

To Whom It May Concern;

On 27 July 2017, at approximately 9:23 AKDT, as I was taxiing to the Regal Air dock at Lake Hood, Alaska in Cessna 206 N1797R I received a text message from our office manager, Tony Bannock, that one of our other aircraft's (Cessna N1749R) ELTs had activated and he had lost the signal from its Spidertracks locator. This aircraft was piloted by Joel Black, and was enroute to a fishing lodge on the Mulchatna River on a charter to pick up some clients.

After reaching our office I confirmed that the aircraft's signal had been lost, and that RCC had notified us that it was receiving an ELT signal registered to that aircraft near its last known Spidertracks location. After checking weather in Lake Clark Pass and the intended destination, I asked our Director of Maintenance, Billy Bredin, to accompany me in a search. We fueled our 206 on floats with maximum fuel, gathered some gear we thought we might need, and took off from Lake Hood at 9:44 AKDT.

Enroute to the west end of Lake Clark Pass I climbed to 6,500' ASL, traveling above a layer of low clouds from Pt. McKenzie to Beluga, then in clear skies until reaching approximately Otter Lake at the west end of the pass. There, we encountered multiple layers of scattered to broken clouds, and observed a low layer of clouds over Otter Lake and the last few miles of the Tlikakila River extending out over Lake Clark. Winds at all altitudes were very light and variable, with no turbulence.

We descended into the Kijik River valley, arriving near the last known Spidertracks location of the missing aircraft around 11:00 AKDT. There were scattered clouds at around 1500-2000' AGL, with more scattered to broken clouds above and tops around 5,000'. Visibility underneath the clouds and between layers was generally unrestricted, and the ceiling appeared to become more broken to overcast farther to the west down the Kijik River valley. There was a very light wind on the surface from the southwest.

We searched the area of the last known location until around 11:30, then, since we never had received an ELT signal on 121.50 MHz, decided to search the nearby lake shores in case the aircraft had ditched and then sank. We searched the shorelines of Lachabuna Lake and Portage Lake, and finding nothing decided to extend the search down a line towards the destination from the last known location. During this time we were in communication with a helicopter that had been dispatched from Port Alsworth to search, and informed them of our intention.

Returning to the last known location, we began searching on a line that would take us to the original destination of the missing aircraft. Lachabuna Lake was directly under this line, so we decided to make a stop to satisfy physiological needs and to call our office to see if they had any more information. We landed at Lachabuna Lake at 11:49. During this phone call we were told that RCC now had Lat/Long coordinates from the ELT signal, and had given them to our office. We entered this new location into our GPS, and it was directly on the line we were following.

We left Lachabuna Lake 11:53, flying about 500' AGL towards the coordinates we had been given. We also informed the helicopter crew of our intentions, and gave them the coordinates. The helicopter pilot indicated that they would follow us. At about 12:04 I made contact with the pilot of a floatplane from Pt. Alsworth who was engaged in the search, and he said he had located the aircraft and that it was down in the trees and burning. While I was talking to him I could see his aircraft from a distance of a couple of

miles, and a plume of smoke rising from the ground beneath his aircraft. He asked if I could see him, and the smoke, and when I answered in the affirmative he said he was returning to Pt. Alsworth. We arrived over the wreckage at 12:06, and it appeared to both of us that the crash was not survivable. I circled over the wreckage several times, taking pictures, until the helicopter arrived. We observed the helicopter hover over the wreckage for a few minutes, then head towards Pt. Alsworth. At that point we also headed towards Pt. Alsworth, landing at 12:23 AKDT.

Weather at the crash site when we arrived was around 1500' broken, with unlimited visibility and calm winds. The smoke was rising vertically from the wreckage.

Dave Oberg
Chief Pilot
Regal Air