Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Williams, California	**Accident Number:**	WPR23LA245
Date & Time:	June 26, 2023, 16:46 Local	**Registration:**	N26DX
Aircraft:	SCHLEICHER ALEXANDER GMBH & CO ASH 26 E	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of lift	**Injuries:**	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The glider pilot reported that he partially extended the wing spoilers and completed a pre-landing checklist while on left base for his intended destination airport. Shortly after, the glider encountered “significant sinking air” and started a descent. He then maneuvered the glider directly towards the runway and stowed the wing spoilers to extend his glide for a precautionary landing. Subsequently, the glider impacting terrain short of the runway, which resulted in substantial damage to the nose of the glider.

The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot’s encounter with atmospheric conditions where the lift was not sufficient to maintain flight, which resulted in a collision with terrain.

Findings

Environmental issues	Thermal lifting - Effect on operation
Aircraft	Altitude - Attain/maintain not possible
Environmental issues	Rough terrain - Effect on operation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Approach-VFR pattern final	Loss of lift (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight engineer; Flight instructor	**Age:**	72,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Single
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	**Restraint Used:**	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Glider; Instrument airplane	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	October 31, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	January 12, 2023
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 31000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 122.2 hours (Total, this make and model), 18000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 23.7 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 12.2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4.8 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	SCHLEICHER ALEXANDER GMBH & CO	**Registration:**	N26DX
Model/Series:	ASH 26 E	**Aircraft Category:**	Glider
Year of Manufacture:	2007	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	26242
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tailwheel	**Seats:**	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 14, 2023 Condition	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	1157 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	1.5 Hrs	**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	352.2 Hrs as of last inspection	**Engine Manufacturer:**	AUSTRO ENGINES
ELT:	Not installed	**Engine Model/Series:**	AE50RAB
Registered Owner:	On file	**Rated Power:**	50 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KMYV,62 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	26 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	16:53 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	98°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	None / None
Wind Direction:		**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.85 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	31°C / 11°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Williams, CA	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	Williams, CA	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:		**Type of Airspace:**	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	WILLIAMS CN12	**Runway Surface Type:**	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	68 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:	16	**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:	2000 ft / 20 ft	**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:		**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	39.163502,-122.13164

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Johnson, Scott
Additional Participating Persons:	Timothy Snyder; Federal Aviation Administration
Original Publish Date:	November 2, 2023
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192487