

Livingston man, 75, dies in fall

By Justin Post

Enterprise Staff Writer

A 75-year-old Livingston man died Thursday afternoon after falling down a steep rocky incline along Convict Grade Road while taking photographs in the area, officials said.

John Charles Heckles parked his yellow BMW motorcycle in the area and walked up a ridge to photograph golden eaglets in a nest when he fell, suffering fatal injuries, officials said.

A passerby contacted law enforcement after discovering the scene, located roughly 1.5 miles up Convict Grade Road, said Park County Coroner Al Jenkins. Convict Grade Road is just east of Livingston. Heckles' death was ruled accidental, Jenkins said.

Convict Grade Road was closed to traffic for a period while the Park County Sheriff's Office investigated the scene and determined there was no foul play, said Sheriff Brad Bichler.

"It's a terrible, terrible accident," Bichler said.

Law enforcement was called to the area at 2:50 p.m. Thursday and determined that Heckles fell some 160 feet in a rocky area, the sheriff said.

The man's family reported to law enforcement that Heckles had visited

the area to look at eagles for approximately 20 years.

A rappelling team from Livingston Fire and Rescue responded to recover Heckles' personal belongings. Park

County Rural Fire District #1 and the Montana Highway Patrol also responded to assist, Bichler said.

The Sheriff's Office cleared the scene at 6:30 p.m.



Enterprise photo by Nate How

Authorities closed a section of Convict Grade Road Thursday where a man fell to his death while photographing an eagle's nest.