

**Metal Detectorist Self-Certification Program**

By Lee Wiese

This article involves responsible metal detecting and the community. While practicing the hobby of metal detecting there have been a number of issues and questions that continues to come to one's attention. These issues have been evident while metal detecting at large, at club hunts, in metal detecting conversations and during some recent club visits as VP of the Western Chapter. So what are the issues and questions?

Generally, it is the lack of knowledge by both new people to the hobby and some old timers. This lack of knowledge covers issues like where one can / cannot go metal detecting, proper methods of pin-pointing and minimizing ground cover damage during target recovery. I am sure that most everyone who metal detects has been exposed to similar situations and has seen first hand the results of very poor target recovery, or has talked to someone who has been asked to leave a specific detecting place due to lack of permission. As more people start to practice the hobby proper training and guidance will become essential for responsible detecting. Without proper education / training the result will be damaged property, public entities banding metal detecting, and arrests; all negatively impacting the reputation of the hobby.

These are the issues that have prompted me to suggest creating a club **Member Certification Program** for metal detecting clubs and individuals. I would willing to work with a club or clubs to establish such a certification program for its members.

Let's explore what a possible club metal detecting **Certification Program** would cover. A certification program is meant to certify metal detecting club members in a classroom environment on responsible metal detecting. The class would be approximately 6-8 hours in length, would cover an **introduction** to detecting, **ethics** for detecting and **where** to hunt, **how** to use a metal detector and target recovery.

Below is a four point outline for a club member certification program or some may call it a Metal Detecting 101, 102, 103 class.

101) The class would start with an **introduction** and discussion on:

- The various Types of Metal Detecting (coins, jewelry, beach / water, prospecting, relics)
- Who are the metal detector Manufacturers
- General or Multi-purpose, Water, Prospecting, Relic Detectors
- How to Purchase (local dealers, internet, etc.)

- Equipment and other Detecting Accessories
- The Internet and Metal Detecting
- National and State Metal Detecting Organizations

102) Instruction and discussion on:

- Metal Detecting **Ethics**
- Acquiring Permission to Metal Detect
- Written and Verbal Contracts
- Research (old newspapers, library, photos, etc.)

**where** you can & cannot metal detect:

- Local Public (parks, schools, public building grounds, beaches, pool areas, etc.)
- State (parks, recreation areas, beaches, historical sites, etc.)
- National (parks, forest, recreation areas, beaches, historical sites, etc.)
- Private lands, lakes, resorts and beaches.

*The section on the Local Public area and State can be tailored to a specific club's location.*

103) Next the class should cover **how** to:

- Turn-on and Setup a Detector
- Control Proper Swing and Coil Height
- Proper Pin Pointing of a Target
- Proper Recovery of a Target

*Section (3) should be covered in a classroom and then practiced under classroom conditions in the field.*

The certification class would be a requirement for every current member and every new member that joins a club. At the completion of the class there can be recognition, with a certificate of completion or some other award.

This program can be a great selling point to your community authorities. The certification program demonstrates the clubs commitment to obeying laws, following good methods for practicing the hobby, and a willingness to reach out to educate its members and the community. The certification class can be used at schools to introduce students to the hobby, or offered as a metal detecting 101 class at your local community center.

In one case, I have witnessed a club that was able to get global permits for club members from city and school authorities by using a similar approach. In another case a club uses such a program to educate the community at large. It will work, and as more and more people join the hobby it will be a must in every club if the hobby is to continue to have access to public and private lands.

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