



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Perma, Montana	<b>Accident Number:</b>	WPR23LA001
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	October 2, 2022, 09:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N892SP
<b>Aircraft:</b>	SCODA AERONAUTICA LTDA SUPER PETREL LS	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Low altitude operation/event	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

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## Analysis

The accident airplane was the lead airplane in a flight of two and while flying about 50 ft over a river, the airplane struck a power line. The airplane abruptly pitched up, descended to the right, and impacted the water, which resulted in substantial damage to the fuselage and wings.

According to a witness, the pilot had prior experience flying at low level over the river close to the accident site. The trailing pilot reported that the accident pilot did not report any mechanical failures or anomalies before the impact with a powerline. The trailing pilot was not aware of the powerline placement, and it is likely that the pilot also did not see the powerline's placement across the river as it was unmarked.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to maintain clearance from the powerline.

## Findings

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<b>Personnel issues</b>	Identification/recognition - Pilot
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Wire - Effect on equipment

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Maneuvering-low-alt flying</b>	Low altitude operation/event (Defining event)
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On October 2, 2022, about 0900 central daylight time, a Scoda Aeronautica LTDA, Super Petrel LS, N892SP, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Perma, Montana. The pilot sustained serious injuries and later in the day succumbed to those injuries. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

According to the trailing pilot, he was following the accident pilot on an impromptu low-level flight over a river. Without incident, they departed Polson Airport, Polson, MT, about 0800, as a flight of two. He reported that about an hour later, while trailing the accident airplane and flying westbound about 50 feet above the river, he saw the lead airplane abruptly pitch up, descend to the right, and impact the water. A still image from a video captured by the trailing pilot showed that the accident airplane was about the height of the powerline poles shortly before the airplane pitched up (see Figure 1).

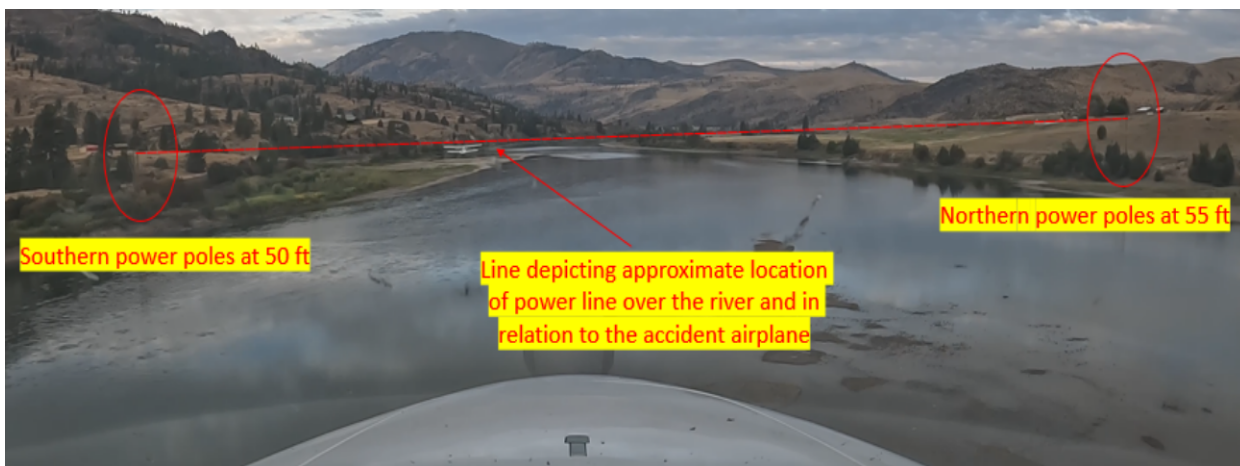


Figure 1. Photo of power pole and line in relation to accident airplane before impact, with added depiction of the powerline over the river (courtesy of witness)

The trailing pilot added that he did not see the powerline before the accident airplane impacted the wire.

A witness who responded to the accident site reported that the pilot stated to him that he had flown over the river near the accident area before, but forgot about the powerline during the accident flight.



Figure 2. Map depiction of wreckage site in relation to powerlines

According to the power company, the “H” configured 2-pole structure on the north side of the river is about 50 ft above the ground (agl) and the structure on the south side of the river is about 55 ft agl, with a lineal span of 1026 ft. They estimated that the distribution powerline spanned above the water between 40 and 80 ft agl and that the line was not marked at the time of the accident.

The airplane came to rest upright on a gravel bar that was about 4 ft below the water level and about 540 feet southwest of the northern power pole structure (see Figure 2). The engine and cabin were submerged with the wings and aft fuselage being above water. The tailcone was partially separated midspan; the empennage was inverted and partially submerged in the water. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the fuselage and both wings.

The trailing pilot stated that the pilot did not report any mechanical anomalies concerning the airplane or engine during the accident flight. The auditioned video was consistent with the airplane and engine operating without any anomalies.

Sanders County Medical Examiner & Coroner’s Office performed the pilot’s autopsy and reported his cause of death as multiple blunt force injuries. The autopsy identified moderate-to-severe and severe aortic atherosclerosis, with no other significant natural disease.

The FAA Bioaeronautical Sciences Research Laboratory, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, performed toxicological testing of specimens from the pilot, which were negative for performance-impairing drugs or alcohol.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private; Sport Pilot	<b>Age:</b>	68, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Unknown
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	September 1, 2016
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	(Estimated)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	SCODA AERONAUTICA LTDA	<b>Registration:</b>	N892SP
<b>Model/Series:</b>	SUPER PETREL LS	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	2015	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Experimental light sport (Special)	<b>Serial Number:</b>	S0344
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle; Amphibian	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	Unknown	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1430 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	ROTAX
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	912ULS2
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	STAPLETON RICK	<b>Rated Power:</b>	100 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	On file	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	KMSO,3189 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	32 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	08:53 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	145°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>		<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Overcast / 1400 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	3 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	None / None
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	130°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	N/A / N/A
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.11 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	10°C / 9°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Polson, MT (8S1)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Perma, MT	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	08:00 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	47.35957,-114.54778

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Nepomuceno, Eleazar
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	John Cosenza; FAA; Misoulla, MT
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	October 3, 2024
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class 3</a>
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=106040">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=106040</a>

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).