

McCartney said in his statement that the Coast Guard in Portland advanced the theory that a helicopter engaging in some illegal activity was what had caused the commotion.

McCartney, who declined to talk to news media people directly, did take a call from Chicago. It was from a representative of an organization that calls itself A Study for UFOs.

## Klamath Falls, ORE. <sup>Herald-News</sup> UFO Probe Planned

PORTLAND (UPI) — The Center for UFO Studies in Chicago plans to send an investigator to Portland this week to look into the sighting of a "bright orange ball" which was seen plunging into the Columbia River, then rising and vanishing.

The ball — later reported to be two balls — was seen before dawn Tuesday near St. Helens 20 miles north of Portland.

A call describing a similar phenomenon near the Port of Portland's Terminal 6 on the Willamette River was received Wednesday morning but police agencies said there was no confirmation, no details and no investigation.

The Tuesday incident was reported by an Oregon State Police trooper and several other law enforcement officers in Oregon and a CB radio operator in Washington.

Trooper Tom McCartney recorded the sound of the object he initially sighted just after 4:30 a.m. Tuesday.

Mark Rodeghier, of the UFO center, said after listening to the recording on the telephone, "It's a rather odd sound, like a high-pitched machine. It's not the sound of a helicopter or plane."

The center is a non-profit organization formed in 1973 by scientists to serve as a clearing house for information on unidentified flying objects.

19 Mar. '81

## Strange sightings reported over river

The U.S. Coast Guard called off a search for a possible missing plane in the Columbia River off St. Helens early Tuesday, hours after local authorities reported seeing bright lights accompanied by "strange sounds hovering over the water."

The incident began about 4 a.m. Tuesday as St. Helens Patrolman "Russ" Yokum was on routine patrol near the St. Helens City Hall.

Yokum reported sighting two "bright lights hovering above the water" on the Washington side of the river. The lights reportedly were separate, with one of the lights reportedly appearing north of the City Hall parking lot, while the other was located near the north tip of Sauvie Island.

Meanwhile, another St. Helens officer and an Oregon State policeman responded to the scene. A Citizens Band radio operator from Ridgefield, Wash., also was in contact with local authorities, having also observed the object.

Yokum reported to Central Dispatch that the group also noticed a "plume-like cloud" coming from both objects and then heard "very strange noises" like a whirling sound, also coming from the lights. Yokum recorded the sounds on a tape recorder.

Shortly afterwards, at 4:43 a.m., the officer reported that the lights of the object near Sauvie Island went out and the sound stopped. Yokum reported that the Ridgefield CB'er reported hearing the object's "impact with the water."

By this time, officials at Portland International Airport reported that the objects had appeared on radar.

The U.S. Coast Guard, earlier advised, had dispatched two vessels to the area, including an auxiliary boat stationed at St. Helens, to assist in locating the objects, in the event there was a downed plane in the area.

A helicopter from Astoria was also asked to assist in the search, but was unable to take off because of heavy fog, according to Radioman First Class Michael Dyer of the Coast Guard's Portland station.

Yokum reported that a short time after the first of the two lights went out, the second light north of the City Hall also disappeared into the river, and the strange sounds reportedly stopped.

About 5:30 a.m. a state patrolman called for additional units to the St. Helens dock because the sounds had started up again. However, the officer reported that heavy fog over the river hindered the ability to sight anything.

The Coast Guard called off its search of the river shortly after 7 a.m. saying there were no reports of missing or overdue aircraft in the area.

Coast Guardsman Dyer said there was speculation that the orange glow reportedly seen could have been a flare marking the location where an aircraft had landed.

He added that authorities were "not ruling out" the possibility that the incident involved some drug type of activity, although "that's totally unconfirmed," he said.

St. Helens, Oregon 19 Mar 81 "The Chronicle"

Roseburg, Oregon 19 Mar. '81

## 'Orange ball' probe set

"News-Review"

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