



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Loma, Colorado	<b>Accident Number:</b>	CEN18LA303
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	July 31, 2018, 11:30 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N125TY
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Buchanan Kitfox IV	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Loss of control in flight	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The private pilot departed on a cross-country, personal flight, and during the flight, he chose to fly at low altitude over a river. The pilot reported that, after passing over a group of river rafters about 500 ft above ground level, he "dropped [the airplane] low to the river." Shortly after descending, the airplane's vertical stabilizer struck a cableway that crossed over the river. The pilot lost airplane control, and the airplane subsequently impacted the side of the river canyon and then came to rest partially submerged in the river.

The cableway was supported by two fixed A-frame structures located on the sides of the riverbank, and the cable height at its center above the water's surface was 32 ft. The pilot likely was not properly monitoring the environment during the low-altitude operation, which resulted in his failure to see and avoid the cableway.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's improper decision to conduct a low-altitude flight over a river and his inadequate monitoring of the environment, which resulted in a collision with a cableway.

## Findings

<b>Personnel issues</b>	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
<b>Aircraft</b>	Altitude - Incorrect use/operation
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Monitoring environment - Pilot
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Wire - Effect on operation

# Factual Information

## History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Low altitude operation/event
Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)
Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

On July 31, 2018, about 1130 mountain daylight time, a Buchanan Kitfox IV experimental airplane, N125TY, impacted a cableway while maneuvering at low altitude over the Colorado River near Loma, Colorado. The private pilot sustained minor injuries, and the airplane sustained substantial damage to the fuselage. The airplane was registered to and operated by a private individual as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident, and the flight was operated on a visual flight rules flight plan. The airplane departed the Grand Junction Regional Airport (GJT), Grand Junction, Colorado, about 1100, and was destined for Cedar City, Utah.

According to the pilot, he departed GJT and elected to fly at low altitude over the Colorado River. After over passing a group of river rafters about 500 ft above ground level, the pilot "dropped [the airplane] low to the river." Shortly after descending, the airplane's vertical stabilizer struck a cableway (owned and maintained by the US Geological Survey (USGS)) that crossed over the river. The pilot lost control of the airplane, and the airplane impacted the side of the river canyon. The airplane came to rest partially submerged in the river, and the pilot was rescued by passing river rafters (Figure 1).



Figure 1 - Accident Site (photo provided by Mesa County Sheriff's Office)

According to the USGS, the cableway is supported by two fixed A-frame structures located on the sides of the riverbank. The center of the cable to the water surface is 32 ft (Figure 2).

09163500 Colorado River Near Colorado Utah Stateline  
(As of 08/27/2018)

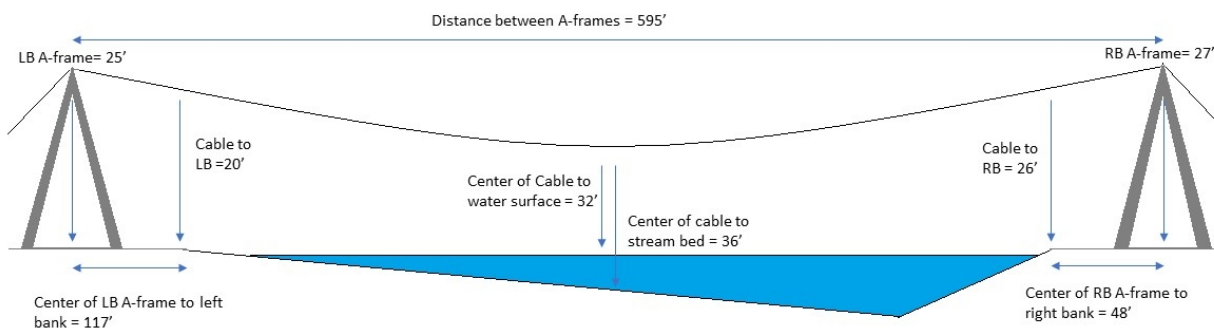


Figure 2 - Cableway dimensions (USGS)

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	59, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Glider	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	4-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	April 24, 2017
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	June 25, 2017
<b>Flight Time:</b>	1240 hours (Total, all aircraft), 783 hours (Total, this make and model), 1077 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 39 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		



## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Buchanan	<b>Registration:</b>	N125TY
<b>Model/Series:</b>	Kitfox IV	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	2006	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	Yes
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal; Experimental (Special)	<b>Serial Number:</b>	HCU089
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	May 31, 2018 Condition	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1200 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	814 Hrs at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Rotax
<b>ELT:</b>	C91A installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	912ULS
<b>Registered Owner:</b>		<b>Rated Power:</b>	100 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	On file	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>		<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Observation Time:</b>		<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	20 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>		<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29.97 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	27°C / -1°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Grand Junction, CO (GJT )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	VFR
<b>Destination:</b>	Cedar City, UT (CDC )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	VFR
<b>Departure Time:</b>	11:00 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	39.135276,-109.025558(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Sauer, Aaron
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Robert D Lesitsky; Federal Aviation Administration; Salt Lake City, UT
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	November 6, 2019
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=97955">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=97955</a>

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).