



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Townsend, Tennessee	Accident Number:	ERA20CA151
Date & Time:	April 10, 2020, 10:40 Local	Registration:	N711MK
Aircraft:	Pipistrel Sinus	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of lift	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that, while en route, the motor glider began to lose altitude unexpectedly. He turned the motor glider toward an area where lift was expected, but it continued to descend. When the motor glider was about 300 ft above trees, he unfeathered the propeller and started the engine. The motor glider continued to descend due to a downdraft, and the pilot deployed the airframe parachute. Subsequently, the motor glider impacted vegetation, which resulted in substantial damage to both wings and the fuselage. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the motor glider that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The motor glider's encounter with atmospheric lift conditions that were not sufficient to maintain flight, which necessitated a forced landing and resulted in impact with vegetation. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's delayed decision to restart the motor glider's engine.

Findings

Environmental issues	Thermal lifting - Effect on equipment
Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Tree(s) - Effect on operation
Personnel issues	Delayed action - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Loss of lift (Defining event)
Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Attempted remediation/recovery
Landing	Off-field or emergency landing
Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private; Sport Pilot	Age:	47, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 27, 2017
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	December 26, 2019
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 1210 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1043 hours (Total, this make and model), 1125 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 17 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Pipistrel	Registration:	N711MK
Model/Series:	Sinus No Series	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	2013	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Special light-sport (Special)	Serial Number:	510 SN 912 LSA
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 21, 2019 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1212 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1046 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Rotax
ELT:	C126 installed	Engine Model/Series:	912 UL2
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	80 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	1A5,2020 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	22 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	10:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	159°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility:	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / Terrain-Induced
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / Moderate
Altimeter Setting:	30.15 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	9°C / -3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Atlanta, GA (RYY)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Atlanta, GA (RYY)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	09:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	35.570835,-83.584999(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gutierrez, Eric
Additional Participating Persons:	Don Williams; FAA/FSDO; Nashville, TN
Original Publish Date:	June 29, 2020
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=101163

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