

AVIATION INVESTIGATION REPORT

A01P0194

COLLISION WITH TERRAIN

WAHKASH CONTRACTING LTD.

DE HAVILLAND DHC-2 C-GVHT

MACKENZIE LAKE, BRITISH COLUMBIA, 4 nm NE

13 AUGUST 2001

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) investigated this occurrence for the purpose of advancing transportation safety. It is not the function of the Board to assign fault or determine civil or criminal liability.

## Aviation Investigation Report

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### *Summary*

A de Havilland DHC-2 Beaver floatplane, C-GVHT (serial number 257), took off from Campbell River, British Columbia, at 1530 Pacific daylight time, with a pilot and four passengers on board. The aircraft was on a visual flight rules flight to a logging camp on Mackenzie Sound, 76 nautical miles northwest of Campbell River, and was scheduled to arrive at 1700. When the aircraft arrived over the Mackenzie logging camp, the pilot informed ground personnel by radio that he was overhead at 2800 feet, between cloud layers with no place to descend, and that because of unfavourable weather conditions, he was returning, presumably to Campbell River. The aircraft then flew to a clear area north of the camp and entered the Frederic Creek valley. When company ground personnel could not contact the aircraft by radio, they began a ground search, later followed by an aerial search. The searches were hampered by poor weather. The aircraft wreckage was found three days later, about four nautical miles northeast of the camp. The accident occurred at 1706 in daylight conditions. All occupants were fatally injured, and the aircraft was destroyed. The emergency locator transmitter was destroyed on impact and did not transmit a signal. No fire occurred.

*Ce rapport est également disponible en français.*

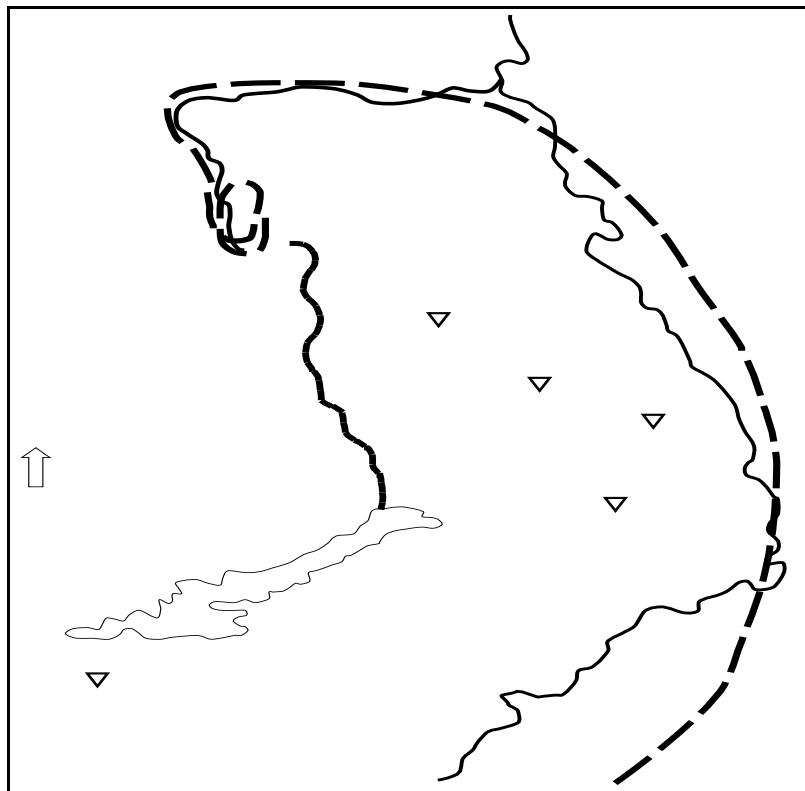
## *Other Factual Information*

The aircraft was owned and operated by Wakhash Contracting Ltd. based in Campbell River, British Columbia, and was normally used to ferry loggers to and from logging camps. The float-equipped aircraft operated only from water surfaces. After departing Campbell River water aerodrome in the afternoon on the day of the accident, the aircraft flew northwest for 43 minutes before making a brief, intermediate stop at a company logging camp at Hoeya in Knight Inlet, 49 nautical miles from Campbell River. After a small consignment of food was offloaded, the aircraft departed Hoeya at 1629 Pacific daylight time<sup>1</sup> and arrived overhead the Mackenzie camp 25 minutes later. The aircraft then continued flying in the area for 12 more minutes, until the accident.

At the time, the ceiling over the camp, which is at sea level, was between 1600 and 1700 feet. It was reported that the north end of the south Frederic Creek valley was free of cloud at the time of the accident but that cloud was moving through a pass into the valley at the south end.

One of the managers of the camp, who was on a logging road in the south valley, advised the pilot to come to the Frederic Creek area because it was clear of cloud. The pilot then flew northeast to Wakeman Sound, where he advised that he could descend below the cloud to the Frederic Creek inlet. The aircraft flew west along Frederic Creek until turning left toward the pass in the south Frederic Creek valley. The pass crosses a north-south divide (saddle); the valley to the east of the divide turns south immediately and descends to Mackenzie Lake. (See Figure 1.)

The pilot was also advised that the ceiling in the pass was between 300 and 400 feet above ground level and that about 1500 feet would be needed to go through the pass. The pilot reported that he was unfamiliar with the area but that he would continue and assess the conditions.



<sup>1</sup> All times are Pacific daylight time (Coordinated Universal Time minus seven hours).

The aircraft flew south toward the pass and made one circuit of the valley. After the circuit, the aircraft again flew toward the pass, then executed a sharp left turn about 10 seconds before the accident. The aircraft was flying away from the pass at impact. The last brief radio transmission from the pilot was at 1706, only seconds before impact.

During the second attempt, the turn radius was smaller and the ground speed slower than in the first circuit, allowing the aircraft to come closer to the pass. As a result, the aircraft was forced to turn in a more confined area.

| Stall Speed |               |         |
|-------------|---------------|---------|
|             | Flap Position |         |
|             | Up            | Landing |
|             |               |         |