

# The Raleigh Hills Hovering and Maneuvering UFO

## An Oregon MUFON Case Study

by

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### Abstract

Keywords: Lights—Low-level—Craft—Hovering—Maneuvering—Dark color

<b>Description</b>	Witness Don Settle and his family were driving back home at night and saw a large, variously bright lighted and then dark craft with blue and red lights hovering and maneuvering around a busy intersection for around two minutes.
<b>Witness(es)</b>	Don Settle, wife Tina, and son Gary (pseudonyms).
<b>Time and Date</b>	September 11, 2010, at about 10 PM and after.
<b>Place</b>	In Raleigh Hills area of Portland, Oregon, at SW Scholls Ferry Road and SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway intersection.
<b>Weather</b>	Clear sky, visibility 10 miles; wind: calm; temperature 55.9° F.
<b>Duration</b>	About two minutes.

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# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
SIGHTING DESCRIPTION .....	3
Curiously Slow Traffic at 10 PM .....	3
It's Coming Right at Us!.....	3
Trying to Figure It Out.....	4
ENVIRONMENT.....	6
Weather.....	7
EVIDENCE.....	8
Face-To-Face Interview .....	8
ANALYSIS .....	8
UFO Distance .....	8
UFO Size .....	9
Another Method of Determining Size .....	10
UFO Speeds and Maneuvering Characteristics .....	12
CONCLUSION .....	12
Identification Candidates .....	13

# INTRODUCTION

This case is a possible close encounter of the first kind (a UFO within 500 feet) because one of the witnesses described a momentary impression of the UFO “swooping” much closer to the automobile than all three witnesses were in during the two minutes or so of the entire sighting. However, this is just a fleeting impression so the case is more probably one of a quite close, structured, hovering and maneuvering, anomalous, craft-like object with odd lights apparently part of the craft-like object.

We would like to thank Don Settle (pseudonym) and his family for cooperating in this investigation. We carried out a face-to-face interview with Don himself, though his wife at the time preferred not to accompany him. So, we have not talked directly to her or their son. Don has continued to answer questions and has cooperated fully and has pro-actively assisted our investigation by photo-illustrating his encounter with a number of photos. This has greatly enhanced our understanding of his encounter.

## SIGHTING DESCRIPTION

On September 11, 2010, a Saturday, Don Settle, his wife Tina (pseudonym), and eight-year-old son, Gary (pseudonym), were driving back home after enjoying a night of bowling as part of a family birthday party. At right around 10 PM, they were about to approach a five-way intersection in the Raleigh Hills area of Portland, Oregon. The SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway (Oregon State Highway 10) runs east and west with SW Scholls Ferry Road running from the NE to the SW through the intersection and SW Oleson Road beginning at the intersection and running south. They were traveling west by automobile on SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway.

### Curiously Slow Traffic at 10 PM

Their car rounded a bend where they could see the intersection about 1000 feet ahead. Curiously, the traffic was stop and go, traveling about ten mph approaching the five-way intersection. The intersection was well lit since there are many businesses in the immediate vicinity along with a strip mall on the north side of SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway. The sky was clear on this completely dark, moonless night.

Don then saw a very bright aerial object that he first thought was a low flying airplane. See *Figure 1, Don Settle's Photo-Illustration of His UFO Experience (1)*. However, he immediately noticed that there were “no blinking lights on it and it was sitting stationary over the road.” He called Tina’s and Gary’s attention to the object and they both saw the object. This very bright white object seemed to “swoop straight up” and then became very dim. While it was dim, they could see the dark outline of a craft-like object with two steady lights—an orange/red one on the left and a blue one on the right toward the ends of the horizontally oblong shape.

