Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Lund, Nevada	**Accident Number:**	WPR13LA407
Date & Time:	September 15, 2013, 08:15 Local	**Registration:**	N1079K
Aircraft:	Mooney M20J	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of engine power (total)	**Injuries:**	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Aerial observation		

Analysis

The pilot reported that he was maneuvering the airplane about 1,000 feet above ground level when the engine experienced a loss of power. The pilot initiated a forced landing to a road; however, the engine regained power before the airplane landed. As the airplane began to climb out, it collided with power lines. The pilot chose to continue the flight and landed at an airport 150 miles south of the accident site where it was discovered that the airplane sustained substantial damage due to the power line strike. Postaccident examination of the airframe and engine did not reveal any mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operation. The cause of the engine power loss could not be determined.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's failure to monitor the environment, which led to a collision with power lines during climbout. Contributing to the accident was the loss of engine power during low-altitude flight for reasons that could not be determined because postaccident examination of the airframe and engine did not reveal any mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operation, which led to a forced landing that the pilot subsequently aborted when the engine regained full power.

Findings

Personnel issues	Monitoring environment - Pilot
Not determined	(general) - Unknown/Not determined
Environmental issues	Wire - Contributed to outcome
Personnel issues	Use of equip/system - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Loss of engine power (total) (Defining event)
Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

On September 15, 2013, about 0815 Pacific daylight time, a Mooney M20J, N1079K, sustained substantial damage when it collided with power lines 15 miles south of Lund, Nevada. The airplane was registered to Smith Plane LLC, and operated under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 as a business flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed. The commercial pilot and two passengers were not injured. The flight originated from Ely Airport, Ely, Nevada, at 0730 and had a destination of North Las Vegas Airport(VGT), Las Vegas, Nevada.

The pilot stated to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC) that the purpose of the flight was to monitor a race course at the Silver State Classic Challenge Road Race. When he was about 1,000 feet above ground level the engine experienced a loss of power. While attempting to make an emergency landing, the engine regained power; shortly thereafter the airplane collided with power lines. The power lines subsequently separated from the airplane and the pilot continued his climbout. The pilot reported that he decided to depart the area and fly south to VGT, which was about 150 miles south, rather than fly over the mountains near Ely, Nevada.

One of the passengers reported in a written statement to a Federal Aviation Administration inspector, that as he was looking out of the window the pilot was manipulating the controls. The pilot stated that he was going to land on a road as he pulled and then pushed the throttle lever back in. After colliding with the wires, the passenger stated that all of the alarms were going off. The passenger further stated that the cylinder head temperature was high, and that he pointed this to the pilot.

The postaccident examination of the airplane revealed that the airplane had impact marks and damage on both wings, cowling and propeller assembly. The left wing tip fairing section was bent rearward and the left aileron was ripped from the trailing edge to its leading edge. The postaccident examination of the airframe and engine revealed no evidence of mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operation.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	**Age:**	74
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	August 1, 2013
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	March 5, 2013
Flight Time:	4222 hours (Total, all aircraft), 4000 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		**Age:**	
Airplane Rating(s):		**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):		**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):		**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:		**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:			

Passenger Information

Certificate:		**Age:**	
Airplane Rating(s):		**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):		**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):		**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:		**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Mooney	**Registration:**	N1079K
Model/Series:	M20J NO SERIES	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1990	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	24-3159
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	**Seats:**	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 4, 2013 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	2899 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	8 Hrs	**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3529 Hrs as of last inspection	**Engine Manufacturer:**	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	IO360 SER A&C
Registered Owner:	SMITH PLANE LLC	**Rated Power:**	200 Horsepower
Operator:	SMITH PLANE LLC	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KELY,6262 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	36 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:53 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	20°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots / None	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/ None
Wind Direction:	190°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/ N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.12 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	7°C / 6°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Ely, NV (ELY)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	
Destination:	LAS VEGAS, NV (VGT)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	07:30 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	

Airport Information

Airport:	ELY ARPT /YELLAND FLD/ ELY	**Runway Surface Type:**	
Airport Elevation:	6259 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Unknown
Runway Used:		**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:		**VFR Approach/Landing:**	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	38.771945,-115.01361

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Swick, Andrew
Additional Participating Persons:	Paul Alukonis; Federal Aviation Administration; Las Vegas, NV
Original Publish Date:	August 14, 2014
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=88038