National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC 20594

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Brief of Accident

Adopted 06/27/2011

ERA10LA317
File No. 28255 | 06/18/2010 | Plymouth, MA | Aircraft Reg No. N401TE | Time (Local): 17:03 EDT

Make/Model:	Cessna / 401
Engine Make/Model:	Cont Motor / TSIO-520-E
Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Number of Engines:	2
Operating Certificate(s):	None
Type of Flight Operation:	Other Work Use
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation

	Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Crew	0	1	0
Pass	0	2	0

Last Depart. Point:	Same as Accident/Incident Location
Destination:	Local Flight, MA
Airport Proximity:	Off Airport/Airstrip

Condition of Light:	Day
Weather Info Src:	Weather Observation Facility
Basic Weather:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Ceiling:	None
Visibility:	10.00 SM
Wind Dir/Speed:	210 / 012 Kts
Temperature (°C):	25
Precip/Obscuration:	No Precipitation

Pilot-in-Command Age: 30

Certificate(s)/Rating(s)
Airline Transport; Commercial; Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land

Instrument Ratings
Airplane

Flight Time (Hours)

Total All Aircraft:	3500
Last 90 Days:	175
Total Make/Model:	1200
Total Instrument Time:	460

*** Note: NTSB investigators may not have traveled in support of this investigation and used data provided by various sources to prepare this aircraft accident report. ***

The airplane was returning from a 3-hour aerial mapping mission and was lined up for a straight-in, 5-mile final approach for landing. About 3 miles out on final approach, and prior to performing the before-landing check, both engines stopped producing power in sequence, one almost immediately after the other. The pilot said that by the time he completed his remedial actions the airplane had descended to about 200 feet above the ground and the engines would not restart. The auxiliary fuel tank gauges were bouncing between 2-5 gallons and the main tanks were bouncing around at 25 gallons per side. The pilot then selected a forced landing site between two large trees and landed the airplane in heavily wooded terrain. A detailed examination of the wreckage revealed no evidence of preimpact mechanical anomalies. According to information contained in the aircraft manufacturer's owner's manual, the auxiliary fuel tanks are designed for cruising flight and are not equipped with pumps; operation near the ground (below 1000 feet) using auxiliary fuel tanks is not recommended. The first step in the before-landing check was to select the main fuel tanks on both the left and right fuel selectors, respectively. The pilot indicated that he should have selected the main tanks sooner and performed the before-landing check earlier in the approach.
Updated at Jun 27 2011 7:29AM

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OCCURRENCES

Approach-VFR pattern final - Fuel starvation
Approach-VFR pattern final - Loss of engine power (total)
Emergency descent - Off-field or emergency landing
Emergency descent - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

FINDINGS

Personnel issues-Action/decision-Action-Delayed action-Pilot - C
Aircraft-Fluids/misc hardware-Fluids-Fuel-Fluid management - C

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:
A total loss of engine power during final approach due to fuel starvation as a result of the pilot’s delayed configuration of the airplane for landing.