### It’s Coming Right at Us!

As Don drove slowly in traffic, they continued to watch the object. Now it maneuvered horizontally a couple of times as well as vertically. It would rise up above the trees and go back and forth and come back down. See *Figure 2, Don Settle's Photo-Illustration of His UFO Experience (2)*. At one point as Tina watched the oddly maneuvering object, she said, “Oh my God, I think it’s going to crash! It’s coming right at us!” Don was watching traffic during this sequence and did not see it move quickly close to them and then recede, which was Tina’s impression. However, he saw it after this doing more maneuvering and dimming down.

As they passed through the intersection, they could see the dimmed object start moving away toward the north of them, somewhat along the northeast trending SW Scholls Ferry Road. Then it moved fast toward the west side of the Portland Hills and disappeared in the distance as they moved through the intersection proper.

## Trying to Figure It Out

During this approximately two minute episode, while it was on-going, Don and Tina quickly eliminated an airplane identification because of the hovering and quick movements of such a large-sized aerial, craft-like object. They also were trying to interpret the craft-like object as a helicopter, too, with perhaps a bright spot light. However, they rejected this also because they saw it so close and from multiple positions. It just wasn't a helicopter. See *Figure 3, Don Settle's Illustration of the UFO*. All the quick maneuvering along with a lack of airplane or helicopter noise also just didn't add up for them.

At one point also, Don recalls Tina saying, "Holy sh\*t! It is a UFO!" (Don said that Tina using a swear word is *very* uncharacteristic of her.) They were both convinced that what they saw was a truly anomalous, aerial, craft-like, maneuvering object— a UFO.

The family continued on down SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway and on to their home. Once there, Don went back outside and looked off in the direction of where the UFO disappeared, but he saw nothing.



Source: Don Settle

**Figure 1. Don Settle's Photo-Illustration of His UFO Experience (1)**

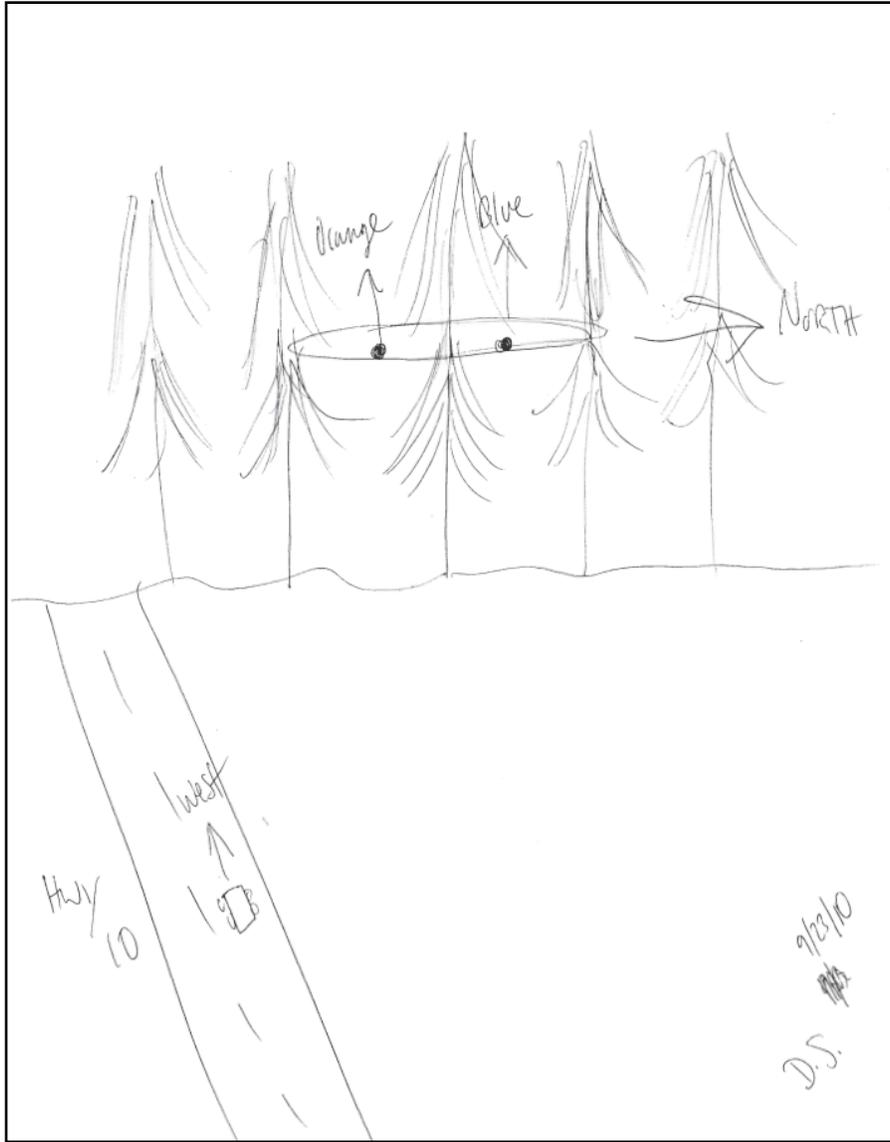
*This is a daylight photo of the spot on SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway where Don Settle and family first saw the UFO as they approached a five-way intersection up ahead at the light. Don has added the white UFO in this photo-illustration.*



