

Metal Detecting Hobby Talk

Serving The Metal Detecting Community

MDHTALK News Brief



World Wide Hobby News



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Metal Detecting Hobby Talk News Brief

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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](#)

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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](#). There are more news stories placed on the MDHTALK website for July 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: Is Recreational Metal Detecting on the Endangered List

By: Lee Wiese

[Download this article](#) Updated: 12-30-20

Metal Detecting took form in the 1950-60s and the detectorists who were metal detecting at that time had very few restrictions and the finds were fabulous. Metal detecting during this period can be described similar to being in the old west with open ranges and anything goes. The finds stories from those in the hobby during that period are hard to believe against today's detecting results.

So is Metal detecting on the Endangered List? Let's take a look at the barriers and variables that affect the hobby.

Barriers to Recreational Metal Detecting

The Law: Today, the U.S. metal detecting environment is controlled by a hodgepodge of Federal, State, City, County laws. A major reason for this is that there is no regulation, law or statue at the Federal level that provides any support for recreational metal detecting.

Some of the Federal statues were written before metal detecting became a popular hobby and since these acts were drafted to protect America's Heritage it may have been felt that users of a metal detector on federal lands would rob America of some of its heritage. There were four major federal acts drafted to protect America's heritage and everyone (detectorist) should read each of them. They are:

- 1906 American Antiquities Act [act link](#)
- 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, As amended in 2000 [act link](#)
- 1979 Archaeological Resources Protection Act [act link](#)
- 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act [act link](#)

The four acts indeed do protect Americas Heritage but at the same time limit or in most situations make metal detecting an unlawful act. If someone is caught metal detecting in National Parks, National Historical Sites, National Monuments, National Recreational Areas, Native American Lands or on archaeological sites the penalties can be severe. There are a few exceptions where portions of Federal Forest Service and BLM lands allow metal detecting if no archaeology sites are present.

During the past 35 years most, if not all, of the fifty states now have laws modeled after the federal acts thus making many state lands unavailable to metal detecting. Many states have also enacted specific metal detecting laws that make it unlawful to detect, or may require special permits and permission to metal detect state land areas. The result is that individual state laws have direct impact and control over recreational metal detecting in the 50 states. Of course this includes state parks, historical sites and state archaeological sites. Usually metal detecting laws are very different from state to state.

In more recent times counties, cities and school districts have also enacted regulations that restrict, forbid or require a permit to metal detect. Each year in the U.S. the list of cities, counties and school districts grows in length as new restrictions are enacted against metal detecting.

The result is that more and more public lands are becoming unavailable to recreational metal detecting. Plus some states are in the process of enacting changes to their archaeology law which in the future may or will impact the ability to metal detect on private lands without specific permits and permission.

Governmental Staffing. The federal government has agencies or very large departments that support the various acts related to the preservation of America's Heritage. All of these agencies are fully staffed with professionals educated in their specific disciplines to protect and evaluate America's heritage and resources.

To compliment the Federal agencies are state agencies and departments which are also staffed, but at lesser levels, to handle the same types of issues. Counties and cities usually have staff in various departments responsible for the oversight of the same American Heritage issues.

Currently you can find staffing at all levels of government that support America's Heritage. So it has become very difficult to get laws and regulations passed, or just modified to support recreational metal detecting. There are now many barriers and no one in the public sector is interested or chartered in providing support for the hobby.

Variables that affect Recreational Metal Detecting

National Detecting Association. In the U.S. there are no metal detecting associations that truly represent the metal detecting hobby. Yes, there are national associations in name but do they really represent the hobby at any government level? No. Occasionally, after an incident occurs these associations take up an issue. Therefore, they do take on small skirmishes but the associations are not pro-active in working with government officials just re-active to a given situation. The major reason for this is the lack of funding, the volunteer staff, and the lack of strong hobbyist loyalty to protect the hobby.

What might be the requirements for an association that truly can, could and would represent metal detecting?

