

Michael Hicks
Air Safety Investigator
Office of Aviation Safety -Western Pacific Region

Date: April 2, 2023
Subject: WPR23LA141 Witness Statements
Contact: Baker County Sheriff Department

Sheriff Ash:

Reported that the weather was overcast and cold. The lowest cloud layer was so low that the mountain tops were not visible. While fishing below the Oxbow spillway, he heard the aircraft running normal, he thought to himself, who could be flying in this weather. He heard the engine power decrease, then rapidly increase, followed by a loud "pop/bang". The engine power remained at what sounded like maximum RPM. The airplane became visible as it descended through the clouds toward the earth, in a nose down "lawn dart" attitude. The parachute was not attached to the airframe. The airplane was visible from the witness's location for between 1-5 seconds. He believed that he was looking at the bottom of the airplane as it descended toward the ground.

The Sheriff went around the Oxbow dam, and was picked up by ground vehicle, and traveled to the accident site. When he arrived at the accident site, he noticed the airplane was destroyed, and a post-crash fire was observed over 100 ft radius and emanating from the location of the engine.

Deputy Thompson

Reported that his location at time of accident was below the Oxbow causeway. The airplane impacted terrain about 0955, and he saw the parachute coming down afterward about 1001. The parachute was not attached to anything and appeared empty.

END