Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Gustavus, AK	**Accident Number:**	ANC24LA069
Date & Time:	July 20, 2024, 14:21 Local	**Registration:**	N410B
Aircraft:	Beech A35	**Injuries:**	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On July 20, 2024, about 1421 Alaska daylight time, a Beech A35 airplane, N410B, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Gustavus, Alaska. The pilot and two passengers were fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

According to a friend of the occupants, the pilot and two passengers departed the Juneau International Airport (PAJN), Juneau, Alaska, on a flight bound for the Yakutat Airport (PAYA), Yakutat, Alaska. The friend alerted search and rescue personnel about 1713 reporting that the airplane did not arrive in Yakutat, and it was two hours overdue.

A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) alert notice (ALNOT) was issued at 1757, and search and rescue crews were dispatched to the last known point on the accident airplane's route, but poor weather conditions hampered the search.

According to FAA archived Automatic Dependent Surveillance–Broadcast (ADS-B) data, the accident airplane departed Juneau about 1344 and initially headed northwest for about 72 miles. The airplane's track then changed direction to a southwesterly heading and began flying through the mountainous terrain of Glacier Bay National Park for an additional 30 miles. (See Figure 1)

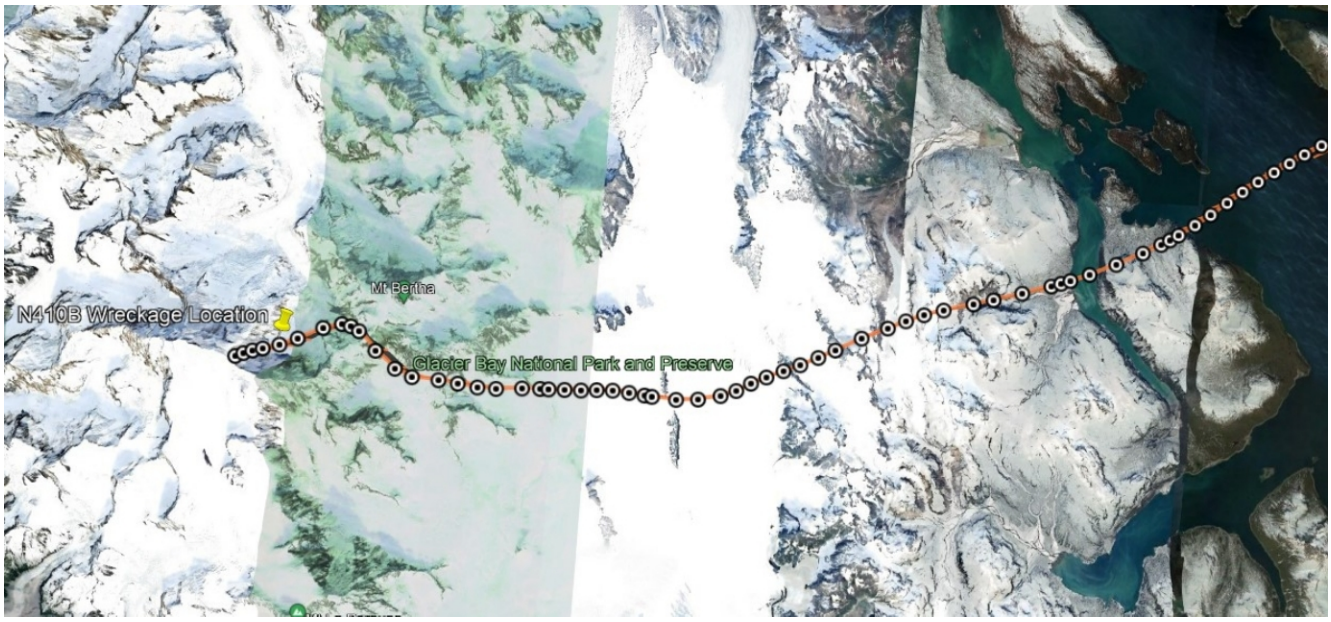

Figure 1: Accident airplane's ADS-B track through Glacier Bay National Park

About 1421, as the airplane's flight track continued along a westerly heading of 245°, at an altitude of 10,875 ft. above mean sea level (MSL), and with a groundspeed of 141 kts, the flight track abruptly stops on the eastern side of East Crillon mountain. The elevation of the terrain above the last data point is about 11,220 ft MSL. The down sloping terrain on the eastern side of East Crillon mountain consists of expansive vertical rock and snow-covered terrain, hanging glaciers, with areas of widespread glacial crevasses directly below. (See Figure 2)

