



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Eastern Region – Ashburn, Virginia

Record of Conversation

Who: Keith Hilton, Skyline Soaring Club member and witness

When: February 24, 2020

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Hilton stated that he was Skyline Soaring Club's duty officer (DO) at the time of the accident. It was an "Ad Hoc" day for the club, so he had taken over the duty from Carlos Troncoso, who wanted to fly that afternoon. Mr. Hilton said that he debriefed with Mr. Troncoso, who told him who was next up to launch, etc. He thought that Pete Maynard had already launched prior to him taking over as the DO.

Mr. Hilton said that he launched Hugh McElrath, who was towed to altitude, and then Rufus Decker and Jim Kellett launched together and performed a premature tow release on takeoff from runway 28. Mr. Hilton watched the glider release on takeoff, return to land on runway 10, and rollout down the entire length of the runway. Then, he heard Rufus Decker announce over the radio that he saw a glider spin into the ground. Rufus then exited the glider and ran over to him and said he saw a glider crash. Mr. Hilton then used the handheld radio he was using to monitor the airport's common traffic advisory frequency (CTAF), to contact the other club members who were airborne. The only person who did not respond was Pete Maynard. Mr. Hilton said Pete Maynard was "meticulous" about using the radio but made "no radio calls" letting him, and the other pilots know where he was in the airport's traffic pattern that afternoon. Mr. Hilton said he had no idea that Pete Maynard was entering or in the traffic pattern when Rufus and Jim launched, and that he would never have allowed them to launch if there was another glider in the traffic pattern.

Mr. Hilton was not sure if Pete Maynard slowed down to let Rufus Decker and Jim Kellett clear the runway. However, he did say that Mr. Maynard had the option of landing on the airport's safety area, which is the grass area adjacent to the runway, or he could have landed on the taxiway.

The club's tow plane was already airborne, and the tow pilot located where Pete Maynard had crashed. Mr. Hilton then called 911 and the airport manager. All club aircraft were ordered to return/land and the Soaring Club's operations were shut down for the day.

Leah D. Read, Sr. ASI

