

Cantwell area residents report

The Associated Press

CANTWELL — Cantwell area residents reported this week seeing a blinding white light pass overhead and vanish over the mountains.

"It was not an aircraft," said John Wallace, who saw the phenomenon Tuesday night while he was stopped at the Reindeer Mountain Lodge on the Parks Highway. "It lit the sky up for 30 or 40 seconds, and completely illuminated the mountain range around it for 15 or 16 miles."

Wallace, who has spent 13 years

checking Alascom's microwave sites along the highway, said he has never seen anything like the light before.

"It was passing overhead, quite fast, about three miles up," he said. "It climbed over the mountain and disappeared," Wallace said.

At first he thought it was a nuclear flash of some sort. "But it lasted for a long time," he said.

"All I could see was the light, no shape or anything. I have no idea what it really was. I called Clear Air Force Base but they wouldn't tell me

anything. Someone must have tracked the thing."

Jack and Shirley Lawson, who run the Reindeer Mountain Lodge, said several people had seen the light.

"I didn't actually see it moving," said Shirley. "But I saw it behind the mountain, and the mountain was completely illuminated, as if the sun was rising right then. But it was white, like floodlights. I thought maybe there were 10 or 15 snow machines driving around back there,

mysterious white light

but it wasn't moving."

Leon and Elizabeth Smith, who run the Igloo Lodge at Mile 188 on the Parks Highway, said that they did not notice the light this week, but they have seen something like it in the past.

"I'm not a believer in UFO's, but there have been some strange things in the sky," Elizabeth said. "We've seen a very bright white light, hanging low around treetop level. It fades in and out, but it doesn't look like it's moving. It's very beautiful."

The Smiths, who refuel helicopters at the lodge, were positive that the light was not an aircraft.

"It was very, very bright," said Leon. "I thought at first that it might be a helicopter's landing lights, but it was just a white light, no red ones, and it was stationary. I watched it for an hour one time when I was refueling some military trucks that were here. The drivers were watching it too, and none of us could tell what it was. It was beautiful, though."