



Aviation Investigation Final Report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Location: | Skwentna, Alaska | Accident Number: | ANC10CA016 |
| Date & Time: | January 31, 2010, 16:00 Local | Registration: | N4568H |
| Aircraft: | Piper PA-17 | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | Collision during takeoff/land | Injuries: | 1 Minor |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

The private pilot reported that he was on a personal flight and was attempting to land on a frozen lake. While on final approach to land, he said the airplane encountered a wind gust and that the left wing struck the top of a tree. The airplane descended and collided with terrain short of the intended landing site. The pilot stated that there were no preaccident mechanical problems with the airplane.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's decision to make a low-altitude approach to land over trees in gusting winds, which resulted in an in-flight collision with a tree and a loss of control.

Findings

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| Personnel issues | Decision making/judgment - Pilot |
| Environmental issues | Sudden wind shift - Effect on operation |
| Aircraft | Descent/approach/glide path - Not attained/maintained |

Factual Information

History of Flight

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| Approach-VFR pattern final | Collision during takeoff/land (Defining event) |
| Approach-VFR pattern final | Loss of control in flight |

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|--|--|--------------|
| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 21, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine land | 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 Without waivers/limitations | Last FAA Medical Exam: | May 25, 2007 |
| Occupational Pilot: | No | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | 471 hours (Total, all aircraft), 31 hours (Total, this make and model) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Piper | Registration: | N4568H |
| Model/Series: | PA-17 | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal | Serial Number: | 15-342 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Tailwheel | Seats: | 2 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 1150 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | | Engine Manufacturer: | CONT MOTOR |
| ELT: | C91A installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident | Engine Model/Series: | C90 |
| Registered Owner: | KNAPP ALAN L | Rated Power: | 90 Horsepower |
| Operator: | Ben Knapp | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|--------------------|---|---------|
| 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: | | Visibility | |
| Lowest Ceiling: | | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | | Temperature/Dew Point: | |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | | | |
| Departure Point: | Skwentna, AK (na) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | Unknown |
| Destination: | Skwentna, AK (na) | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | | Type of Airspace: | |

Airport Information

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|-----------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Airport: | na na | Runway Surface Type: | Ice |
| Airport Elevation: | | Runway Surface Condition: | Snow |
| Runway Used: | 36 | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | | VFR Approach/Landing: | Traffic pattern |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 Minor | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | |
| Total Injuries: | 1 Minor | Latitude, Longitude: | 61.563888,-151.557785 |

Administrative Information

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| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | LaBelle, James |
| Additional Participating Persons: | Bill Bell; FAA, Anchorage FSDO; Anchorage, AK |
| Original Publish Date: | May 28, 2010 |
| 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=75327 |

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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](#).