

Fire Lake Aircraft Accident



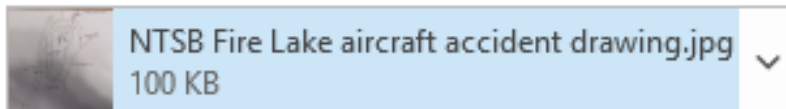
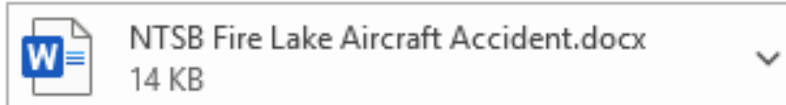
Cole Hagge

To Swenson Eric



4/20/2020

 You replied to this message on 4/21/2020 7:30 AM.



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Eric,

Please let me know if there's anything more I can do or help with. I hope we can learn more about what possibly happened and wanted to just say thank you again for what you do!

Cole Hagge

I was outside at the time here at the house when I heard the airplane approaching from the north heading south towards downtown Eagle River. Our house is located near the northeast corner of Lower Fire Lake. From here it's apparent when airplanes are landing south because they'll approach right above the trees here at this end. When the accident airplane flew over it was high and fast for a landing to the south. I would estimate at the time the plane flew over the altitude to be roughly 600 feet or so. I also noticed right at that time it was going over that it was configured with the flaps up. I believe the pilot was intending to fly directly over the lake to visually inspect the lake to make sure it was clear and turn base over Eagle River for an approach and landing back to the north. As the airplane flew over the house I heard the power suddenly change from a mid-range cruise setting to an abrupt drop and loss in power almost directly above. The propeller was still windmilling thereafter with what seemed like a minimal amount of sound coming from the engine still. Seconds later the airplane banked to a more southwest heading quartering across what seemed like midway down the island that's near the middle of Fire Lake heading towards the Glenn Highway west of the lake. At this point I seemed to notice that the airplane had flaps extended and was in a forward slip momentarily heading that same direction. As I tried to keep watching through some trees I eventually lost sight for a moment to seconds later catching just a glimpse of the plane heading back to the east in the direction of the lake less than seconds before the definite sound of the airplane impacting the ground.

I seem to possibly think the pilot being a little high and fast still as he overflew the north end of the lake when the engine cut out had quickly turned out towards the highway to teardrop around and make an emergency landing back in the opposite direction when it started to contact the treetops near the accident site. Again, I know this is just based on what I think, but I believe based on the airplane's altitude and airspeed at the time when the engine quit that the airplane would've likely overran the useable landing area on the lake had it landed straight ahead to the south and the pilot was just trying to make the best out of the situation.

