



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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National Transportation Safety Board

Date: 08/08/2017
Person Contacted: Bill Brockhaus (Pilot – N4138M)
NTSB Case Number: ANC17LA040

Narrative:

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by Bill Brockhaus to the NTSB IIC, via telephone.

- The flight was a 14 *CFR* Part 135 visual flight rules on-demand charter flight, operated by Bering Air. The pilot reported the purpose of the flight was to place mineral claim markers, which involved maneuvering the helicopter over a global positioning system (GPS) point-in-space where the passenger can drop the marker from the rear left seat of the helicopter. Some of the mineral claim corners are in water, and the placement of those markers must be offset to the nearest land mass.
- The pilot departed OME and arrived at the passenger's private residence about 4 miles east of Nome. The helicopter was shutdown, the pilot briefed the flight to the passenger, 23 markers were loaded onboard the helicopter, and the helicopter departed to conduct the flight.
- With about half the markers left to drop, the helicopter was operating over a lagoon between the mainland and a sand barrier, at about 10 to 15 ft above the water. The pilot reported that he was lower than he should have been and lost situational awareness when he was working with the Garmin GPSMAP 495 unit. He inadvertently allowed the helicopter to descend into the water and the helicopter was not maneuvering at the time. He further reported that he must have pushed forward on the cyclic as he leaned forward to manipulate the GPS unit.
- After the helicopter impacted water, the helicopter rolled, and came to rest on its right side in about 4 ft of water. The pilot and passenger egressed without further incident and waded to the shore.
- The pilot reported that there were no preimpact mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airframe or engine that would have precluded normal operation.
- The helicopter did not have a radar altimeter installed.