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AS-Eastern

Date: September 26, 2023

Subject: ERA22LA416; N40WB Airplane acquired by a towing company then "shredded" prior to NTSB and FAA Examination.

Contact: FAA Inspector Cody Watson; Washington Flight Standards District Office

The accident occurred on September 13, 2022. The airplane performed a forced landing into a swamp and was partially submerged. A local towing company removed the airplane from the water and transported it to their salvage yard. (Waggs Towing) The towing company wanted to charge over \$15,000 dollars for the owner to recover the airplane and had a dispute with the insurance company over the cost of the salvage, so he elected to hold onto it. I spoke with the towing company several times and informed him that we would be coming to examine the wreckage at his yard.

FAA Inspector Cody Watson and I planned several trips to go and examine the airplane together in March 2022 but were unable to accommodate each other's schedule. He was particularly interested in examination of the fuel system because the airplane had a full left tank, and the fuel selector was on the left tank when the accident occurred.

In early April the schedules allowed for a joint examination, and we planned the trip, however, Watson called me back and reported that the owner had "shredded" the wreckage; there was nothing left to examine. I informed NTSB Eastern region leadership of the situation.

On September 26, 2023, a follow up call to the insurance company about an unrelated item revealed that the wreckage was not shredded but salvaged for about \$8,000 and sent somewhere else. No communication to the NTSB was ever made

informing the FAA or NTSB IIC that the owner of the towing company and the insurance company had come to an agreement. [END]