

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 May 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?

By Lee Wiese

[Download This 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 extend 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.

16 U.S.C. Section 1c defines the National Park System as "...any area of land and water now or hereafter administrated by the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service for park, monument, historic, parkway, recreational or other purposes."

The 1966 act is the mechanism by which historical sites can be preserved by adding them to the National Register of Historic Places. Once a site is added to the National Register three acts above (1966, 1997, 1990 acts) can be applied to protect the properties. The 1966 act also provides for the setup of historical sites at the state level. Once historical sites are placed on the national or state historical register; them the sites are no longer available for metal detecting of any kind.

The 1990 act covers just about everything that has anything to do with, native American remains, burial sites, and associated culture items.

National Forests. The Forest Service does permits the use of recreational metal detecting and the collection of rocks and mineral samples. Generally, most of the National Forests are open to recreational mineral and rock collecting, gold panning and metal detecting. This activity usually does not require any authorization. It is always wise to check with the local district ranger to ensure that the land you are going to detect does not contain archaeological or historical resource. [National Forest Regulation](#).

Federal Bureau of Land Management -BLM. Most areas of BLM lands are open for use of metal detecting with the exception of historical sites. You should contact the local BLM district office for information to find out the areas that are off limits. [Metal Detecting](#)

Federal Bureau Of Reclamation. Metal detecting is prohibited. [Federal Code 423.29 \(f-1&2\)](#)

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers §327.14 Public property metal detector use. The use of metal detectors is permitted on designated beaches or other previously disturbed lands unless prohibited by the district commander to protect archaeological, historical and paleontological resources.

States. Each state has laws that are modeled after the national acts making state lands regulated similarly to national lands. Generally, all state historical sites, state Native American burial grounds, and other state archaeological sites are off limits to metal detecting.

- *State Parks.* However, most states have regulations that determine the legality of metal detecting in their state park system. These regulations usually either allow or disallow metal detects or provide specific information as to where metal detecting can take place. [Check this web-link for specific state regulations](#).

Some states require permits, while eight or more states simply make it unlawful to detect state parks and some states allow only specific areas like beaches or disturbed lands.

If there are no metal detecting regulations in a state the state usually defaults to their archaeology laws that forbid diggings for targets or the state may use regulations dealing with the disturbance of vegetation or the removal of rocks, etc. In the latter case you may detect but not recover or remove any targets.

- *State Beaches.* Generally salt water state beaches are ok to metal detect. There may be restrictions, such as, you can detect only from the low tide mark to the high tide mark. Never metal detect in sand dunes that are roped off, have vegetation growing on them, or any beach park grassy area.

State fresh water beaches are sometimes locally ranger controlled. Even if the state has tough regulations against metal detecting it may still be ok in some instances to detect certain state fresh water beaches.

- *Counties.* Of all the public entities, counties may have the least restrictions placed on their county parks system when it comes to metal detecting. Usually fresh water beaches are open to metal detecting although in some county park systems it may be forbidden to metal detect in the water. Other county public lands may have similar restrictions on archaeology, historical and Native American burial sites. Some counties require a permit to metal detect in county parks, others do not.

- *Cities.* Many cities have municipal ordinances that cover park usage. Frequently there are short statements in an ordinance that may made it unlawful to metal detect, or a permit may be required, or metal detecting is allowed but no digging. In many cities there may be no metal detecting ordinance but other aspects of the park ordinance and regulation may indirectly make detecting unlawful. City properties usually fall under the states archaeology, historical and Native American burial laws.

- *College & School Districts.* School districts are starting to make school properties off-limits after school hours except by special use permission. In many cases school properties are secured by putting up chain link fences and posted with no trespassing signs. In some cases school districts are establishing property rules and often metal detecting is on the do not list.

- *Cemeteries.* Metal detecting in a cemetery is not a good hobby image. Regardless of the law never metal detect inside of any cemetery boundary. I would even question metal detecting outside of the physical boundaries of a cemetery since this could still provide the public with a very bad image of a detectorist.

