



### Support The Hobby

I would like to point out to the News Brief readers that there are a number of organizations taking on the challenge against various types of legislation dealing with metal detecting and gold prospecting. MDHTALK's recommendation is to visit their website and give strong consideration to joining the fight. In some cases your support may be to send emails and / or write a letter to specific legislators or to provide funds to help with the fight. Here are the organizations and a link to their website.

[Go to the Join The Fight MDHTALK Webpage to read more about each of these organizations](#)

**What is a News Brief?** The news brief provides a brief look into any news event. The intent of the news brief is to provide you, the reader, with news clips on what was taking place in the hobby last month. To read the whole story select the Article Link or go to [MDHTALK.org](http://MDHTALK.org). There are more news stories placed on the MDHTALK website for February the news stories listed in the MDHTALK News Brief are just a portion of all the hobby related news reported the past month. **The news Brief is now available in Adobe PDF format, there is a link at the top of this webpage.** The news brief is no longer emailed; it is only available on the MDHTALK website and can be downloaded.

### The Website's featured article for this month is: Where is it Legal to Metal Detect?

[Download to Read The Complete Article](#)

This question should be easy to answer but that is not the case. There are no uniform state laws or regulations across the fifty states or are there uniform municipal codes for the many thousands of cities and counties in the U.S. One way to get a handle on laws and regulations for your area is to join a local metal detecting or gold prospecting club. These clubs will usually know what the local law and regulation situation is for the hobby. So lets take one section of the U.S. at a time and try to find some answers.

**National.** There are a number of federal acts that control what can or can not be done on federal properties. These acts are the:

- **1906** [American Antiquities Act](#)
- **1966** [National Historic Preservation Act As amended through 2000](#)
- **1997** [Archaeological Resources Protection Act](#)
- **1990** [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act](#)

Each of these acts places protection for America's antiquities plus use restrictions on federal lands, historical sites and Native American Indian burial grounds.

The **1906 and the 1997** acts have an impact on the National Park System, National Monuments, National Sea Shore Beaches, Civil & Revolutionary War Battlefields, and to some extent on Native American lands. These acts indirectly make metal detecting illegal in any of these places. If caught metal detecting or have a detector in your possession while on any of these protected places it can be a felony with tough penalties.

A typical statement on a **National Monument** websites is: Metal detectors are strictly prohibited on park grounds. Relic hunting by the use of metal detectors or other means is prohibited and violators will be prosecuted.

*Park rangers enforce a number of federal regulations in the park, including the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36 (36 CFR), and the United States Code, Titles 16, 18 and 21. Within 36 CFR, park superintendents are granted the right to make park-specific regulations.*

***36 CFR 2.1 (7)** Possessing or using a mineral or metal detector, magnetometer, side scan sonar, other metal detecting device, or sub-bottom profiler.*

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General U.S. and World Wide Hobby News

- Setting goals keeps treasure hunting exciting. [Article Link](#)
- Metal-detecting group look for owner of nurse's First World War medal found in Chilliwack. [Article Link](#)
- Isanti approves metal detecting policy. [Article Link](#)
- Michigan Treasure Hunters Find Rare British Colonial Coin. [Article Link](#)
- Search for Buried Treasure: Armendariz takes up metal detecting around Halstead. [Article Link](#)
- Virginia eyes outlawing relic hunting on preserved battlefield land. [Article Link](#)
- Bottles, vintage tins, Merrimack Journal from 1885 among local woman's finds. [Article Link](#)
- While washing his wife's car, Anthony Ware felt his Aggie Class of '94 ring slip off his finger. [Article Link](#)
- California couple wants to reunite lost Portsmouth High School class ring with its owner. [Article Link](#)
- You Can (Reportedly) Still Find Buried Treasure at These Spots. [Article Link](#)
- Isanti Council to dig deeper into metal detecting request. [Article Link](#) Specifics of metal detecting policy hammered out. [Article Link](#)
- Do you recognize this wedding band? Treasure hunter wants to make someone's Valentine's Day happier. [Article Link](#)

