

Death of man in forest a homicide

Laura McVicker and John Branton *Columbian* staff writers
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A man who was found dead in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in Skamania County on Saturday was a homicide victim, officials said Monday evening. Saturday was opening day of elk season, and an official said large numbers of hunters were in the area.

The man appeared to be about 30, but he carried no identification and his name was unknown, said Undersheriff Dave Cox.

Even the exact cause of death wasn't known Monday.

With information so scarce, officials are asking anyone who saw or heard anything to call the sheriff's office.

Two men found the body in the Skookum Meadows area off the U.S. Forest Service 32 Road, about 2 miles northwest of Lone Butte, according to a Skamania County Sheriff's Office bulletin.

The area is about 25 miles up the Wind River from Carson.

Cox earlier had said the man may have been shot, but he said Monday evening he'd heard no cause of death from officials who conducted an autopsy that afternoon.

Detectives have ruled out suicide.

Cox said Monday the man was a homicide victim, and said that could include an accident.

Investigators interviewed hunters in the area and discovered that a single gunshot was heard in the area between noon and 3 p.m. Saturday.

Detectives are looking for a white SUV similar to a Jeep Liberty, driven by a man described as short, white and 30 to 40 years old.

He wore round glasses and answered to a name similar to "Craig."

Authorities believe he may have information and would like to speak with him.

Anyone with information is asked to call sheriff's Detective Sgt. Monty Buettner or Detective Tim Garrity at 509-427-9490.

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