Association Requires:

- a paid association staff
- vision, mission, strategies, tactical plans, commitment, and financial resources
- alliances with other hobby associations (Prospecting, Off Road, Gem & Rock Hounds, Bottle Collectors, Coin & Token Collectors and other like hobbies)
- recognition and support by detector companies
- strong support from U.S. clubs and individual detectorist
- involvement in governmental legislation

One recognized U.S. National Detecting Associations is:

- FMDAC - Federation of Metal Detecting and Archaeology Clubs [web link](#)

State Detecting Association. There is a vacuum in the U.S. when it comes to state metal detecting associations. These associations could provide a great deal of metal detecting support at the state level. Any state that has five or more clubs should be represented by a state metal detecting association. The primary role of this association would be to introduce state metal detecting legislation, monitor other state legislation and provide direct support to local clubs. Currently there are two state associations:

- Metal Detecting Association Of Washington [web link](#)
- Texas Council of Treasure Clubs [web link](#)

Each of these organizations would be a good model to emulate for setting up new state association.

Detecting Clubs. There are around 550 metal detecting clubs in the U.S. with only a small number of these clubs being actively involved in their local community; far more clubs take no leadership role in the support and protection of the hobby. Some large clubs with good organizational structure and membership involvement do not participate in any way at the national, state level, or in their community. Generally, clubs do not even have a training program for new detectorist, yet with the influx of new detectorists the need of such a program is very desirable.

Clubs are usually centered on internal club events. This is good for the membership but in today's environment these same clubs must dedicate people, club time and resources to do much more to support the hobby.

The Hobby. With the retirement of the boomer generation the hobby will experience many new detectorists. These new retirees are looking for an experience that will provide exercise, enjoyment, a new challenge and getting outdoors. This influx of adults into recreational metal detecting may add to the endangerment of the hobby. Why is this? These new detector hobbyists are not educated

on the laws influencing metal detecting, the responsibilities of the detectorist, the ethics, the proper recovery of a target and how to detect without annoying people in their immediate area. This lack of metal detecting knowledge can lead to damaging public and private properties as well as the public's image of the hobby. This in turn may cause more lands to become off limits to metal detecting since public officials will be quick to make metal detecting unlawful if complaints arise.

There is also the issue of proper etiquette while metal detecting. Etiquette encompasses the use of detecting ethics, the detectorist responsibilities and displaying proper respect for others in one's immediate metal detecting area.

Example: Proper beach detecting etiquette is extremely important by

- keeping a wide distance or margin away from other beach goers
- not lifting your sand scoop up high and shake it when sand can be blown from the scoop onto people laying on the beach
- not metal detecting on the beach during the busiest times of the day
- always removing all metal trash from the beach
- etc, etc.

Metal detecting etiquette will be a future mdhtalk article.

Detectorist Responsibility. The term Responsible Metal Detecting can be found in the Code of Practice on Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales [web link to responsibilities](#). However, the term Responsible Metal Detecting in the U.S. is rarely used or defined. Below you will find six major heading of an article on the responsibilities available on the MDHTALK website. Responsible Metal Detecting is to:

- Know and Follow the Law
- Gain Permission
- Always Apply the Metal Detecting Code of Ethics
- Join a Metal Detecting Club and National Metal Detecting Association
- Understand the Potential Cultural Value of Your Find
- Volunteer Your Services to the Hobby

You will find more detail for each of these responsibilities at: [web link to article](#)

Metal Detecting Ethics: [web link to article](#)

Night Hawking. Night Hawking is metal detecting on public and private lands under the cover of darkness. As there is an increasing effort to curb the hobby by making more laws and greater enforcement of existing laws detectorist will out of desperation, turn to night hawking to detect and remove those remaining good targets.

As the public becomes aware of metal detecting abuses such as night hawking, public officials will be lobbied more and more by groups that support the preservation of native American artifacts, historical sites and archaeological resources. The result will be more restrictions and greater enforcement against the hobby.

Detectors Technology: During the last ten years metal detector technology has greatly improved by providing greater depth sensitivity, LCD displays, target id technology, software control, and enhanced coil technology. The detectors of today provide the user with the opportunity to detect targets at greater and greater depths. This greater depth capability is a plus for the hobbyist and can be a minus for the hobby. Putting this technology in the hands of inexperienced hobbyist can lead to the destruction both public and private land. This is because recovering targets that are much deeper can result in creating wider and deeper holes in the turf to recover the target. Without proper target recovery training these deeper target recovery efforts can be disastrous to the turf and in turn to the public's image of the hobby.

Environment. The laws to protect the environment, the laws to protect animal & marine species and laws to protect other archaeology resources will in the future have a greater impact on beach detecting (fresh & salt water). On salt water beaches during certain periods of the year you can find small taped off areas to protect turtle eggs. In the future as more attention is placed on protecting marine life you will probably see complete beaches and coastal areas un-accessible for public activities.

