



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Oljato, Utah	Accident Number:	LAX08LA135
Date & Time:	May 9, 2008, 17:30 Local	Registration:	N9030E
Aircraft:	Maule M-5-235C	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Landing area overshoot	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot overflew the 1,190-foot-long dirt airstrip and it appeared safe for landing. The wind was light and variable as he made a stabilized approach. The airplane touched down long, bounced, and was firmly on the ground by midfield. When the pilot applied brakes in the sand runway, the wheels locked, the airplane skidded, and the pilot lost directional control. Approaching the runway's end, the airplane veered off its left side, went down an incline and nosed down. The pilot had relied upon a non-government publication in his preflight planning that appeared to indicate the airstrip was open for public use. The Federal Aviation Administration's aeronautical chart, while not depicting the (uncharted) airstrip's location, did show that the area was within the boundary of National Park Service-administered land, and that landing without authorization was prohibited.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to achieve a normal touchdown location and loss of directional control during landing roll out. Contributing to the accident were the runway's soft surface and short length.

Findings

Environmental issues	Runway/landing area length - Contributed to outcome
Environmental issues	Soft surface - Effect on operation
Aircraft	Directional control - Not attained/maintained
Aircraft	Descent/approach/glide path - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-flare/touchdown	Landing area overshoot (Defining event)
Landing-landing roll	Loss of control on ground
Landing-landing roll	Nose over/nose down

On May 9, 2008, about 1730 mountain daylight time, a Maule M-5-235C, N9030E, owned and operated by the pilot, veered off the runway and came to a stop in a nose down attitude at the Zahn's Camp (uncharted) airstrip, located about 18 miles northwest of Oljato, Utah. The airplane was substantially damaged. Neither the private pilot nor the pilot-rated passenger was injured during the personal flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time, and no flight plan had been filed. The flight was performed under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91, and it originated from Page, Arizona, about 30 minutes before the accident.

The pilot reported to the National Transportation Safety Board investigator that he and his friend intended to fly to the "backcountry" airstrip for the purpose of enjoying the scenery and camping. The pilot stated that he overflew the airstrip to look for obstructions and potholes, and to assess its overall condition. The airstrip appeared in good condition, and there were no indications that it had been closed. There are no facilities at the airstrip. During the overflight, the pilot looked at bushes and opined that the wind was light and variable. There is no windsock.

According to the pilot, from his preflight preparations, he believed runway 06 was the preferred landing runway under the existing conditions, and he proceeded to make a traffic pattern approach for landing. The pilot further reported that his approach was stabilized, and the airplane's speed was 70 miles per hour with 40 degrees of wing flaps extended. There was no indication of a crosswind, and the airplane touched down "slightly long." Thereafter, the pilot said he "discovered that full braking was ineffective," the airplane was "skidding in the dirt...the wheels locked...and we had run out of runway." The conventional gear airplane veered off the side of the runway as it approached the runway's end, went down an incline, and came to a stop with its propeller and right wing on the ground. The outboard portion of the airplane's right wing and horizontal stabilizer were bent. The pilot reported that, during the accident flight, he had not experienced any mechanical malfunction or failure with his airplane.

The pilot further reported to the Safety Board investigator that immediately following the accident he and the passenger exited the airplane. Fuel was observed leaking from the right wing's vent. There was no fire. A global positioning system receiver and a satellite cell phone were on board the airplane. These devices were used to notify authorities of their precise location. This action facilitated their rescue.

The pilot-rated passenger reported to the Safety Board investigator that during the pilot's low altitude overflight of the Zahn's airstrip he did not observe anything wrong with the airstrip that would preclude a normal landing. On final approach, no turbulence or obvious wind (headwind, tailwind, or crosswind) was encountered. From their preflight planning, they were aware that the runway was short. The pilot-rated passenger additionally stated that the airplane "floated" past the beginning of runway 06, touched down a little long, bounced, and was firmly on the ground about midfield. Thereafter, the airplane's rate of deceleration was less than normal, despite the pilot's application of brakes. Upon exiting the airplane, the wind was light and variable.

The Safety Board investigator noted that the airstrip is not depicted on the Federal Aviation Administration's Denver Sectional Aeronautical Chart, which covers the accident site area. There are no roads, services, or facilities (windsock, buildings, etc.) at the airstrip. The backcountry airstrip is located in San Juan County, near the San Juan River arm of Lake Powell, which is within the geographic boundaries of the Glen Canyon National Recreational Area, in southeastern Utah. The boundary area is depicted on the Denver Sectional Aeronautical Chart as being on land administered by the National Park Service.

A notation on the Denver Sectional Aeronautical Chart states the following: "The landing of aircraft is prohibited on lands...administered by the National Park Service...without authorization from the respective agency." The National Park Service (NPS) district ranger reported to the Safety Board investigator that permission to land at the airstrip had not been requested by or granted to the pilot. The NPS ranger additionally reported that the airstrip is not maintained, and it is not equipped with markings of any type. As indicated by federal regulation, the airstrip may be used in emergencies involving the safety of human life.

The pilot-rated passenger reported that he used a private publication for assistance in performing preflight planning for the accident flight, and he provided the information to the pilot. The publication is called "Fly Utah!" According to this publication, the Zahn's Camp airstrip, elevation 3,794 feet mean sea level, is 1,190 feet long and 30 feet wide. Its single, hard packed, sand runway is oriented on an approximate magnetic course of 060/240 degrees. When landing on runway 06, which is the preferred landing runway, there is a 1.68 percent uphill slope.

The "Fly Utah!" publication contains two manuals, entitled "Air & Info Sections" and "Ground Section." In the "Air & Info Sections" a "Warning & Disclaimer" statement is written that states: "The pilot must take sole responsibility for determining the current status of the runway and the results of his actions in using it. This book is sold with the understanding that it is to be used only in conjunction with official publications of the U.S. government, and is not to be considered a legal substitute for such publications." In the "Ground Section" of the publication there is a photograph of three airplanes parked on the airstrip. The photograph is labeled "Surveying Zahn's airstrip."

Following the accident, the Utah Back Country Pilots Association issued the following statement on its web site: "Zahn's Camp airstrip is NOT open to air operations...." Also, the publisher of "Fly Utah!" issued a "Critical Update" to its publication stating that Zahn's Camp is "closed until further notice. DO NOT USE."

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	54, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 1, 2005
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	July 2, 2006
Flight Time:	469 hours (Total, all aircraft), 218 hours (Total, this make and model), 458 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Maule	Registration:	N9030E
Model/Series:	M-5-235C	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	7070C
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 1, 2008 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	5 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1271 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-540-J1A5D
Registered Owner:	Wingnutz and Lama, Inc.	Rated Power:	235 Horsepower
Operator:	John Lawson	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	17:30 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	20°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Page, AZ (PGA)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(NONE)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	17:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Zahn's Camp NONE	Runway Surface Type:	Dirt
Airport Elevation:	3794 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	06	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	1190 ft / 30 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	37.221389,-110.546943

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Pollack, Wayne
Additional Participating Persons:	Tanya Glines; Federal Aviation Administration; Salt Lake City, UT
Original Publish Date:	June 11, 2009
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=67991

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](#).