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Thermal interaction between a thermokarst lake and a nearby embankment in

permafrost regions

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Abstract: Linear engineering construction and changed climate on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau have

initiated significant thermokarst processes, which seriously deteriorates the thermal stability of

nearby engineering infrastructure. The existence of embankments also has a potential thermal

effect on nearby thermokarst lakes. However, this thermal interaction between an embankment

and a thermokarst lake has not been fully understood. A series of numerical simulations were

conducted to study the thermal interaction of thermokarst lake-embankment system in 50 years by

a dynamic heat transfer model with phase change. Our simulated results indicate that the existence

of the thermokarst lake has a significant thermal effect on nearby embankment, while the

existence of the embankment has a slight thermal effect on nearby thermokarst lake. The

influences of lake-bottom temperature, the distance between the lake and the embankment, the

ground temperature and the ice content of permafrost on the thermal interaction were discussed.

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