

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Anchorage, AK 99503



ANC22LA080

WRECKAGE EXAMINATION SUMMARY

October 6, 2022

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A. ACCIDENT

Location: Skwentna, Alaska
Date: September 25, 2022
Time: 1300 AKDT
Airplane: Cessna 180A, N9728B

B. WRECKAGE EXAMINATION SUMMARY

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C. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

On September 25, 2022, about 1300 Alaska daylight time, a Cessna 180A float-equipped airplane, N9728B, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Skwentna, Alaska. The pilot was fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 91 personal flight.

According to a family member, the accident pilot sent a text message at 1240, indicating that she was ready to taxi for departure from Whiskey Lake so the family member would know when to expect her arrival. The intended route of flight was from Whiskey Lake to Lake Hood (PALH), Anchorage, Alaska. The family member estimated that it would take about 45 minutes to get from the departure point to the destination, and when the airplane was about 15 minutes overdue, he started calling around. A friend of the family flew over Whiskey Lake and found an airplane submerged in the water.

Members from the Alaska State Troopers (AST) Search and Rescue team located the airplane and pilot about 1630. Initial on scene photographs taken by AST

indicated that the left float separated from the airplane, and it was subsequently located about 175 yards away from the main wreckage. The right float remained partially attached to the submerged airplane wreckage.

On October 4, members from the Alaska Dive Search Rescue and Recovery Team traveled to Whiskey Lake and subsequently recovered the submerged airplane, then moved it to the shoreline. The airplane rested inverted on the shore, the empennage and right wing were on land, the engine and left wing remained mostly submerged in the lake.

Airframe and engine maintenance logbooks, and the pilot logbook were not located.

D. AIRFRAME EXAMINATION

1.0 Fuselage

The main fuselage was intact. The cockpit right seat remained attached to the airframe at all attach points. The pilot's seat left rear post was fractured. The two passenger seats were not installed.

The instrument panel was intact and partially submerged. The tachometer showed 497.3 hrs. The carburetor heat was pulled out in the ON position. The fuel selector was in the BOTH position. Flight control cable continuity was established from the flight controls in the cockpit to the flight control surfaces. The water rudder handle was in the UP position, the water rudders were in the DOWN position; however, the cables exhibited overload signatures.



Figure 1 View of wreckage on the shore of Whiskey Lake after recovery.

2.0 Wings

The outer portion of the right wing sustained impact damage, the right wing tip was not located. The outboard portion of the right aileron was separated. The left wing was partially separated and remained partially submerged. The flaps were retracted.

3.0 Empennage

The empennage sustained crush damage aft of the baggage door around the circumference of the aircraft and separated from the fuselage. The left elevator remained attached at the outboard attach point.



Figure 2 View of the empennage.

4.0 Floats

The airplane was equipped with EDO model 249-2870 straight floats. The bottoms of the floats were heavily corroded. The left float, its struts and the aft spreader bar separated from the aircraft and were located approximately 175 yards northeast of the main wreckage. The right float, its struts and the forward spreader bar separated from the aircraft but remained attached by the flying wires. The right float exhibited a separation of the outboard hull approximately 18" forward of the step. No evidence of impact with a foreign object was noted. Both floats exhibited extensive corrosion and evidence of multiple repairs. There were six patches noted on the bottom of the right float. One patch had a row of screws next to a row of rivets. STC paperwork revealed the EDO floats were installed on June 17, 1960.



Figure 3 View of patch and screws on the hull of the right float (Photo courtesy of Textron)

A portion of the right float was partially separated and bent aft, about midspan from the tip of the float to the step. Extensive exfoliation and corrosion were present.



Figure 4 View of the partially separated section of the right float.



Figure 5 View of the left float.

The left float was separated from the fuselage, two patches (one on top of the other) were noted on the bottom of the left float. The left float had impact damage to the front tip of the float.



Figure 6 View of multiple patches on the bottom of the left float.

E. ENGINE EXAMINATION

The engine was partially submerged in water and not examined due to the position of the wreckage. The propeller remained attached to the engine. One blade was bent aft midspan, the other blade was curled at the tip.

Submitted by:

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Aviation Accident Investigator