Source: Don Settle

**Figure 2. Don Settle's Photo-Illustration of His UFO Experience (2)**

*This photo-illustration shows the UFO in a different position as they pass slowly through the five-way intersection up ahead about 500 feet. Note the orange/red light on the left and the blue light on the right of the horizontally oblong-shaped UFO. At night, the UFO at this point was dimly lit. It also moved in front of the trees to the left at one point.*



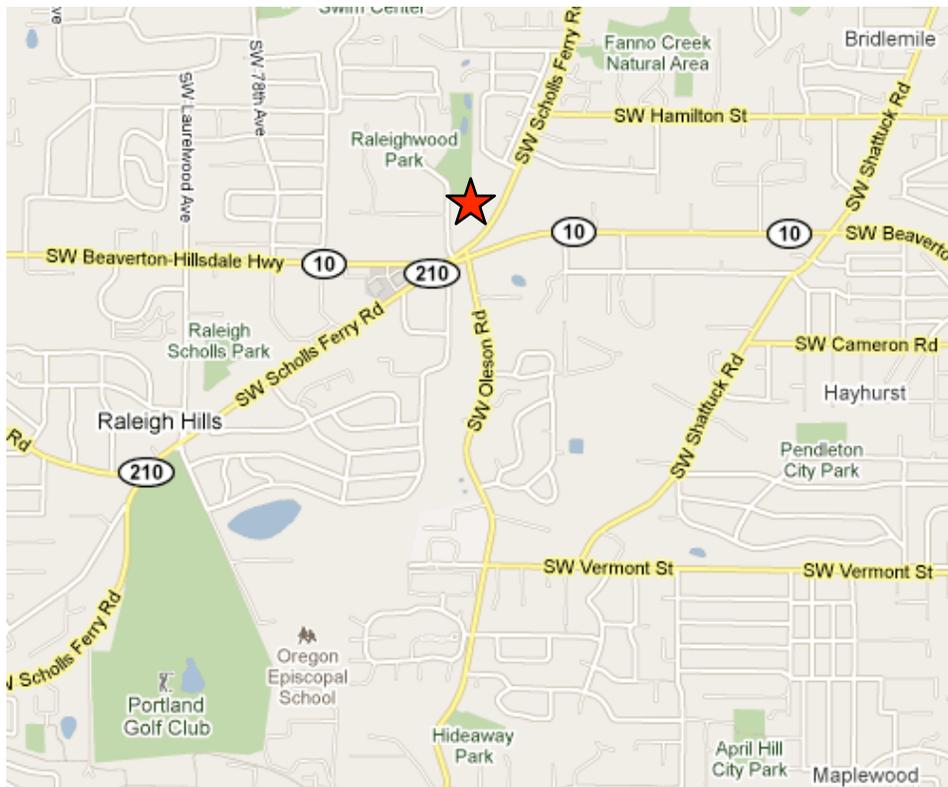
Source: Don Settle

**Figure 3. Don Settle's Illustration of the UFO**

*This is Don's drawing done during our face-to-face interview. Note that the UFO is in front of the trees making the UFO in front of a known stationary object so that the real size can be calculated. See later in ANALYSIS.*