U.K. News

- Derbyshire fishmonger could net a fortune after finding 'mysterious buried treasure' in Peak District. [Article Link](#)
- Inspired by the Carey Mulligan Netflix movie The Dig? Then discover treasures found all over Britain. [Article Link](#)
- 'Buried treasure' worth thousands of pounds found in Derbyshire. [Article Link](#)
- Viking Treasure Hoard Discovered on Isle of Man. [Article Link](#)
- Reported Treasure Finds 2018/19 Statistical Release. [Article Link](#)
- Detectorists: tell us about your most interesting finds. [Article Link](#)
- Live grenade found in field outside Amersham and blown up by bomb squad. [Article Link](#)
- Treasure found in Berkshire in 2019. [Article Link](#)
- A record year for buried treasure finds follows success of TV's The Detectorists. [Article Link](#)
- Magnet fisher's explosive catch. [Article Link](#)
- A record number of buried treasure troves were discovered in Cumbria in 2019, figures reveal. [Article Link](#)
- Buried treasure: record UK haul fuelled by rise in metal detectorists. [Article Link](#)
- Man finds gold coins in Germany, but reward unlikely. [Article Link](#)
- The metal detectors who struck gold, and trouble. [Article Link](#)
- Amateur treasure hunter finds \$2.5M gold headpiece from Henry VIII's lost crown. [Article Link](#)
- Carey Mulligan is a metal detector fan. [Article Link](#)

North America Archaeology News

- Venetian Glass Beads Found in Arctic Alaska Predate Arrival of Columbus. [Article Link](#)
- 'Ice age' horse skeleton found in Utah backyard isn't what we thought. [Article Link](#)
- New Orleans Underground: The city beneath the city. [Article Link](#)
- 'The Dig' brings out the archaeologist in all of us. [Article Link](#)

Other News Sources

- **American Digger Relic Roundup.** For diggers and collectors of history. An hour long program every Monday Night at 9:00 PM eastern standard time. Join your hosts Butch Holcombe, Jeff Lubbert and Heath Jones as they explore the past. Learn more about Metal Detecting, Treasure hunting in all it's forms, and the preservation of history. [February Pod Cast Link](#)
- **Archaeology and Metal Detecting Magazine** present the BIG metal detecting podcast. A weekly show bringing all areas of history together with our guests, news and much more. [February Pod Cast Link](#)
- **Coin World** - Numismatic and Coin Collecting [February News](#)
- **Mark Schuessler FMDAC President's POD Cast**
- **Garrett Searcher January Searcher**
- **Gold Prospectors Assn of America (GPAA)** - News on legal issues for the gold prospecting community [February News](#)
- **Mel Fisher February Salvage News**
- **Prospecting and Mining Journal (IMCJ)** [February News](#)
- **PLP - February Press Release**
- **The Archaeology and Metal Detecting Magazine** The Archaeology and Metal detecting magazine are one of the lead online sites in their genre. Offering multiple platforms for Archaeological, Historical and metal detecting news, articles, research areas and much more. [February News](#)
- **1715 Fleet Society March Newsletter**

Jewelry Returns

- Columbus man's wedding band found, returned after wife posts for help on Facebook. [Article Link](#)
- Devastated Folkestone mum's precious family bracelet went missing in snow but then something amazing happened. [Article Link](#)
- Western mass News.com Metal detectorist helps couple recover lost engagement ring. [Article Link](#)
- Return of class ring special for Continental family. [Article Link](#)
- Her engagement ring was lost on a snowy Portland street, so she called The Ring Finders. [Article Link](#)
- Man, 91, overwhelmed as people help him find lost wedding ring. [Article Link](#)
- Pensioner reunited with stolen engagement ring 33 years later. [Article Link](#)
- She lost her wedding ring nearly 50 years ago in Chicago. On Valentine's Day, thanks to some history buffs, her husband will slip it back on her finger. [Article Link](#)
- More than a ring. [Article Link](#)
- Husband hires a mysterious treasure hunter known only as 'Big H' to track down his wedding ring after losing it at a beach on Australia Day - and the ending will warm your heart. [Article Link](#)

W.W. Meteorite News

- Want to own a piece of Mars? Christie's puts rare space treasures up for auction. [Article Link](#)
- Own a piece of SPACE: Meteorite with seven-billion-year-old stardust is set to go on sale for \$50,000 - in astronomical auction which also features moon rocks and pieces of Mars that could sell for \$180,000. [Article Link](#)
- How to hunt for meteorites. [Article Link](#)
- Breakdown: Why meteors aren't typically dangerous for Earth. [Article Link](#)

