

N952SA – Pilot Steve Abel Statement

I was flying my owned 2024 Carbon Cub EX 2 en route from near Austin to California. I overnighted near Hooper, Colorado. The next morning, I flew to KRCV for fuel. Elevation 7955 '. Arrival about 8:30 MDT. I filled the fuel tanks to capacity, 40 gallons usable. First mistake. I should have taken on less fuel. After fueling and using Foreflight to plan the next leg of the trip to KPNA Wyoming, I departed in an approximately northbound direction at about 9:15 MDT.

Initial climb intended to 10,500 MSL. En route I saw and overflew a high mountain Plateau. I decided to circle and slow to see it again. I slowed to approximately 60 knots and pulled 2 or 3 notches of flap for slow flight. Second mistake. I should have overflown at a faster speed with no, or at most, one notch of flaps.

Overflying the plateau, I planned to fly as low as 100' AGL. Third mistake. I should not have planned that low of a pass at that high MSL and Density Altitude.

As I was over the plateau, I could see that it rose gradually to a ridge at the far end with a tree line additionally increasing the necessary altitude gain. There was also slightly higher terrain on both sides of my flight path, so I was essentially in a box canyon. I applied full power to climb but failed to neutralize the flaps. Fourth mistake. I suspect that upon attempting to climb I was behind the power curve and the resultant climb was insufficient. The AOA began alerting and I attempted to balance the climb rate with the stall speed. I do not recall checking the climb rate, but I would guess it may have been 200 to 400 FPM. Unfortunately, there probably was only about ten seconds to climb so I would estimate a total altitude regain of only 50 to 100 feet.

Seeing that I was unlikely to clear the trees straight ahead, I made a slow turn to the right in an attempt to overfly a saddle area on that side. The saddle area also had trees of approximately 30-50' in height. In overcrossing that stand of trees, either my right tire, or possibly right wing brushed a tree tip. I believe that was sufficient to cause the plane to stall to the right. Fifth mistake. I may have been able to apply hard left rudder and recover the stall sufficiently to keep me aloft slightly longer which would have put the flight path over descending terrain and likely continued flight.

Instead, the plane rapidly descended approximately 60' in a right turning direction and culminated in ground impact.

I immediately turned off all switches and switched the fuel tanks to one side because the aircraft was leaning to the left and fuel continues to equalize between the tanks in the Off position. I quickly removed my helmet/headset, unbuckled the four-point harness and exited the plane in case of fire. There was no fire. The ELT did activate and shortly thereafter I received a call from SAR. A few minutes later I deactivated the ELT.

The plane was substantially damaged, but the wreckage was contained to the immediate area.

After contact with NTSB, FAA and local SAR, I secured the aircraft as well as possible, gathered a few personal belongings and hiked out approximately one mile and 2000' elevation drop to meet with local SAR.