



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	FAIRBANKS, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC98LA151
Date & Time:	September 15, 1998, 16:00 Local	Registration:	N93904
Aircraft:	Cessna 185F	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation		

Analysis

The certificated private pilot was flying a float equipped airplane from a remote mountain area to pick up supplies for a hunting/guide business. During the flight, weather conditions, consisting of low ceilings and low visibility, forced the pilot to deviate from his planned route. He was flying over a public use cabin located on a remote lake, and noticed a person on the ground waving. The pilot landed on the lake to wait for improving weather conditions, and to determine if the person at the cabin was in need of assistance. After waiting for better weather conditions, the pilot began a takeoff from the lake without the person at the cabin. The pilot estimated the lake was about 1/4 mile long. As the airplane was about to lift off, the left wing collided with several trees located along the bank of the lake. The airplane then collided with the shore, and received damage to the engine, propeller, left wing, the right wing lift strut, and the float assemblies.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's selection of unsuitable terrain for takeoff and his failure to maintain adequate obstacle clearance.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - ROLL/RUN

Findings

1. OBJECT - TREE(S)
2. (C) UNSUITABLE TERRAIN OR TAKEOFF/LANDING/TAXI AREA - SELECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On September 15, 1998, about 1600 Alaska daylight time, a float equipped Cessna 185F airplane, N93904, sustained substantial damage while taking off from a remote area lake, about 42 miles northwest of Fairbanks, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) cross-country business flight under Title 14 CFR Part 91 when the accident occurred. The airplane was registered to Thomas Hillis, Fairbanks, and operated by the pilot in support of the airplane owner's hunting/guide business. The certificated private pilot, the sole occupant, was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC), on September 18, 1998, at 1115, the pilot reported he works as a guide for Wolf Creek Outfitters, Fairbanks. The pilot departed the Brooks Mountains near Bettles, Alaska, about 1100 for a flight to Fairbanks to pick up supplies. During the flight, weather conditions, consisting of low ceilings and low visibility, forced the pilot to deviate from his planned route. The pilot was flying over a public use cabin, located about 10 miles east of Livengood, Alaska, along the Colorado Creek. He noticed a person on the ground waving. The pilot landed on an adjacent small lake to wait for improving weather conditions, and to determine if the person at the cabin was in need of assistance.

The pilot waited until 1600, and began a takeoff from the lake without the person at the cabin. The pilot estimated the lake was about 1/4 mile long. As the airplane was about to lift off, the left wing collided with several trees located along the bank of the lake. The airplane then collided with the shore, and received damage to the engine, propeller, left wing, the right wing lift strut, and the float assemblies.

The pilot and the cabin occupant were both rescued on September 16, 1998.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	51, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 11, 1998
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	13000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2000 hours (Total, this make and model), 50 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N93904
Model/Series:	185F 185F	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	18503261
Landing Gear Type:	Float	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 9, 1998 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3350 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2000 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	IO-520
Registered Owner:	THOMAS HILLIS	Rated Power:	300 Horsepower
Operator:	JERALD D. STANSEL	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 1000 ft AGL	Visibility	2 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	-1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	BETTLES , AK	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(FAI)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

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:	64.670379,-147.03926(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Erickson, Scott
Additional Participating Persons:	DAVE LACE (FAA); FAIRBANKS , AK
Original Publish Date:	September 28, 1999
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=43984

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