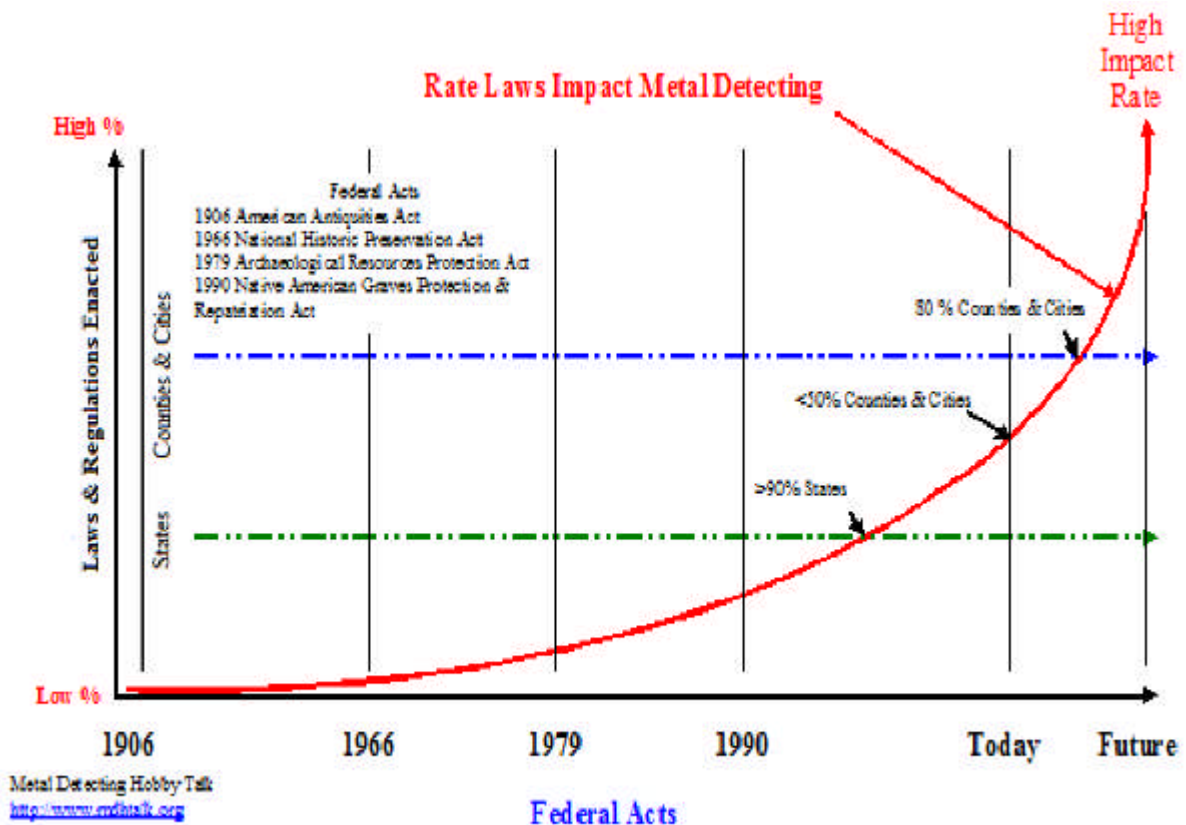
Here is one example: *The California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), calls for the creation of a science-based network of marine protected areas along the state's coastline similar to national parks regulation on land.* [web site link](#)

There have also been numerous examples drafted to establish a National Landscape Conservation Program to cover BLM lands. This type of legislation could be similar to the national park regulations for outdoor use and be very restrictive. This legislation would impact all outdoor hobbies not just metal detecting.

Fresh water beaches, lakes and streams are starting to be protected by archaeology laws as the states rush to protect more of America's Heritage. In the future, these laws will become better defined and enforceable towards fresh water beaches, adjacent water areas, lakes and streams and will most likely make them un-accessible to metal detecting.

Conclusion. The U.S. wide environment for recreational metal detecting during the past twenty-fives years has gotten much more restrictive and far more restrictions are expected in the next twenty years. Take a look at the graphic below.

