

KELOWNA

Blinking bouys bring backlash

by Wayne Moore - Story: 63682
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Several new additions to Okanagan Lake have caught the attention of water gazers and emergency services.



Photo: Contributed - Environment Canada

It seems three Evaporation Buoys recently released onto the lake by Environment Canada come equipped with flashing lights, and those lights have resulted in at least two false distress calls.

RCMP Const. Steve Holmes says both incidents occurred after dark with callers believing the flashing lights were a call for help.

The lights in each case were five flashes over a 15-second span that is repeated over and over again.

"Upon investigation, it was discovered that the origin of the flashing lights were Evaporation Buoys that were placed by Environment Canada in three locations in Okanagan Lake," says Holmes.

"One of the buoys is located approximately 4 kilometres north of the Okanagan Centre boat launch in Lake Country and the other in West Kelowna across from the Cove."

The buoys will monitor lake evaporation over the next three years.

Holmes says in one instance, the fire department rescue vessel was sent out to investigate. In the other it was determined from shore that the signal was in fact from one of the buoys.

"We're not trying to discourage people from calling us if they see something that they perceive is someone in distress," says Holmes. "We just want people aware there are these buoys that are anchored in the lake at these positions and they do have a flashing light that, from what we understand, emit five flashes in 15-second intervals."