

Incident Report

House Creek 01/07/2024

At around 3:45 PM on Thursday the 4th of January, I saw Jared Hansen at the Cortez airport, who was alone, start and warm up his airplane N712DG in preparation for a flight.

On 01/07/2024 at 13:25 met with search team in Dolores, CO. We traveled to the residence of [REDACTED] Dolores, CO to do a welfare check on the report of two individuals who were overdue on a return flight back to Cortez, CO. Their aircraft N712DG is a fabric covered two seat aircraft constructed as a JUST AIRCRAFT HIGHLA.

When we arrived at the residence, there was no one at the house and their airplane was not parked in the area. We then continued to investigate the airstrip which is approximately 1,000 feet in length as well as the road that continues approximately 660 feet beyond the west end of the airstrip. As we came to the end of the road, we spotted what was left of the aircraft wreckage which was located on the south side of their private road extending west beyond the airstrip and through a barbed wire fence. GPS location of the crash site was at approximately 37.52722--108.52539.

The aircraft sustained extensive damage from impacting the ground resulting in a post-crash fire that burned all the fabric and interior parts that were flammable. Both occupants were located by the assistant coroner within the wreckage where the seats would have been attached.

The forward portion of the fuselage had been crushed back by the impact with the engine still located forward of the occupants next to an embankment. The gear reduction drive was still attached to the three blade composite prop. The gear reduction drive had been broken off of the engine upon the initial impact which was located about 15 feet behind the engine.

There was about 8 inches of new snow that was covering the wreckage. Brushing the snow off of the prop without moving the prop revealed that the prop was still intact without much leading edge damage. In my perspective it appears that the engine was not making power when it impacted the ground shortly after taking off from the airstrip. It appears that the right wing hit the fence and the ground first which tore the right landing gear off. The left landing gear was still attached to the fuselage with the tire still intact and unburned. It was hard to tell what angle the aircraft struck the ground because of the new snow covering the ground scarring.

The group of four SAR members returned to the intersection of House Creek Road and the Groundhog Road to wait for the Sheriff's investigators to arrive and to be briefed and transported to the crash site.

Report submitted by [REDACTED] On 01-09-2024