- The "X" axis has key dates that coincide with the four major federal acts plus today and the future.
- The "Y" axis represents how rapidly states, counties and cities have enacted laws and regulations supporting the federal acts.
- The red arc (line) from 1906 to the Future displays the rate at which public entities have adopted or created laws that indirectly or directly effect recreational metal detecting.
- High Impact Rate. This is the projected rate at which laws and regulations are enacted that will make metal detecting unlawful, or require a permit, or permission.
- *Graphic Disclaimer.* This graphics is based on the analysis of the federal acts, state laws, and the review of many county and city regulations. The percentages are a bit of a guess when it comes to the level of law enacted in each entity (states, counties, cities) however the error factor is probably relatively small.



In summary the graphic is an interpretation of the previous discussed on the barriers to metal detecting and the variable that effect metal detecting as represented by the opinion of this author. lations continue to be enacted in more and more public entities there is a lack of evidence that national detecting associations, state detecting associations and detecting clubs have had any impact on slowing down the generation of these laws and regulations.

With many more inexperience detectorists entering into the hobby and using the greatly improved detector technology the issue is; there is no clear and consisted way to educate them on the dos' and don'ts of the hobby. Finally, the future looks bleak when it comes to new environmental legislation that may be passed and in turn could impact the hobby's future.

By just looking at the time period from 1990 to today you can see that a great deal of change is taking place in relationship to the laws and regulations driven by the hobbies popularity and distrust of the hobby by those in government. The expectation is that this curve will accelerate in the next twenty years as the result of more regulation of the hobby. The result will be that at some point metal detecting will probably not be available on most lands in the U.S. So.....

The question: Is Recreational Metal Detecting on the Endangered List? YES, one can find no evidences that the current trend rate will not continue to go up and to the right on the graphic. Currently, there is nothing in the works to change or diminish the metal detecting barriers or to alter the metal detecting variables.

Next month there will be a follow-up article on some alternatives to aid the hobby. If you have an opinion about this article, or a possible alternate view, or a possible solution MDHTALK would like to hear from you.

You can email MDHTALK at: hobbytalk@mdhtalk.org

Hobby Related News

General U.S. and World Wide Hobby News

- Pathway to the past: Sidewalk work uncovers coins. [Article Link](#)
- A piece of history found in Southeastern NC's backyard. [Article Link](#)
- Stories of lost gold and hidden treasures dot the Oregon coast. [Article Link](#)
- This modern-day treasure hunter from Stockbridge has collected more than 5,000 glass bottles in rivers and streams. [Article Link](#)
- Buried Treasure: Man discovers \$2,000 in cash from 1934 hidden under his porch in Wildwood. [Article Link](#)
- Gold prospecting hobbyists find moving further afield in the Kimberley still pays handsomely. [Article Link](#)
- Meet the metal detectorist who would love to 'hunt' your yard. [Article Link](#)
- The Washington Outdoors Report: Treasure hunting. [Article Link](#)
- Newport Beach retiree Stan Ross, aka the Metal Detector Man, finds O.C.'s lost riches. [Article Link](#)
- Metal detecting not my only hobby. [Article Link](#)
- Golf course refuses to yield buried family treasure. [Article Link](#)
- 'Where there's bodies, there's treasure': A hunt as Lake Mead shrinks. [Article Link](#)

U.K. News

- Unique sword casts new light on Viking voyages across the North Sea. [Article Link](#)
- Treasure found in Pembrokeshire. [Article Link](#)
- Magnet fishing is helping to get 'nature back to the way it should be'. [Article Link](#)
- Woman Finds Gold Viking Ring in Pile of Costume Jewelry. [Article Link](#)
- Drones used to catch 'nighthawkers' stealing Norfolk's hidden treasures. [Article Link](#)
- Treasure ruling over coins and jewellery. [Article Link](#)
- Frustrated dog owner upset with people 'ruining Chesterfield Park with metal detectors'. [Article Link](#)
- Antiques Roadshow guest delighted after finding medieval ring in garden worth €10,000. [Article Link](#)
- TikTok proposal fail: Search for ring lost at Watton lake proves fruitless. [Article Link](#)
- Grenade and a jar of voodoo charms: Magnet fisherman rates his strangest finds. [Article Link](#)
- Glasgow metal detectorist in final stages of national competition. [Article Link](#)
- Joy of metal detectorist as he unearths treasure in field near Rotherham. [Article Link](#)
- Hidden treasure found by metal detectorists uncovers North Wales' distant past. [Article Link](#)