## ENVIRONMENT

The environment for this sighting is a residential neighborhood between the cities of Beaverton and downtown Portland, Oregon, off to the east over the Portland Hills. The SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway runs east and west through the area of Raleigh Hills. Don Settle and his family were going west on the Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway back home and had the sighting as they were approaching and going through the major five-way intersection of the SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway, SW Scholls Ferry Road, and SW Oleson Road. There are only retail businesses, a shopping center, and residential neighborhoods in this area. There is no light or major industry for a couple of miles around. See *Figure 4, Raleigh Hills Sighting Environs*.



Source: Google Maps

**Figure 4. Raleigh Hills Sighting Environs**

*Don Settle’s sighting occurred as he crept along in traffic going through the five-way intersection of Beaverton-Hillsdale, SW Scholls Ferry, and SW Oleson roads. The red star shows the basic location of the UFO. However, it was maneuvering around a bit during the sighting. A small strip mall is located just north of the Highway 10 symbol near the UFO star indicator.*

## Weather

See the details in *Table 1, Weather on Sighting Day*, for the weather on the day of the UFO sighting: September 11, 2010 at about 10 PM. Note that the wind speed near the surface was calm at essentially 0 mph on the time in question. The weather is not a factor in this sighting except for clear weather allowing for a very good look at the UFO and the implications for balloon explanations because of the calm conditions.

**Table 1. Weather on Sighting Day**

Event Date	Event Time	Temp (F)	Visibility (miles)	Wind Direction	Wind Speed (mph)	Conditions
9/11/10	10 AM	55.9°	10	Calm	0	Clear sky

## EVIDENCE

The evidence in this case consists mainly of the testimony of the primary witness (Don Settle) and his photo-illustrations. However, we have no reason to doubt his trustworthiness in relating his experience. As mentioned earlier, he has cooperated fully and answered all our questions in a forthright and articulate manner. A brief check on the Internet revealed nothing causing any doubt about his general trustworthiness or his standing in the community.

Don has taken a real interest in his sighting and has gone out of his way to take daylight photos of the area and then has drawn in the size, shape, and colors of the UFO associated with his sighting. We thank Don for this.

