

# Shooting of hunter deemed accident

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

**KINGSTON TOWNSHIP** - Game Commission officials are describing the shooting of John Voytko November 29 in Frances Slocum State Park as an accident.

"The other hunter's only crime was not stopping to see if he could help. He only complicated things by taking off," said wildlife conservation officer Jim Jolley, who is investigating the incident, assisted by the Luzerne County District Attorney's office. "I'm optimistic that either the person will come forward or we'll find him. Voytko could have died if he had been hunting alone."

Voytko, 27, of Moscow, was shot while hunting with his brother-in-law, A.J. Oliveri of Trucksville, and is listed in critical condition in the intensive care unit of Geisinger Medical Center in Danville with a wound to his left shoulder.

According to the investigation, Voytko, wearing a blaze orange outfit, was sitting on the ground when he was shot.

Jolley called the accident a "line of fire" accident, saying Voytko was wounded by another hunter shooting at a deer between them.

"Voytko saw the buck after he had been shot," Jolley said. "He was obscured from view because he was sitting on the ground. He was shot in the back. I'm 99 percent sure it was an accident."

John Carey of Trucksville heard the shots and the wounded hunter's screams, then ran to Audrey Simpson's house on Green Road and asked her to dial 911. Carey then returned to the scene, stayed until Game Commission officials arrived and spoke with them to help the investigation.

Approximately 300 acres in Frances Slocum State Park's northwest section along Green Road have been open to hunters

since the park opened 20 years ago, according to superintendent Dave Barrett.

This is its first hunting accident to his knowledge, although the area is hunted fairly heavily, he said.

The decision to allow or prohibit hunting is made on the recommendation of each park's manager to the Bureau of State Parks based on safety, Barrett said.

"There's no need to limit hunting or the type of firearm or ammo here," he said. "It's safe to hunt as long as hunters practice safe hunting techniques. There are risks involved in everything."

A controlled hunt in other sections of the park to reduce the deer population is still under consideration by the bureau, he said.

Green Road forms part of the park's northwestern border and is about a mile long, with only six or eight homes on its eastern end.

Robert Duris has lived here for 17 years and has hunted deer with a shotgun and "ounce balls" since he was a kid. He lives about 300 yards away from the scene of the hunting accident.

"If a hunter shoots a person wearing orange, there's something wrong with the hunter," he said.

Although the park is convenient and close to town, he believes too many hunters use it for the size of the area available.

He hasn't had any close calls with stray bullets, but has seen "plenty of ignorant people."

"They'll park and block my driveway to go hunting," he said.

*"The other hunter's only crime was not stopping to see if he could help."*

Jim Jolley  
Wildlife Conservation Officer

"Or else they'll come too close to the house and don't care about it."

Possibly limiting hunters to using bows and arrows, muzzle loaders or shotguns in the park is a good idea, he said.

"I use a shotgun and have never shot more than 50 to 75 yards," he said. "More than that and I can't see what I'm shooting at. All people want to use now is the high-powered rifles, which I can't see. Everything involves some risk, but wearing blaze orange while you're out hunting helps reduce it."

Ralph Kuniskas has lived on Green Road for about 20 years.

"It's a decent area to hunt," he

said. "I've gone over there several times but haven't seen many deer. I think they're being pushed by hunters onto private farmland nearby."

He doesn't think limiting the type of weapon hunters may use in the park matters.

"There aren't many houses on that end anyway," he said.

Mrs. Anthony Harchar and Mrs. E. E. Griffen also don't worry about hunting accidents, although they have lived here a long time.

"I thought I could expect to see hunters around when I first moved here because it's a wooded area," Mrs. Griffen said.

The park isn't hunted as heavily as it once was, Mrs. Harchar said.

"It was a lot worse before, but now there aren't many deer left," she added. "They should just let the deer live in peace in the park and not allow any hunting. If people keep on shooting them, there won't be any left for the park visitors to enjoy."



## Miller bags a buck

Luke Miller, 12, Trucksville, bagged an 8 pt. buck on the first day of the season at 7:30 a.m. He was hunting in Cross Forks, Pa. with his father Daniel Miller, who shot a 4 pt. buck five minutes earlier.

## Beth Wagner wins Power Points

Beth Wagner of Dallas was the local winner in the tenth week of the 1995 Power Points football contest. Her score of 106 points was the highest among local entries.

Wagner will receive \$25 cash from The Dallas Post and a free month of HBO from Tele-Media, the contest co-sponsor.

The statewide winner, with 134 of a possible 136 points was Patty Bobby of Barnesboro. She won by

the widest margin of the year, 10 points, over the second-place score.

The Power Points contest will run until the end of the NFL regular season. Entries must be deposited by 2 p.m. Fridays at either the office of The Dallas Post at 45 Main Road in Dallas, or Tele-Media on the Harveys Lake Highway.

There is an after-hours drop box at the front of The Post's building.

## Pet photos with Santa

The S.P.C.A. of Luzerne County will hold its eighth annual pet photos with Santa Dec. 9 and Dec. 10, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the shelter on Fox Hill Road, Plains.

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