statements

Witness 1
Chad Smoke

Witness 2
Joedy Marlatt

Witness 3
Jason Svetrich

In a group interview with the witness they collectively recalled the following events.

According to the three witnesses, they had cancelled the days hunting due to the weather, which they described as rain with heavy fog. While at their campsite, they heard an airplane fly past, but could not see it. After the airplane flew past, they heard a pop, and then silence. They had no way of knowing where the pop came from and decided to not go out in the bad weather. The hunter's campsite was located less than a half mile northeast from the accident site. The hunters eventually saw some search and rescue personnel, who were looking for the airplane. and gave them their statement.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Weather Conditions Sept.8th near plane crash site
Date: Monday, September 16, 2019 9:46:30 AM

All,

From Tom Frazier, the FBO owner at Ontario Airport (ONO). Mr. Frazier knows the accident PIC and was in the accident area on the 8th, as he describes below. Are you going to contact the family for the pilot logbook?

Based on the observations we made on the ground, the vertical stab was intact, indicating the aircraft was upright at impact. The significant damage to the right side of the engine and broken propeller blade suggests the initial impact was to the right side of the engine. The debris field shows equal scatter from both sides of the aircraft, with the heavier components travelling further down slope. Tach locked at 2700 RPM indicates the propeller governor was working and the engine was at full power at impact. The forward baggage compartment and forward fuselage section was bent to the right, supporting the initial impact to the right side of the engine. The right wing root and right flap, both with walkway paint, was located upslope of the main wreckage and right wing...indicating the right wing was severed at initial or close-following tree impact.

Based on what I saw at the site, it does not appear the accident was caused by mechanical failure. Let me know if your folks find anything we missed. Great meal at the steakhouse!

Cheers,

Gregory W. Horrell
Principal Maintenance Inspector
Boise FSDO

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Tom Frazier [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 15, 2019 9:15 AM
To: Horrell, Gregory (FAA) [REDACTED]
Subject: Weather Conditions Sept.8th near plane crash site

Good Morning Greg:

As we spoke recently I will recap for you the weather conditions the morning of September 8th. I live in Cove Oregon but have the FBO in Ontario Oregon. I drove home from Ontario to Cove late evening of the 6th of September, picked up my wife and motor home and drove to Pendleton for the parade and the concert on the 7th of September. After the concert the night of the 7th the weather in Pendleton started to change with strong winds and clouds moving in. At around 11:00 pm my wife and I left Pendleton headed to Cove but decided to stop at Hilgard State park and spend the night in the motor home. It started to rain hard at about 6:30 am on the morning of September

8th. We had to get home and drop off the motor home and drive to Payette Idaho for a great grandsons birthday party. All the way to Cove and then on toward Payette the through the Baker Valley it was rainy with the Elkhorn mountains being almost totally obscure. Being a pilot and flying back and forth from Ontario to LaGrande it was very questionable flying conditions. In the fall of the year when we start getting rain we also get very heavy ground fog which was also very prevalent over the Blues and of course the Elkhorns. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Frazier Aviation, LLC.

Tommy L. Frazier

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Ontario, OR 97914

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