



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Pilot Statement

Christopher Freeze
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: September 15, 2022
Person Contacted: Dawson Simmons (Pilot)
Contact # [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA402

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

Mr. Simmons contacted me by phone on September 15, 2022, at 11:20 a.m. EDT. He called from [REDACTED]. He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED].

At the beginning of the interview, he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

Mr. Simmons stated that, on the morning of the accident flight, his two passengers were both park rangers, each carrying a backpack. Their objective was to circle and survey a few areas the pair intended to hike to, as well as cabins that were being used. The weather was clear with calm wind.

The pilot conducted a routine preflight and verified the airplane had adequate fuel. After boarding the passengers, he provided a safety briefing to the two passengers, who both worn only their lap belts (no shoulder harnesses). Departing from Millinocket Lake, the flight circled the requested areas before intending to land on Katahdin Lake.

Prior to landing, the pilot surveyed the lake and noted some vegetation in the waters, while Rob - the passenger in the front seat - noted none. Recognizing the potential hazard and calm conditions, the pilot set up to glassy-water landing but, in retrospect, was too close to the shore. Maintaining good airspeed but a high descent rate, which he judged to be 500-feet-per-minute, the airplane landed on the water surface hard and bounced back in the sky. The pilot immediately executed a go-around, throttling up to full power.

The aborted landing startled the front-seat passenger and resulted in a cut on the nose of the rear passenger, Dan. After taking some time to attend to the situation, another landing attempt was successfully completed.

Upon pulling onto shore and deplaning, Rob administered first aid to Dan and cleaned the wound. Rob then proceeded to check a nearby camp. Simmons checked out the airplane and floats, and observed no damage.

After Rob returned to the plane, all 3 reboarded for the return flight, cruising at 1,500 feet, and landing uneventfully.

The pilot unloaded plane and, after a short conversation and check for alertness by his colleague, Dan departed via car. The pilot left the other ranger to prepare for another flight in the same plane but noticed minor tailcone damage and the ventral fin missing.

It was only later that the pilot learned that Rob was hospitalized with a broken rib, and Dan had experienced a minor concussion.

The pilot agreed that there were no pre-impact anomalies or malfunctions affecting the airplane's operation.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on September 15, 2022.