



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Brian C. Rayner
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: September 28, 2022
Person: Garry Kessler – Airport Owner - Witness
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21FA377 Lansing, WV
Subject: Witness Account

Narrative:

Mr. Kessler was the owner of the WV32 Airport. His family had owned the property for over 40 years. Captain Kessler was an airline captain with thousands of hours of flight experience in both transport category and general aviation airplanes.

Captain Kessler said the airplane arrived at the airport two days prior to the accident with “a lot of camping gear.” He said that his wife gave the 3 men a ride over to the campground in their full-size SUV. The back was “completely filled” with their gear, and the two men in the back had “both of their laps filled with luggage and gear.”

On the day of the accident, the men returned, loaded their airplane, and taxied out for departure on runway 22. The airplane “powered up” and accelerated. When the airplane reached the point where “airplanes usually lift off,” it continued accelerating down runway 22. The takeoff was aborted, the airplane continued to the runway end, and subsequently attempted a takeoff from runway 04, which was also aborted.

The airplane then turned around and accelerated for takeoff from runway 22.

According to Captain Kessler, the airplane lifted off “maybe” 800 ft before the departure end of the runway, cleared the trees at the departure end, and flew over Mill Creek which ran below and perpendicular to the runway. The terrain on the opposite bank was higher than the runway and included mature trees. He said, “I thought he might make it...” over the trees, but instead the airplane banked steeply left, and disappeared below the trees. Captain Kessler estimated the bank angle was 45° and said that the engine sound was smooth and continuous from engine start until the sound of impact.

When Captain Kessler returned to his house there on the airport property, he found canned food and other articles left behind by the airplane's occupants prior to loading and boarding their airplane.