

Rayner Brian

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 22, 2014 12:07 PM
To: Rayner Brian
Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: C-180, N180GK Norris / we found [REDACTED]

Hello Brian,

Pursuant to our recent tel-con, here is the preliminary info on the above accident:

Cessna 180, N180GK (floatplane)

On 9/19/2014, at approximately 17:30, pilot Gary Norris departed Mud Pond (near Chamberlain Lake) with his friend Robert Wheelock. They flew to the Clayton Lake area and after about 40 – 45 minutes they were at 2500 ft. altitude and 4 miles north of Lake Ross. They first heard a slight squeal and then the engine started to sputter. A short time later, they were at 1500 ft AGL when the engine and prop completely stopped. He could not make the lake but he saw a dirt road to the left. As he turned to land on the road, the right wing clipped a 60 ft tree, they hit hard on the floats (somewhat sideways) and bounced into the ditch beside the dirt road. The pilot was shaken but relatively uninjured. The passenger hit his head and was bleeding from a 2 inch gash on his head. They could see & smell fuel, so they immediately climbed out of the aircraft.

The crash scene is located in T10 R15 WELS, lat 46.563513, long 69.686128 a few miles north of Ross Lake which is a very remote location in North Western Maine. The Maine Warden Service was the first to arrive at the scene and made arrangements to transport both men to the closest hospital in Millinocket (2 hours away, over 90 miles of dirt/shale roads). Both men were examined, treated as necessary and released the same day. The warden noticed fuel dripping from the aircraft and estimated there was at least 20 gallons of fuel onboard. He also noted the prop was straight and relatively undamaged indicating no engine power/rotation on impact.

State Police were very helpful and described the aircraft as destroyed with the floats crushed under the fuselage, both wings damaged, aft fuselage buckled and the cockpit/passenger area relatively intact. Their on-scene analysis was; right wing clipped a tree (approx. 60 ft above ground), floats then impacted road (60ft from tree) and slid into ditch (it is approximately 150 ft from the tree to where aircraft came to rest). State Police are sending photos and pilot interview information.

IIC authorized removal of the aircraft to a more secure and accessible location. The aircraft has now been moved to Lincoln, ME (LRG). Where the investigation continues.

A&P reported there was no contamination in the carburetor bowl and the engine crank does turn/ no evidence of inflight oil leakage on fuselage belly.

Interesting Note: Preliminary check of weather archives at Claton Lake Weather Station (8 miles from crash site): two hours before the accident, 16:15 the temp was 52F with 35% relative humidity, at 18:15 the temp was 39 F with relative humidity of 81%. That drastic increase in humidity with a significant decrease in temperature at the time of the accident led us to suspect that carb ice was a contributing factor.

HOWEVER, WHILE WRITING THIS, I JUST RECEIVED A CALL FROM THE A&P MECHANIC (KIETH STRANGE). HE REPORTS THAT A BOROSCOPE INSPECTION OF THE NUMBER 3 CYLINDER SHOWS A LARGE HOLE IN THE TOP OF THE NUMBER 3

PISTON. HE WILL INVESTIGATE FURTHER TO DETERMINE IF IT SWALLOWED A VALVE. I BELIEVE WE HAVE THE CAUSE OF THE ENGINE FAILURE AND ACCIDENT.

THANKS,
Paul W. Hubbard
Aviation Safety Inspector
FSDO -65 / Portland, ME.