- Archaeologists Unearth 600-Year-Old Golden Eagle Sculpture at Aztec Temple. [Article Link](#)
- Researchers Locate Elusive Tlingit Fort in Alaska. [Article Link](#)
- MSU archaeology professor invites public on summer research trips to 'new and old' worlds. [Article Link](#)
- NASA asks Queensland school for explanation after 'meteorite' falls on grounds. [Article Link](#)

### PLP Update - New Path for Legally Re-Starting Gold Suction Dredge Mining [Web Link](#)

Due to the results of the 2020 national election, Public Lands for the People (PLP) is actively researching a new path for legally reopening gold suction dredge mining in the U.S. The research was started over 2 years ago but was put on hold to pursue recommended legislative routes through the National Defense Authorization Act (that is still ongoing) and through Presidential executive orders. Now that we have a new Democrat administration and Democrat majority in Congress, our path will have to be more bipartisan in structure and purpose—all the while without compromise of your mining rights. One might think that this would be an impossible task if you are new to PLP or do not follow the legal cases we have won for our members, but long-timers in PLP know well that we have beaten the odds before and we can do it again.>

We are sending our research of suction dredging to an independent, non-partisan national research group PLP has worked with for the past several years in Washington D.C. By doing so, it will help lay the foundation for bipartisan legislation that could remove the obstacles suction dredge miners face in the U.S. The miners have been saying the science is on our side and that suction dredging is a net benefit to the environment for many years, but the mining community was unable to carry this premise properly so it could be implemented into legislative form. PLP's working group will lay that foundation and in the coming year, release the findings. We can then step forward with draft federal legislation for bipartisan sponsorship.

You can follow our monthly updates in ICMJ's Prospecting & Mining Journal for free. February's update can be found here: [PLP Update | ICMJ's Prospecting and Mining Journal](#)

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PLPLP Update

February 2021 by Scott Harn

I admit I was sitting on pins and needles, waiting to see if President Trump would sign the proposed Executive Order we presented with Public Lands for the People (PLP) prior to the expiration of his term in office.

Even the news organization Reuters believed that another Executive Order related to mining would be issued, stating on January 8:

Administration officials tell Reuters they plan to publish a raft of decisions on January 15 that will expand miners' access to federal lands... Biden will be able to reverse some of Trump's changes...but some of Trump's steps will either be irreversible or require Biden to restart the rule-making process..."

While administrative approval was given to Resolution Copper's large project in Arizona on January 15, no other major mining-related orders or decisions were issued.

When Democrats won the two outstanding Senate elections in Georgia, this created a 50-50 party split in the Senate which allows for Vice President Harris to provide the deciding vote should a tie vote occur. This throws into serious doubt whether Senator Barrasso (R-Wyoming) will be seated as the chair of the Senate Energy and Resources Committee.

Clark Pearson of PLP and I are hoping to get back to DC as soon as this pandemic allows so we can meet and strategize with our friends in DC. I assume the goal will be to return to our previous strategy of getting our much-needed regulatory reform inserted into the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The NDAA has been one of the few bills that passes each year with huge bipartisan support.

The bottom line remains the same: The federal government must assert control from overzealous state regulators over regulations pertaining to federal mining claims in order to bring some regulatory certainty back to mining in America for both small and large operations. This is the only viable method to wrest control back from China, and to put suction dredges back in the water. And we are not about to stop until we reach this goal.

If you like the work PLP does, please help PLP help you on the path towards legally resuming suction dredge mining and reclamation!

Supporting the 2021 PLP Grand Raffle helps us continue to fight for your rights. A book of 12 tickets is only \$10. We have a lot of great high value prizes. You can't win if you don't enter! Tickets are available through July 11th to purchase by phone for the July 14th, 2021 Grand Raffle Drawing. You can call our toll-free number (844)-PLP-1990 which is (844) 757-1990 or Mail a Check by July 5th (to the address below) and specify the number of ticket books you wish to have mailed to you.

Thank you for your steadfast support through troubling times.