### Face-To-Face Interview

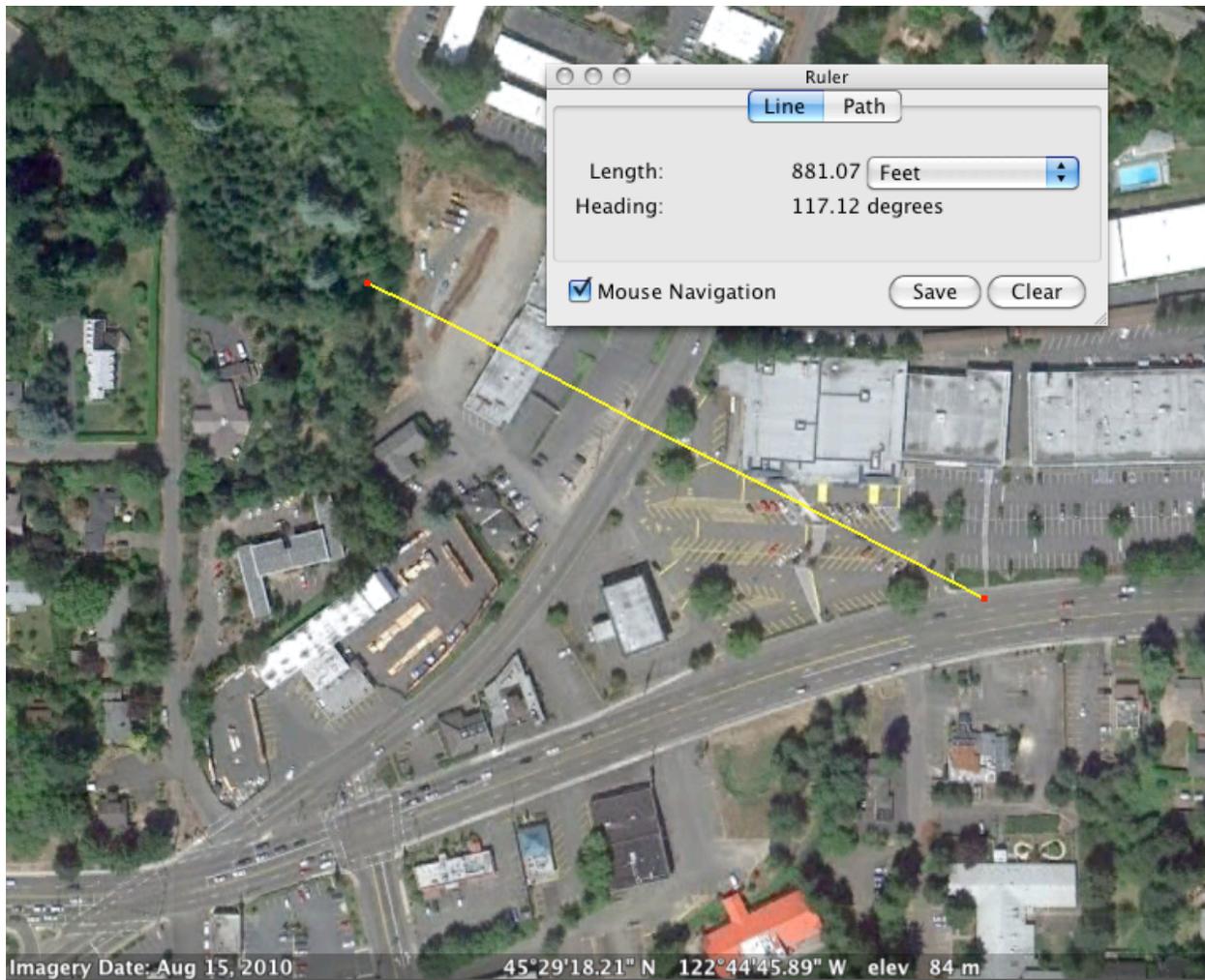
Oregon MUFON Field Investigator Lisa Fox and Assistant State Director Keith Rowell arranged an interview with witness Don Settle at a Portland restaurant on September 23, 2010. Lisa and I found Don to be a straightforward and open witness. We added new information to his initial report and clarified some additional details. We talked about the difference between angular size and absolute size, which Don readily understood. We came up with a best guess of  $2^\circ$  for the angular size of the UFO he saw. Trying to get an accurate angular size helps to determine an absolute (or real) size sometimes when enough information is present in the evidence.

## ANALYSIS

There are no photos or video in this case or physical evidence. But Don has created some photo-illustrations based on some daylight photos he took to illustrate his impressions of the size, shape, and colors of the UFO. We will analyze these to get some idea of the real size of the UFO. We determine the UFO distance first and then use this to estimate a size for the UFO.