North America Archaeology News

- Alabama experts getting ever closer to locating the long-lost site of the Battle of Mabila. [Article Link](#)
- Still no answers in Native American burial grounds controversy in Fort Myers. [Article Link](#)
- It's Not Your Headstone: Ethics, Archaeology and Kwajalein's Cultural of Casual Looting. [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. [July Pod Cast Link](#)
- **Coin World** - Numismatic and Coin Collecting [July News](#)
- **Garrett Searcher April 19 Searcher**
- **Gold Prospectors Assn of America (GPAA)** - News on legal issues for the gold prospecting community [July News](#)
- **Mel Fisher Salvage Update**
- **Prospecting and Mining Journal (IMCJ)** [July News](#)
- **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. [July News](#)
- **1715 Fleet Society August Newsletter**

Jewelry Returns

- Hobbyist helps East Texas woman recover treasured jewelry. [Article Link](#)
- Ring Finders South Jersey Recover Lost Jewelry at Jersey Shore. [Article Link](#)
- Corkbeo Cork's wedding ring king strikes again as trusty metal detector saves the day. [Article Link](#)
- NJ metal detectorist unearths family heirloom for full circle Father's Day moment. [Article Link](#)
- Man returns WWII vet's class ring to family 80 years later. [Article Link](#)

W.W. Meteorite News

- Meteoroid hit has caused 'significant uncorrectable' damage to James Webb Space Telescope. [Article Link](#)
- WATCH: Videos taken in central Indiana show fireball meteor soar through sky. [Article Link](#)
- Meteor sighted in parts of lower North Island. [Article Link](#)

Drones used to catch 'nighthawkers' stealing Norfolk's hidden treasures.

Author Simon Parkin [Weblink](#)

Drones used to catch 'nighthawkers' stealing Norfolk's hidden treasures

Dronrones are being used to protect historic Norfolk sites from thefts and damage by gangs of metal detecting 'nighthawkers'.

Police patrols involving drones with thermal imaging cameras have been stepped up at locations where so-called 'nighthawking', or illegal metal detecting under the cover of darkness, has been reported. es used to catch 'nighthawkers' stealing Norfolk's hidden treasures

Damage has seen the eye in the sky patrols undertaken at St Benet’s Abbey and Caistor St Edmunds in an effort to catch people illegally digging for archaeological artefacts.

PC Chris Holmes, who is overseeing the heritage crime crackdown, said the scale of thefts is a hard crime to quantify due to the secretive nature of illegal metal detectorists.

Intelligence, tip offs from the metal detecting community and reports from wardens and locals are helping to target locations.

“Nighthawking is very bad in Norfolk but the full extent is an unknown quantity because it doesn’t get reported most of the time,” said PC Holmes, who admits to being an avid amateur historian himself.

“It tends to be found out at a later date that it has happened. Often wardens who work on the archaeological sites will find holes dug, that will get fed back to us and we can do patrols.”

Both St Benet’s Abbey and Caistor St Edmunds Roman town are scheduled monuments where metal detecting is banned.

The Norfolk Archaeological Trust (NAT), which owns or manages these and eight other archaeological sites, said it has seen a “huge increase in crime” including metal detecting and criminal damage.

“Any activities which damage the scheduled monument, in any way, are forbidden, and any works require written permission – known as scheduled monument consent,” it said.

“NAT takes its responsibility to look after these sites very seriously, and we work in partnership with the Norfolk Constabulary, and Historic England to ensure that they are here for future generations to discover and enjoy.”

Drones were ideal pinpointing people on the ground at night using thermal cameras, said PC Holmes.

A recent operation saw police stake out one location using multiple drones backed by teams and dog units after intelligence suggested a gang of ‘nighthawkers’ planned to visit.

He said: “Drone patrols are a good way of covering all that land and potentially catching people, but also getting a message there that we can and will be targeting ‘nighthawking’ which we haven’t done to this extent before.”

Event News

Metal Detecting & Gold Prospecting Events.

Now is the time to start planning and getting your club's 2022/23 hunt information on the web. The 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.

- **August 13, 2022** Event: (Two Days)
Duryea, Pennsylvania
38th Annual Black Diamond Treasure Hunt
Black Diamond Treasure Hunters Club
- **August 20, 2022** Event: (Two Days)
New Concord, Ohio
43rd Annual Buckeye Championship
Treasure Hunt
Don & Bill Hayes

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

[Add Your Event Information Here](#)

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