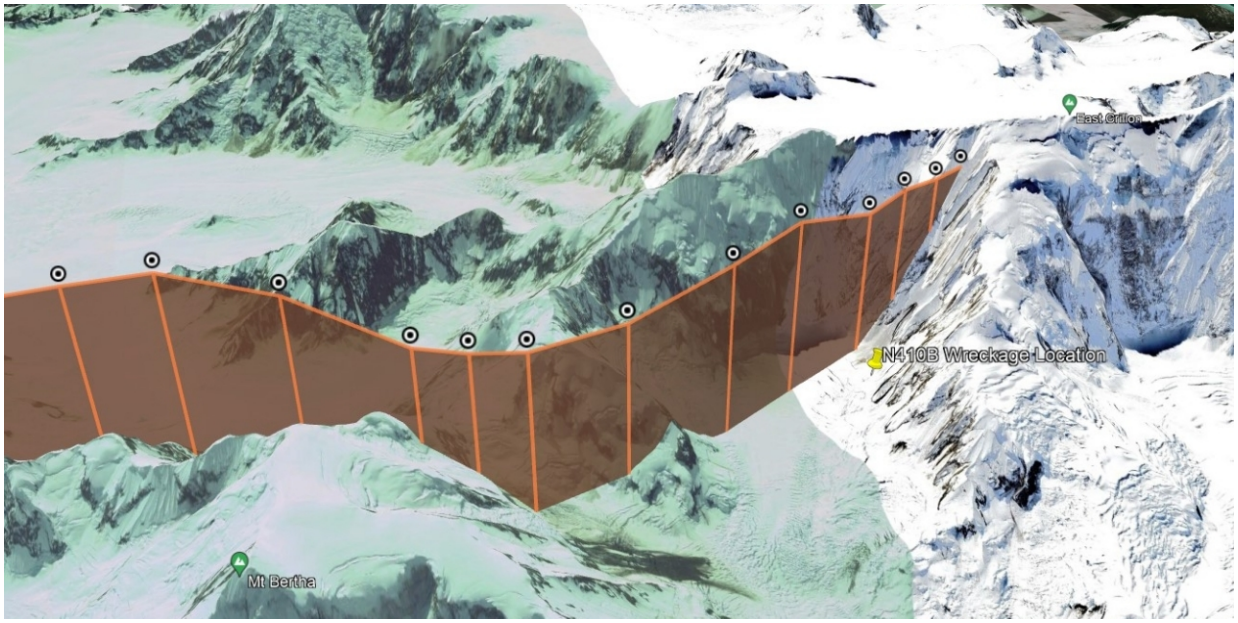

Figure 2: Accident airplane's ADS-B track

The closest weather reporting station is in Gustavus, about 54 miles southeast of the accident site, which was reporting that, at 1356, the ceiling was overcast at 600 ft above ground level (AGL) variable to 1,100 ft AGL, with 10 miles visibility.

A preliminary National Transportation Safety Board weather study showed Aviation Weather Center (AWC) Graphical Forecasts for Aviation (GFA) data indicating cloud bases as low as 2,200 ft MSL and tops no less than 12,000 ft MSL in the accident region with surface visibilities less than 0.25 statute miles. The High-Resolution Rapid Refresh (HRRR) model, provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), suggested the presence of clouds from 3,000 ft MSL to 12,500 ft MSL in the accident region.

The National Weather Service (NWS) had issued an Airmen's Meteorological Information (AIRMET) for mountain obscuration in the accident region.

The United States Coast Guard, Alaska Air National Guard, and Civil Air Patrol conducted extensive search and rescue efforts in the area surrounding East Crillon mountain, which is in the Fairweather Mountain Range, in the southernmost part of the Saint Elias Mountains.

Search personnel reported finding what was believed to be an initial impact site, marked by a V-shape upslope terrain disturbance near the last known ADS-B data point on the accident airplane's flight track. The site was located in an area of very steep, and in some areas vertical, snow and ice-covered terrain. The area around the airplane's suspected initial impact site appeared to have had recent avalanche activity, which would have carried any airplane wreckage downslope. Search and rescue crews deemed the suspected initial impact site as inaccessible due to the high elevation, significant avalanche danger, and inclement weather at the site.

