



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Ashland, ME	Accident Number:	NYC02LA003
Date & Time:	10/02/2001, 1400 EDT	Registration:	N2528M
Aircraft:	Piper PA-12	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

While en route to refuel, the pilot experienced a loss of engine power and impacted trees during the ensuing forced landing. The pilot said he departed when the airplane's fuel quantity gauges indicated that the right fuel tank was empty, and the left tank was "close to 1/2," which should have allow him to reach his destination; however, due to "heading winds" and the use of a "higher rpm," the airplane "ran out of fuel." The airplane experienced a loss of engine power and impacted trees during the ensuing forced landing. Examination of the airplane did not reveal any pre-impact mechanical malfunctions. Both fuel tanks remained intact and there was no evidence of a fuel spill. Approximately 1/2 gallon of fuel was observed in the airplane's fuel system. Additionally, the fuel line which connected from the airframe fuel filter to the carburetor was removed and contained "a few drops" of fuel.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate preflight planning, which resulted in a loss of engine power due to fuel exhaustion.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
2. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Findings

3. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

On October 2, 2001, about 1400 eastern daylight time, a Piper PA-12, N2528M, was substantially damaged during a forced landing near Ashland, Maine. The certificated commercial pilot sustained minor injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan had been filed for the flight destined for the Shin Pond Seaplane Base (85B), Patten, Maine. The personal flight was conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

In a written statement, the pilot said the airplane's fuel tanks were "topped off" on September 29, 2001, at 85B, before a flight to "Fish River Lake, Moose Point Lodge." The following day, the pilot flew to East Grand Lake, Orient, Maine, and then returned to Fish River Lake. The morning of the accident, the pilot conducted a 1 hour local flight, and then departed Fish River Lake with the intention of refueling at 8B5. The pilot stated that the airplane's fuel quantity gauges indicated that the right fuel tank was empty, and the left tank was "close to 1/2;" which should have allowed him to reach his destination; however, due to "heading winds" and the use of a "higher rpm," the airplane "ran out of fuel." The airplane experienced a loss of engine power and impacted trees during the ensuing forced landing.

Examination of the airplane by a Federal Aviation Administration inspector did not reveal any pre-impact mechanical malfunctions. Both fuel tanks remained intact and there was no evidence of a fuel spill. Approximately 1/2 gallon of fuel was observed in the airplane's fuel system. Additionally, the fuel line which connected from the airframe fuel filter to the carburetor was removed and contained "a few drops" of fuel.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	55, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	08/09/2001
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	09/07/2001
Flight Time:	352 hours (Total, all aircraft), 22 hours (Total, this make and model), 321 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 33 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 22 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N2528M
Model/Series:	PA-12	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	12-1019
Landing Gear Type:	Float	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	09/06/2001, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	24 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4660 Hours at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-A2B
Registered Owner:	Robert D. Ellis	Rated Power:	150 hp
Operator:	Robert D. Ellis	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PQJ, 534 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	17 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1335 EDT	Direction from Accident Site:	70°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 7500 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots / 18 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	300°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.64 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	20° C / 6° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Fish Pond Lake, ME (NONE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	PATTEN, ME (85B)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1330 EDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Luke Schiada **Report Date:** 06/03/2002

Additional Participating Persons: Dennis Delo; Portland, ME

Publish Date:

Investigation Docket: NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov, or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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