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Hazardous waste roundup nets some bizarre finds

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A hazardous waste roundup is not the right place to turn in explosives.

Regional waste reduction staff had that message this week after flares were among the more volatile items turned in during the annual hazardous waste roundup held Saturday at Okanagan College's KLO campus.

Event spokeswoman Rae Stewart said that some pretty unusual things have turned up in the 19 years the regional district has offered the drop off service to the public.

"One of the things that was unusual this year was a barometer which had a lot of mercury in it," said Stewart.

"It was about three feet long at least—one of those really old ones. It was from Britain, according to the guy who dropped it off, and was about 50 or 60 years old."

As for flares, those should be left with the RCMP, according to Stewart.

Ammunition has been left at the roundup in the past too, also an item for the RCMP.

Over 45,000 litres of "eco-nasties" were collected during the six-hour

roundup this year, including acids, antifreeze, solvents, pesticides, propane tanks and car batteries, said Stewart.

She also thanked the many volunteer groups who came out to assist with the busy event.

Meanwhile, regional waste reduction supervisor Peter Rotheisler said one of his top priorities in 2010 will be to establish a permanent location for hazardous waste collection.

"People are looking for a spot to go to throughout the year, as opposed to have to hold on to it for a year and hope they're around or in town when the (roundup) event actually occurs."

However, trying to find a permanent location has been in the works for at least two years.

"The major delay is finding the right location," said Rotheisler.

Once research is finished, Rotheisler said a request for proposals would need to go out, looking for the right commercial operator to handle the job.

Most materials would only be gathered at the site for proper sorting and storage, and then shipped out to various processing locations across the country.

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