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APaz 07/10 1251 UFOSighting

   WIKIEUP (AP) -- A "strange orangeish light" hanging over the western horizo
n
followed a carload of people on their way to Las Vegas, Nev., early today, the
Arizona Department of Public Safety says.
   A woman, her two teen-age sons and another adult were traveling along U.S. 9
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near Wikieup when they spotted the bright, pulsating light, Sgt. Allan Schmidt, a DPS spokesman, said.
   "It appeared to be sitting on a mountain ridge about five miles away,"
Schmidt said. "It then appeared to move and follow them along to the west as
they traveled, coming within about a mile of them at one point."
   Schmidt described the object as "pulsating, like a star, about twice as
bright and twice as big as a star."
   The light also was seen by a DPS officer, identified as Veronica Minch, at
about 4 .m., Schmidt said.
   "It appeared to move, but she discounted that due to tired eyes," he said.
   The people who said their car was followed by the mysterious light called th
e
DPS from a pay phone at Wikieup, and Minch was dispatched to the scene, Schmidt said.
   "They were agitated, excited, but these are not crazy people -- not
hallucinating, drunk or crazy," Schmidt said. He declined to identify the
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people.
   Schmidt said that when Minch arrived, the light was hovering just above the
horizon.
   "While she was there, it suddenly dropped out of sight below the horizon," h
e
said.

Officials at Nellis Air Force Base were contacted "to see if they had done any rocket work" that might have accounted for the light, Schmidt said, "but they didn't have anything."

A spokesman for the North American Aerospace Defense Command said officials were studying reports of the Arizona sighting.

Delbert Kindschi said NORAD often receives inquiries about objects that turn out to be satellites burning themselves out as they re-enter the Earth's atmosphere.

However, Kindschi said the Arizona sighting did not seem to match the descriptions of incidents involving satellites.

A spokesman for the National Weather Service in Phoenix said the object sighted near Wikieup probably was not a weather balloon. He said weather baloon s in Arizon are launch only from Winslow and Tucson.

This morning's incident was referred to Luke Air Force Base for further investigation.

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