

CRIME

Manslaughter charges dropped against hunter

By Maline Hazle

Record Searchlight

Involuntary manslaughter charges against an Anderson man who fatally wounded a fellow hunter near Burney Mountain in September were dismissed Monday in Shasta County Superior Court.

Kenneth Wayne Park, 44, faced up to 14 years in prison had he been convicted in the death of Michael Wood, 28, of Burney.

Involuntary manslaughter is punishable by up to four years in prison, while a special allegation of using a fire-

arm carries a sentence of up to 10 years, Assistant Shasta County District Attorney Howard Welch said when Park was charged.

Wood was hunting with Park and two others on Sept. 21, the first day of deer hunting season, when he was shot and killed by a round fired from a rifle, according to Shasta County Sheriff's Department reports at the time.

Two months later, manslaughter charges were filed against Park, a truck driver

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CHARGES: *Man was hidden by clothing, foliage*

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and equipment operator for Shasta County.

The case went to trial Feb. 3, though the trial convened only two days a week, Park's attorney, John Kucera of Redding, said Monday.

Testimony from witnesses supported Park's story that Wood, who was wearing green camouflage clothing and hidden by foliage, was impossible to see when he was shot, Kucera said.

Jurors deliberated for three days before returning Feb. 23 to tell trial Judge William Gallagher that they were deadlocked, said Welch, who prosecuted the case.

Kucera said the deadlocked jurors voted 9-3 in favor of acquittal.

"After reviewing the case and assessing what we knew of the thoughts of the jurors, we asked that the case be dismissed in the interest of justice," Welch said Monday.

Judge Wilson Curle dismissed the charges.