



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Shearer, Idaho	Accident Number:	WPR24LA292
Date & Time:	August 28, 2024, 15:15 Local	Registration:	N924LB
Aircraft:	RONALD J MCLAUGHLIN BEARHAWK PATROL	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control on ground	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot of the tailwheel-equipped airplane was attempting to land at an airstrip within a canyon. The pilot overflew the runway twice; he first observed a right crosswind followed by a “limp” windsock during his second pass. The pilot then maneuvered through the canyon to land, encountering turbulence as he approached the runway. During the landing rollout, the airplane drifted to the left side of the runway despite the pilot’s rudder input. The right main landing gear hit a depression in the ground, the airplane then ground looped, and its left wingtip impacted terrain. The airplane sustained substantial damage to its left wing. After the pilot exited the airplane, he noted there to be a “strong, direct tailwind” present.

The pilot reported there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane 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 pilot’s failure to maintain directional control during landing, which resulted in a ground loop.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Environmental issues	Variable wind - Effect on operation
Aircraft	Directional control - Not attained/maintained

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	70,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	BasicMed Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 19, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	May 16, 2024
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 2500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2500 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	RONALD J MCLAUGHLIN	Registration:	N924LB
Model/Series:	BEARHAWK PATROL	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	2016	Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	RJM-4
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 20, 2024 Condition	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	150 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Titan
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	IOX-360
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	189 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:	KHRF, 3645 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	34 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	62°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 7000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	13 knots / 20 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / Terrain-Induced
Wind Direction:	320°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	Unknown / Moderate
Altimeter Setting:	30.16 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	17°C / 1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Salmon, ID (SMN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Shearer, ID	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	Shearer USFS Airport 2U5	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	2634 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Used:	18	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2000 ft / 15 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	45.9895,-114.84127

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Whitaker, Kathryn
Additional Participating Persons:	Paul Lucas; Federal Aviation Administration; Spokane, WA
Original Publish Date:	March 6, 2025
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=195048

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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](#).