Your PLP Board of Directors

### PLP Researchers make major breakthrough on Forest Service Land Access Problems

Hello Friends,

Public Lands for the People (PLP) is preparing to release materials that the Forest Service does not want miners to know about. These online materials (take 4 steps and a few minutes to perform) are probably the most effective bug spray to legally use on rogue Forest Service agents ever contemplated by PLP in all its 30 years of existence. It is totally legal and professional, and it has already been used numerous times in the field by PLP members on National Forest Service managed lands. It works on access problems, occupancy limitation problems and whole lot more. It gives the legal power to the miner to resist the requirement to submit an NOI or POO when the surface disturbance activities are clearly insignificant. It employs the bundle of rights known as "Miners Right of Self-Initiation" under the Mining Act and puts an effective leash on the Forest Service agency and radical environmentalists who often plot to deprive you of your livelihood. These materials are not only an effective deterrent from Forest Service citation but a gold mine of legal research knowledge any mining lawyer would love to charge you an arm and a leg for in a legal battle. Thanks to our PLP member support, our trips to Washington D.C. have netted us an inside track to data on the Forest Service (and other agencies) that we are prepared to release to our members.

PLP members that are renewing online and by mail will start receiving these valuable gems of knowledge as a new bonus along with our member card and orange challenge card. PLP can say with confidence, that the Forest Service will never treat known PLP members the same again. As you probably know, knowledge is power and a highly effective tool against your enemies who wish to deprive you of your rights!

### Event News

#### Metal Detecting & Gold Prospecting Events.

Now is the time to start planning and getting your club's 2021 hunt information on the web. The

- **March 13, 2021** Event: (One Day)  
Wabasso, Florida 34th Annual TCAS

- **March 14, 2021** Event: (Four Days)  
Stanton, Arizona 2021 Detecting Hunt at Stanton LDMA-Lost Dutchman Mining Assn

sooner it is out and available to the metal detecting community the greater the chance for people to see it and give your event some consideration.

**Check out your event before going it may have been postponed or canceled.**

- Hunt TCAS - Treasure Coast Archaeological Society
- **March 13, 2021** Event: (Two Days) Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 22nd Annual NorthWest Gold Prospectors Assn & Treasure Show Northwest Gold Prospectors Assn

- **March 14, 2021** Event: (Four Days) Stanton, Arizona 2021 Detecting Hunt at Stanton LDMA-Lost Dutchman Mining Assn

[Add Your Event Information Here](#)

[Select here to View the Complete Event Details for MARCH](#)

### **Virginia eyes outlawing relic hunting on preserved battlefield land** [Web Link](#)

Nearly every day, on one of America's Civil War battlefields, some tangible bit of history is erased. Relic hunters were at work, unearthing the metallic evidence of warfare.

That's due to legal loopholes and the fact that most battlefield acreage has not been preserved.

In Virginia, though, a proposal to discourage metal detecting on preserved battlefield land is gaining traction in the General Assembly.

On Friday, the House of Delegates voted 100-0 to approve a bill by Del. Chris Runion, R-Rockingham, to make it a Class 1 misdemeanor to disturb, damage or remove "any object of antiquity" on battlefields owned or held in easement by a private preservation group. [Read More](#)

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Relic hunting on state-owned battlefields, such as New Market, Sailor's Creek and High Bridge, is illegal. Ditto for Civil War sites preserved by the National Park Service.

But no such protection applies to land preserved by nonprofits, such as the American Battlefield trust, Fredericksburg-based Central Virginia Battlefields Trust and Richmond Battlefields Association.

Should Runion's bill become law, it would plug a hole in the Virginia Antiquities Act, said Keven Walker, CEO of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.

"This legislation would create a legal deterrent to illegal relic hunting and disturbance of archaeological sites on battlefield land owned by nonprofits such as ours," Walker said in an interview Friday. "Battlefield preservation is a public-private partnership, really. A lot of the work is done by private entities working with state and federal agencies. And their land isn't afforded the same protection under Virginia law. Looting and unauthorized disturbance of archaeological sites in Virginia happens on a fairly regular basis."

Hence, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation made fixing the law its top legislative priority this year, he said. The foundation protects nearly 6,000 acres in the eight-county Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District.

The House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Del. Kenneth Plum, D-Fairfax, held a hearing Wednesday on Runion's bill, via Zoom.

