

## Man Gravely Injured After Fall in Remote Avery

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A man was airlifted to the Johnson City Medical Center after a fall at the Hunt Fish Falls in an extremely remote area near the Avery and Caldwell County lines Saturday, causing a huge rescue effort to try to save him. Avery County dispatchers received the call and sent rescue crews just after 3 Saturday afternoon, witnesses first saying the man fell some 20 feet, suffering head and back injuries. Rescue crews gathered four wheelers and equipment, but found that the trail was too rugged for any machinery, and estimated it would take over two hours to reach and retrieve the man on foot. First arriving rescuers found grave injuries were suffered by the man, with reports at the scene saying he fell 80 feet, striking rocks with his head and back before reaching the bottom. The man was said to be unconscious—but at least breathing when the effort to transport him got underway. Additional crews from Watauga and Caldwell were called to the scene to help with manpower for the long trek back, while WINGS Air Rescue circled overhead, hoping to find a closer landing zone, but ultimately, the long hike out could not be avoided, and it was around 6 yesterday evening before the man lifted off at the landing zone. Rescuers noted that they crossed into US Forest area, so exactly who would investigate the incident was unclear late yesterday, as we seek information about the victim and the incident.