



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Person Interviewed: John Furina
NTSB Accident Number: ANC15FA071

Narrative:

During a conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC), John Furnia, stated that the Otter typically flew with a load of about six people, and occasionally, but not often, a full load of 11 people. The flight to the Swikshak River is about 45 minutes, and that the loads were not dependent on the distance of the destination. He stated that it was the pilot's responsibility to fuel and load the airplane. Most of the time he would oversee the loading of the airplane, and sometimes the guides would load the airplane the night before. When arriving at the airplane in the morning before a trip, he would pump the floats, inspect the gear and how it was loaded, and would sometimes rearrange gear. A typical load of gear included packs for the guides and guests, fishing rods, food, coolers, and cooking supplies. Generally there was one cooler for 3 people, and anything specific that the guests requested.

He said that depending on the destination they would load gear in the floats, typically firewood, chairs, or fuel. Gear would only be loaded in the floats if at the destination the gear would be easily accessible. The schedule and list of guests that would be on the plane, he did not have access to their weights, he would guesstimate their weight and mentally compute the weight and balance, there was no discussion with the passengers about their weight. The guests would sit anywhere on the airplane, the guides sat in the back, next to the exit. The fuel load depended on the destination, he stated that he had been to Swikshak once before earlier in the season. He would plan on the roundtrip taking 90 minutes, he would also plan on one hour of reserve fuel. He said that he computed the weight in his head, there were no fillable forms or paperwork that he used. The manuals, paperwork, airworthiness, registration, and life vest were all in the pocket behind his seat. Included in the binder with all of the paperwork was a current weight and balance. From recollection he believed that the useful load was about 3,000 pounds. He said that he kept a notepad of weights and radio frequencies in his pocket, but it was not recovered after the accident. After everyone was loaded he would look to seat where they were seated. Not

often, about 10 times a year, if there was too much stuff he would make multiple trips to drop stuff off and then go back for the remaining passengers or gear. He said there was never any repercussion for taking multiple loads. He said that he used the ADS-B for traffic awareness.

When the schedule was posted it would give a departure time and a return time, the departure time depended on the destination. There was no consideration for the departure time regarding civil twilight time. He stated that he did not have personal weather minimums. He did not typically file a flight plan with the flight service station. If there was inclement weather Gus would tell him in the morning and he would delay the flight for an hour or two. He said there was never any pressure to fly in poor weather conditions.

The Otter departs off of East Wind Lake to reduce the number of cycles on the engine. He stated that the otter uses approximately 1/3 of the lake to get airborne, it had so much power that the takeoff distance was never a factor. He said when lifting off that he did not look at his airspeed, but estimated it was typically around 60 mph, and that he goes by how the controls feel. The Otter with the turbine conversion climbs with a pitch attitude of a typical airplane, different from the non-turbine Otter, which climbs out with a lower pitch attitude. He said that a very small percent of flights depart in the dark, typically just late in the season flights.

He stated that the night before the accident the guides loaded some of the gear in the cargo area of the airplane. The next morning when he arrived at the airplane he looked over what had been loaded, and topped off the forward and center tanks. The rear tank only had residual fuel, it was not dry, but low, he ran that tank low to get the weight out of the back. He pumped the floats, and noted that the gear included his pack, as well as the guide's packs, chairs, firewood, a stove, passenger's bags, food, fishing rods, and coolers. He did not load anything in the floats because at the Swikshak it was not convenient to get things out of the floats. He said there was about 8-10 pieces of firewood, about 2-3 pounds each, and that it was a normal load of firewood.

He said that because the passengers were familiar with flying in the airplane that there was no briefing before they departed, and that Rodger Glaspey was in the third seat behind him, and Jim Fletcher was in the third seat on the right side. He believed that most of the passengers wore their headsets, but that he isolates his until after they depart so that he doesn't hear chatter. He stated that he typically does not have much contact with the guests except when they are loading and unloading. He thought that his last flight in the airplane was Monday, the day before the accident, or the Saturday before. He said that nothing was different, it was an early morning departure with a typical load. He said when he is departing to the west he sometimes leaves straight from the boards, or he circles around, there was not a standard procedure.

He stated that the water was calm, a small ripple, about 4,000 feet overcast, a west wind about 7 knots. There is a light on the building near the tie-ups that they sometimes use, depending on how dark it is. Typically he departs to the west and they shut it off, if it is an east departure they leave it on to use as a visual reference point, there is no light to the west. He said that he had the navigation lights on, the strobe lights were possibly on, the high intensity LED landing light was on, and the flaps were in the takeoff position. He stated they left from the boards and he powered up, and was headed down the center of the lake, which is shaped like a figure eight. He said he had never not been airborne before the two points that stick out in the lake. He was looking

outside as the airplane came up on the step and lifted off at a normal pitch, and that the acceleration felt normal. A few seconds after the airplane was airborne in the air the nose came up and he heard a noise that distracted him, he was looking outside, he couldn't see as well as before the nose was up in the air, and 2-3 seconds later they impacted.

There is a ridge line about seven miles west of Iliamna that he uses as his horizon. During the takeoff he looks outside, he does not focus on his instruments during takeoff. He stated that when he departed it was not daylight, but that he could see the end of the lake and shadows. He said that he could not see as well from inside the airplane as he could outside of the airplane because of glare. He stated that other than the noise the airplane felt normal and sounded normal, and that they were off the water for a couple seconds when he heard the noise. He did not recall the pitch relative to the horizon. He felt that the controls were in a neutral position with slight backpressure. He trimmed for a nose down position, because if not the airplane would pitch up too much. He said that he would characterize his pitch attitude that day as a low pitch as the airplane becomes airborne, then a 20-30 degree pitch up to climb out. He said that everything felt and looked normal.

He said he had no sensation of turning right, he didn't know the airplane was in a right turn. He said he uses rudder trim to counteract the p-factor. There was no stall horn or stall light that illuminated, he did not think that the airplane stalled. He did not feel any loss of power, or indication of a catastrophic engine failure. He said the lack of light caused him to lose visual cues after the airplane became airborne. He stated that the owners did not put any pressure on him regarding flights. He said that the lodge ran a safe operation, that he was never pressured to fly in weather or fly heavy. It is a competitive industry, and all of the lodges fly to challenging locations. He felt that waiting until there was better ambient light might have helped. He stated that he did not think the airplane was overweight or out of CG, and that he had never had a problem with the airplane before.