On August 5, an aerial search of the accident site and the surrounding area revealed portions of highly fragmented airplane wreckage on the eastern side of East Crillon mountain at an approximate elevation of 6,260 ft MSL. The portions of wreckage were found more than 4,500 ft. below the suspected initial impact site, and spread out over an area of rough, steep, and crevasse-covered glaciated terrain. (See Figure 3)

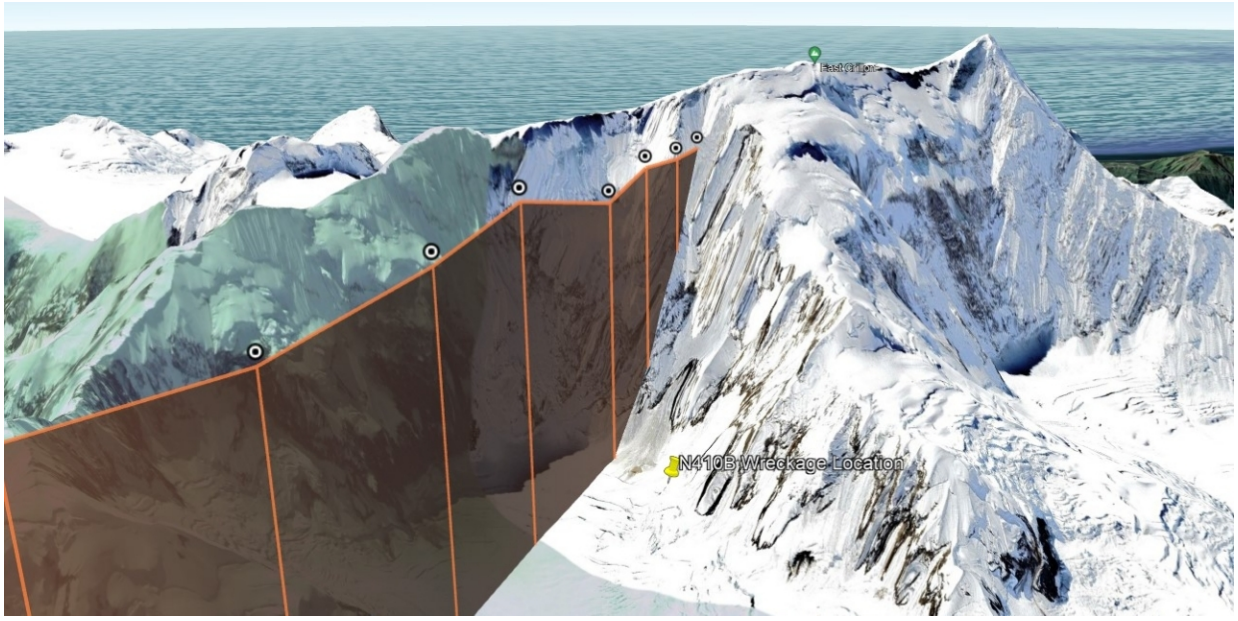

Figure 3: ADS-B track of accident airplane with reference to downslope wreckage location

Portions of the fragmented wreckage were subsequently identified as belonging to the accident airplane by comparing photos of the airplane's distinctive paint scheme with photos of the wreckage discovered on August 5.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	**Registration:**	N410B
Model/Series:	A35	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	On file	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Unknown	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PAGS,30 ft msl	**Observation Time:**	14:33 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	47 Nautical Miles	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	19°C /16°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:		**Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:**	/ ,
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 1000 ft AGL	**Visibility:**	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.22 inches Hg	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Departure Point:	Juneau, AK (AJN)	**Destination:**	Yakutat, AK (AYA)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	**Aircraft Damage:**	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	**Aircraft Fire:**	Unknown
Ground Injuries:		**Aircraft Explosion:**	Unknown
Total Injuries:	3 Fatal	**Latitude, Longitude:**	58.65852,-137.13252

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rasmussen, Mitchell
Additional Participating Persons:	Tom Johnson; FAA Juneau FSDO; Juneau, AK
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.