



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Date: September 18, 2019
Persons Contacted: Bradley Zweifel, pilot
NTSB Accident Number: unassigned N6837E, Cessna 175 seaplane

Narrative: Mr. Zweifel was the pilot at the controls during an accident that took place 23 nm southwest of Nenana, Alaska, on September 15, 2019 at 1245 ADT. This is a summary of his statements made during a telephone interview with the duty officer:

- Mr. Zweifel was taking off from a lake 23 nm southwest of Nenana, destined for Nenana Airport (ENN). There was a bluff along the river and the winds were strong and gusty that day. He estimate the winds at 10-15 knots with gusts to 20 or 25 knots. His takeoff was to the north and he had a quartering headwind.
- During the climb out, the airplane seemed to experience a loss of lift. He wasn't sure what was causing it, perhaps a pocket of dead air or an engine issue, but he turned left to land back on the lake. As soon as the airplane turned, a gust hit the tail and he lost control of the airplane. He believes that the airplane stalled. The airplane impacted the water and he egressed.
- An airplane overhead heard the ELT beacon and rescued him. The rescue coordination center (RCC) also sent a helicopter due to the ELT transmission.
- Mr. Zweifel suffered minor injuries. He was the only person onboard.
- Mr. Zweifel described the damage to propellers, engine, floats, left wing and left wing lift strut.
- He stated that there were no known mechanical issues with the airplane.
- He stated that after the accident, he understood that the loss of lift was likely a downward wind gust off of the bluff, and he should not have turned left exposing the tail to that wind.
- He stated that the accident was definitely preventable and that he should not have turned, and he could have landed straight ahead at another lake.
- He has about 1500-2000 flight hours, and 99% of those were in this airplane.
- He is a private pilot, certificate # 516708876.
- He recovered the airplane out of the lake to minimize water damage. It is located in Healy, Alaska. There is no insurance on the airplane.

- The NTSB duty officer released the wreckage for repair or sale, provided that pictures of the damage are provided. One photograph of the airplane after recovery was provided. Refer to figure 1.



Figure 1. N6837E C175 after accident recovery at Healy Airport