### UFO Distance

The distance to the UFO can be calculated reasonably here because the UFO was very close and the UFO was seen in front of a known object—Douglas Fir trees on the NW side of SW Scholls Ferry Road just north of the five-way intersection. Also, Don has indicated where he was on the road when he saw the UFO the clearest and closest. Using Google Earth, we can make a good estimate of the distance from the witnesses of the UFO at its closest approach (ignoring the very close “swooping in right at us” impression of Tina; see the *SIGHTING DESCRIPTION* earlier). This was about 900 feet. See *Figure 5, Closest Distance of the UFO to the Witnesses*. The UFO position indicated in *Figure 6, UFO in Front of Some Douglas Firs*, was used to determine where the UFO was in Google Earth in *Figure 5*.



Source: Google Earth

**Figure 5. Closest Distance of the UFO to the Witnesses.**

*The closest approach of the UFO to the witnesses (acknowledged by both witnesses; see the SIGHTING DESCRIPTION earlier) is about 900 feet. The UFO was at the left end of the yellow measuring line and the witnesses were in their car at the right end of the line.*

## UFO Size

As mentioned earlier during the face-to-face interview with Don, Lisa and I determined that a good estimate of the angular size of the UFO, at least when the witnesses first saw the UFO, is about 2°. This is four times the diameter of the full moon and allows for plenty of opportunity to discern detail in an object in the sky. In fact, this angular size for a freely flying and maneuvering conventional aircraft means that the aircraft is very close to the witness, so plenty of opportunity for seeing visual detail and hearing typical aircraft sounds is present.

The witnesses heard no ordinary aircraft sounds—either airplane, helicopter, etc. And, of course, their detailed visual descriptions and Don’s drawings and photo-illustrations rule out conventional aircraft.

Don’s photo-illustrations give us an opportunity to measure an absolute size with the help of Google Earth. See *Figure 6, UFO in Front of Some Douglas Firs* and *Figure 7, Using Google Earth to Measure UFO Length*. Locating the five-way intersection and Douglas firs is done first in Google Maps and then the measurement tool is used to approximate the position and length of the UFO as illustrated in *Figure 6*,

*UFO in Front of Some Douglas Firs*. The resultant length is around 60 feet give or take 10 or 15 feet. In other words, the UFO is on the order of a normal sized, smaller aircraft.

### **Another Method of Determining Size**

We can also use Don's photo-illustration in *Figure 6, UFO in Front of Some Douglas Firs* in another way to calculate the size of the UFO somewhat more accurately. We know from the EXIF data in Don's photo-illustration that he took the photo at a 35 mm camera equivalent of a 72 mm lens. We also know that the photo is 1600 pixels across and this is equivalent to  $28.5^\circ$  across the frame since it was taken with a 72 mm lens equivalent. By measuring Don's illustration of the UFO, which is about 200 pixels from end to end, we can calculate that the UFO is about  $3.5^\circ$  across. Finally, we know that Don was about 900 feet away from the trees by measuring this distance in Google Earth. See *Figure 7, Using Google Earth to Measure the UFO Length*. Thus, some trigonometry tells us that the UFO works out to be about 55 feet across. This agrees reasonable well with the direct measurement in Google Earth described earlier.

We also note here that Don's idea of around  $2^\circ$  for the size of the UFO when we interviewed him agrees reasonably with what he has illustrated here in his photos, which were done after we interviewed him. Since there is some discrepancy, however, we feel sure that Don was not working backward from his estimate of  $2^\circ$  to somehow make his photo-illustrations agree with his previous ideas. We feel certain that Don's photo-illustrations are his honest attempt to illustrate what he and his family saw on September 11, 2010.