Private Lands. To use private lands for metal detecting one should secure permission from the property owner or caretaker. Private lands can have many older public sites on them such as:

- Defunct Amusement Parks
- Defunct Outdoor Theaters
- Resort Areas
- Railroad Lands
- Ghost Towns
- Civil & Revolutionary Battlefields
- Homesteads

- Private Lakes and Beaches
- etc

Private lands are an excellent choice to metal detect. There are usually no direct laws against the hobby except for property trespass laws. Therefore gaining permission to enter the private property to metal detect is a must. Permission can be either verbal or in a written form. One thing to keep in mind for private property is that if there is a known or registered archaeology, historical or Native American burial site on the private land they will be off-limits to metal detecting.

In a few states there are laws on the books that prohibit anyone except archaeologists to recover artifacts from private lands.

In Summary - Where is it legal to metal detect? From this short article you may draw the conclusion that there are very few places to metal detect in the U.S. That is not really the case. Many county and city properties are available to metal detect as well as fresh and salt water beaches. The only catch is that there are many local and state regulations that can cause a beach or a portion of a beach to be off limits. The ability to know where it is lawful or unlawful falls on the individual detectorist to seek out the answer.

There is information on the web but it is not comprehensive and will not cover all counties, cities and school districts. The best approach is to join or establish a metal detecting club and have a few of the members become experts on the laws, regulations and city ordinances in your area.

You may say to yourself my own yard is safe to metal detect, well yes and no. If your property is on the historical register, is part of an archaeology site or may have Native American burial grounds your property will be off limits to metal detecting.

Hobby Related News

General U.S. and World Wide Hobby News

- Texas excavates second-best ranking for urban treasure hunting. [Article Link](#)
- Metal detector's discovery sparks a new friendship on the other side of the world. [Article Link](#)
- Tearful Jackie 'O' Henderson reveals she lost a \$250k diamond ring at the beach after hiring it from a luxury jeweller for Kyle Sandilands' wedding. [Article Link](#)
- Family hopes lost ring passed down for generations turns up. [Article Link](#)
- Eight-Year-Old Norwegian Girl Discovers Neolithic Dagger at School Playground. [Article Link](#)
- Preserving History with the Driftless Digger. [Article Link](#)
- What Happened to the Nazi Treasure Buried in This Dutch Village? [Article Link](#)
- California readies for treasure hunt as floods wash up 'Gold Rush 2.0'. [Article Link](#)
- In search of relics: Treasure hunters descend on a Rockingham pasture. [Article Link](#)
- Can you help this B.C. man find the descendants of the owner of this antique jewelry? [Article Link](#)
- Annual event brings together metal detector users from all over. [Article Link](#)

U.K. News

- Detectorists in Wiltshire and Swindon struck gold with more treasure discoveries recorded last year, new figures show. [Article Link](#)
- Increasing amounts of treasure being found across Cheshire. [Article Link](#)
- Beaconsfield treasure inquest reveals Bronze Age ring find. [Article Link](#)
- Only three treasure finds were reported in Worcestershire in 2022. [Article Link](#)
- Immaculate 2,000-year-old carvings of 'true beauty' found buried in Wales. [Article Link](#)
- What lies beneath: meet the real life metal detectorists. [Article Link](#)
- Metal detectorists jailed for conspiring to sell rare Anglo-Saxon coins. [Article Link](#)
- Treasure hunter with a metal detector stumbles on a stash of silver coins in Romania. [Article Link](#)
- North-east dad and daughter find 'bomb' on beach while metal detecting. [Article Link](#)
- Metal detectorists and mudlarks take note as Scottish Treasure Trove processes reviewed. [Article Link](#)
- Hoard of 1,000-year-old Viking coins unearthed in Denmark. [Article Link](#)
- Illegal detectorists dig holes at Colchester Roman site. [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 its forms, and the preservation of history. [May Pod Cast Link](#)
- **Coin World** - Numismatic and Coin Collecting [June News](#)
- **Garrett Searcher** [September Searcher](#)
- **Gold Prospectors Assn of America (GPAA)** - News on legal issues for the gold prospecting community [May News](#)
- **KG & Ringy's** [Archive Podcast](#), [March Podcast](#)
- **Mel Fisher Salvage Update**
- **PLP** [May Newsletter](#)
- **Prospecting and Mining Journal (IMCJ)** [May 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. [December News](#)
- **1715 Fleet Society** [June Newsletter](#)

