



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Preliminary Report

Location:	Nikolai, AK	Accident Number:	ANC19FAMS1
Date & Time:	03/06/2019, 1700 AKS	Registration:	N7469A
Aircraft:	Cessna 172	Injuries:	N/A
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

On March 6, 2019, at an undetermined time, a Cessna 172 airplane, N7469A, went missing and is presumed to have crashed, at a location between Farwell, Alaska, and Wasilla, Alaska. The crash site and the sole private pilot's whereabouts remain unknown. The airplane was registered to the pilot who was operating the airplane as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 visual flight rules personal flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the departure point at the time of departure, and no flight plan was filed. The flight departed from Submarine Lake near Farewell at 1655 and it was en route to the Wasilla Airport (IYS), Wasilla, at the time of its disappearance.

The area between Farewell and Wasilla consists of remote mountainous, snow-covered terrain. The typical flight route between Farwell and Wasilla would be via Rainy Pass, a narrow mountain pass that is commonly used by Visual Flight Rules pilots to transit through the Alaska Range.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board investigator-in-charge, a friend of the pilot who was hunting near Farewell, stated that the purpose of the flight was for the pilot to fly bison meat from their hunting camp located at Submarine Lake to IYS.

The friend said that the airplane arrived at Submarine Lake on March 6, about 1600, later than originally planned, and the pilot made a statement that he was delayed due to clouds near Skwentna. He also mentioned that he had difficulty navigating without his GPS unit. The pilot said that the pass was open, and the weather was good for the remainder of the flight. The pilot and his friend loaded the airplane with about 420 lbs. of bison meat, and the pilot added 5 gallons of fuel into the airplane's fuel tanks. The pilot commented to the friend that the airplane had 2.5 hours of fuel onboard. The pilot's friend reported that the weather deteriorated while they were loading the airplane, with occasional light snow and reduced visibility, but the mountains to the east were visible. The pilot agreed to send a text message to his friend's Garmin inReach satellite communication device when he arrived at IYS, and the airplane departed to the east about 1655 without incident. Later that evening, after repositioning the hunting camp, the friend noted that no text was received from the pilot and

an overdue airplane report was filed with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) flight service station.

The FAA issued an alert notice (ALNOT) at 2316 on March 6. The Alaska Rescue Coordination Center (AKRCC) coordinated a joint-agency search operation in the Alaska Range that included units from the Alaska Air National Guard, Army National Guard, United States Coast Guard, Civil Air Patrol, Alaska State Troopers, and the National Park Service. There were no visual sightings of the airplane or pilot, and no emergency locator transmitter (ELT) signals were received. On March 22 the search operation was suspended by AKRCC.

A preliminary review of archived FAA primary radar data revealed that an unidentified aircraft, believed to be the missing airplane, departed Submarine Lake at 1655 and flew south along the south fork of the Kuskokwim River at an altitude of about 4,000 ft above mean sea level (msl). The radar track ended about 10 miles south of Submarine Lake 8 minutes after takeoff. A target that is believed to be the missing airplane appeared 11 minutes later 5 miles north of Rainy Pass about 6,700 ft msl tracking east. The target climbed to 6,900 ft before the track ended 1.4 minutes later. The last radar data point was at 1715:09 and indicated a track of about 110° at 102 knots ground speed, and at a latitude of 62.26993° and a longitude of -152.98216°.

The closest official weather observation station is located at Rainy Pass Lodge Airport (6AK) about 15 miles southeast of the last radar data point. At 1648, a weather observer reported, in part, wind, 250° at 4 knots; visibility, 20 statute miles; broken clouds at 2,700 ft; temperature, -2° C; dew point, -2° C; and an altimeter setting of 29.80 inches of mercury.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N7469A
Model/Series:	172	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:	No		
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Unknown	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	6AK, 1900 ft msl	Observation Time:	1648 AKS
Distance from Accident Site:		Temperature/Dew Point:	-1° C / -1° C
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	4 knots / , 250°
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 2700 ft agl	Visibility:	20 Miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.8 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Farewell, AK	Destination:	Wasilla, AK (IYS)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Damage:	Unknown
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	Unknown
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	Unknown
Total Injuries:	N/A	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Noreen O Price

Additional Participating Persons:

Note: The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.