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NORTHWEST

Meteor lights up Northwest

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An apparent meteor streaked through the sky over the Pacific Northwest early Tuesday, drawing reports of bright lights and sonic booms in parts of Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

Although a witness reported seeing the object strike the Earth in a remote part of Adams County, in southeast Washington, it had not been found.

"I'm convinced it was a meteor," said Geoff Chester, spokesman for the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C. "It was a classic description of a fireball."

Chester speculated the meteor was the size of a big suitcase and had been orbiting the sun for millions of years before entering Earth's orbit.

The Federal Aviation Administration said a private pilot reported seeing the meteor hit the Earth in a burst of light near State Route 26 and the Lind-Hatton Road about 5:45 a.m.

The Adams County sheriff's office had no immediate reports of damage, injury or a meteor landing in the area.

Chester said people commonly think they see a meteor hit or about to hit the ground, when it is nowhere close. Most meteorites that strike the Earth are never found, he said.

"When you see objects like this in the sky your sense of scale is distorted," he said. "It's a common optical illusion."

A number of pilots reported seeing the meteor streaking through the sky from Boise, Idaho, into Washington state, the FAA said.

Surveillance cameras in the region captured a ball of light in the sky and then a flash illuminating the early morning darkness.

Television stations in Spokane reported getting viewer calls from across Washington state and north Idaho, parts of Oregon and southeastern British Columbia, starting about 5:30 a.m.