Walker, Virginia historian Clark B. Hall and American Battlefield Trust President David Duncan were among those who testified or shared statements with Plum's committee.

Hall, who lives in Culpeper County, heartily applauded legislators for trying to make it illegal to loot artifacts on battlefield acreage owned or preserved by private, nonprofit groups.

"I am out on the privately-owned Brandy Station battlefield most every week, if not several times a week, and I often observe the holes that relic hunters have dug (at night). They are like daggers in my heart," Hall said in an interview. "I know—probably better than most—that soldiers, blue and gray, still rest beneath that hallowed soil."

"There is no question that when we stroll on battlefields, we are also walking in sacred cemeteries," he said. "Scores of soldiers remain buried today at Brandy Station, Cedar Mountain, Kelly's Ford, Hansbrough's Ridge and Freeman's Ford, just to name a few Culpeper battle venues."

Duncan, president of the nation's largest battlefield preservation group, contributed electronically submitted testimony to the discussion.

"Thousands of acres across the Commonwealth (are) exposed to potentially destructive looting," Duncan wrote the panel. "Without this HB 2311, archaeological resources that provide important clues to Virginia's tumultuous past could be lost to history or be irreparably harmed."

“Preserved battlefields protect open space, serve as ‘outdoor classrooms,’ and are economic engines for local economies, providing jobs and tourism dollars, and generating revenues for state and municipal government coffers,” he continued. “These battlefields are also living memorials to the soldiers who once struggled there. The artifacts that remain beneath these hallowed grounds are equally worthy of preservation and, with advances in ground-penetrating radar and related technology, can bring to life forgotten stories and solve century-old mysteries.”

Julie Langan, director of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, also testified at the committee meeting.

Langan said her agency had no opinion on Runion’s bill.

But in her testimony, she “confirmed that unauthorized digging is indeed a problem,” Langan said Friday via a spokesman.

The committee voted 21-0 to approve the measure. Walker particularly thanked Dels. Alfonso Lopez, D-Arlington; Todd Gilbert, R-Woodstock; and Tony Wilt, R-Harrisonburg, for supporting Runion’s bill.

After Friday’s unanimous vote by the full House, HB2311 was referred to the Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee for consideration. Sen. Chapman Peterson, D-Fairfax, chairs the committee.

Countless times, historical questions cannot be answered through documents or first-person descriptions, Walker said. Accounts may be confusing or conflicting. But answers can come through archaeology.

One can tell by the presence of bullets buried in the soil where a regiment’s battle line stopped during a battle and what kind of troops or what units from what state were there, Walker said.

“If that record isn’t disturbed, from what the soldiers left behind, we can pinpoint those locations and get a better picture of what occurred during the battle,” he said. “It’s not that different than using forensics information to learn about a crime.”

For example, Walker noted, archaeologists who teamed up with relic hunters in Montana gleaned in-situ data that transformed historians’ understanding of what happened during the Battle of the Little Bighorn, in which Gen. George Armstrong Custer perished.

“Their work completely changed how we understand that battle and dispelled some myths surrounding it,” he said.

Virginia archaeologist Taft Kiser has worked with relic hunters to survey historical sites, and values their skills and interest in history.

But he takes a dim view of many hobbyists who metal detect at night or without asking property owners.

“If you don’t have permission and don’t own the land, it’s theft,” said Kiser, who has been investigating historic sites across the commonwealth since 1984. “Most people don’t even know what is being taken off their land.”

“You can erase sites by taking stuff,” he continued. “For instance, one of the most desirable things is a soldier’s metal ID tag. It may be the only proof that person and that soldier’s unit was there, the entire record. So if you dig it up, you’re removing part of the story, you are erasing history.”

“Battles are really fast, intense things and they don’t leave a lot of traces. They’re ephemeral,” Kiser said. “What they leave is a scatter of metal in the ground. Soldiers are dropping stuff as they go, running and moving. So if you collect that material, and don’t record it, that’s gone. That’s the history of the men who were fighting. You can literally erase them.”

Less than 20 percent of Virginia’s historically significant battlefield land has been preserved.

The American Battlefield Trust owns nearly 9,000 acres in the state, out of 27,000 acres it has helped preserve.