Source: Don Settle

**Figure 6. UFO in Front of Some Douglas Firs**

*The fact that Don saw the UFO in front of a known object, in this case some Douglas Fir trees, means that we can figure out a real (absolute) size for the UFO with some confidence. The UFO is about 50 to 60 feet from end to end.*



Source: Google Earth

**Figure 7. Using Google Earth to Measure the UFO Length**

*Using Figure 6, UFO in Front of Some Douglas Firs, which is Don's photo-illustration of the UFO size and position at its closest approach, we can then use Google Earth's view of the same area to approximate the UFO's length, which is around 60 feet give or take 15 feet or so. The horizontal yellow measuring line represents the UFO's length and location according to Don's photo-illustration.*

## UFO Speeds and Maneuvering Characteristics

The witness' descriptions of this UFO makes UFO speed analysis difficult—sometimes it was hovering, sometimes it was moving from side to side, sometimes it was “swooping” in close to the witnesses, and at the end it was moving away fairly fast. Suffice it to say that the speed and maneuvering characteristics takes it out of the realm of anything conventional given its calculated size of around 60 feet in length.

## CONCLUSION

The UFO observation in this case was made by three people with the two adults giving extensive information. It also lasted around two minutes or so, which is plenty of time to accurately see and remember many details. The details taken all together rule out any conventional explanations. Because of the richness of detail, the identification candidates are ruled out definitively except for the “secret military aircraft.”

## Identification Candidates

The candidates for identification for this low-level, extensively maneuvering, oblong UFO with two prominent lights on either end of the oblong shape are the following:

- **Secret U.S. military or foreign power aircraft.** This explanation, of course, can never be completely ruled out by anyone except for the very few within the bowels of our deep black military and corporate contractor world who would also have access to all the on-going projects. This list of people is exceedingly small (perhaps only 100?!) because of the “need to know” and compartmentation of military secrets. However, verified reports of this kind of object over populated areas in the U.S. are far fewer than “standard” UFOs. It strains credulity that human-designed, “conventional” secret aircraft would be tested at 100 feet or so altitude in the middle of a large metropolitan area. (We assume that secret military aircraft buffs could adequately “verify” this kind of report, but the documented record of reports of secret military aircraft appearing over populated areas—which are always only at very high altitudes!—is very scant, indeed.) The primary witness mentioned no sound coming from this craft despite ample opportunity and despite being about 900 feet away at times (and perhaps closer). *Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.*
- **Police surveillance UAV.** No city police or county sheriff’s departments in the Portland metro area have any operational police surveillance UAVs, much less any that fit the description of this object. The calculated size is much too large for a police UAV. *Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.*
- **Aircraft.** No conventional aircraft, military or civilian, would make no sound or create no other environmental disturbances at 900 feet away and only 100 feet in altitude. Additionally, the maneuvering behavior rules out conventional winged aircraft. *Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.*
- **Helicopter.** A helicopter makes the most sense for an identification but there was no helicopter sound heard at any time during the sighting and the visual description does not match in any way any kind of helicopter. *Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.*
- **Blimp.** A blimp does somewhat at least fit the visual description of this UFO. However, no conventional blimps would operate below 1000 feet altitude over populated areas except while landing and taking off. This was not the case, of course. Also, the maneuvers of the UFO do not fit at all the flight characteristics of a blimp. *Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.*
- **Ultralight.** Some sort of ultralight might with a lot of stretching of the imagination possibly have been the stimulus for this sighting except for its shape and its speed of departure. Ultralights have a top speed of around 100 mph. Also, there was no sound. Additionally, ultralights do not operate over population centers at night. Moreover, the calculated size of this UFO is far beyond the size of any ultralight. *Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.*
- **Remote-controlled model aircraft.** RC models are usually built as replicas of conventional aircraft and do not look at all like what the witnesses described. They are never more than about ten feet in length. Also, they are propelled by conventional, noisy piston or sometimes jet model engines. Additionally, the calculated size of this UFO is far beyond the size of any RC model. *Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.*
- **Balloon.** The wind speed at the surface at 10 PM was essentially zero (calm). This rules out the possibility that the UFO was an unpowered airborne object like a balloon. And, of course, the UFO was seen to maneuver around quite a bit during the two minutes of the sighting. *Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.*

***Since the identification candidates fail for the reasons stated, this UFO observation is classified as a true UFO, a MUFON UAV.***