Jewelry Returns News

- Above and beyond: Prineville police find lost wedding ring at park. [Article Link](#)
- Lords of the ring: volunteer group reunites forester with wedding ring lost for 23 years. [Article Link](#)
- Scots girl finds lost wedding ring with toy metal detector after panicked call from dad's friend. [Article Link](#)
- Metal detectorist in Italy finds bracelet belonging to American soldier from WWII. [Article Link](#)
- Metal detector hero rescues distraught pensioner's lost wedding ring. [Article Link](#)

W.W.W. Meteorite News

- Metal tectorist finds rare 15th Century Madonna and Child ring. [Article Link](#)
- Detectorists' surge in metal detecting sparks treasure trove review. [Article Link](#)

North America Archaeology News

- 5 archaeological site areas in San Diego with remnants of the past. [Article Link](#)
- U.S. Repatriates Looted Artifacts to Yemen. [Article Link](#)
- Native American remains discovered at Dartmouth College spark calls for accountability. [Article Link](#)

- Meteorites found in Canada cannot be removed from the country without permit. [Article Link](#)
- Meteorite hunters comb woods near New Brunswick border hoping to net \$25,000 reward. [Article Link](#)
- Rock that punched hole in New Jersey house confirmed to be 4.6 billion-year-old meteorite. [Article Link](#)

Event News

Metal Detecting & Gold Prospecting Events.

Now is the time to start planning and getting your club's 2023/24 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.

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

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

[Add Your Event Information Here](#)

- **June 03, 2023** (One Day)
Pitsville, Maryland
3rd Annual ESMDS Seeded Hunt
Eastern Shores Metal Detecting Society
- **June 03, 2023** (Two Days)
New Concord, Ohio
11th Annual Silver Seekers Open
Treasure Hunt
Sponsored by Don Hayes & Ed Burke
- **June 03, 2023** (Eight Days)
Burnt River, Oregon
Diggers Expedition: Clash of the Trommels - Gold Rush in Eastern Oregon
LDMA-Lost Dutchman Mining Assn
- **June 10, 2023** (One Day)
Raidersburg, Montana
Annual Detector Hunt Find Coins, Silver & GOLD
Headwaters Chapter of the GPAA
- **June 10, 2023** (Seven Days)
Burnt River, Oregon
Diggers Expedition: Clash of the Trommels - Gold Rush in Eastern Oregon
LDMA-Lost Dutchman Mining Assn
- **June 16, 2023** (Three Days)
Athol, Idaho
51th Northwerst Annual Treasure Hunt
Northwest Treasure Hunters Spokane Club
- **June 16, 2023** (Three Days)
East Durham, New York
2023 Lost Treasure Weekend
Blackthorne Resort
- **June 21, 2023** (Five Days)
Loud Mine, Cleveland, Georgia
Gold Prospecting Experience: 5-Day Gold Mining Dirt Party
LDMA-Lost Dutchman Mining Ass
- **June 24, 2023** (Two Days)
Seymour, Indiana
Indiana Open Treasure Hunt
Wrays Treasure Shop

Texas excavates second-best ranking for urban treasure hunting [Website](#)

If you love geocaching, antiquing, and metal detecting, you'll probably love learning that Texas is one of the best states for partaking in the art of modern treasure hunting. And if this is a brand new idea to you, there's no better day to start than today – except maybe National Scavenger Hunt Day on May 24.

Texas ranked No. 2 in LawnStarter's 2023 "Best States for Urban Treasure Hunting." The Lone Star State has the most metal detecting sites, pawn shops, flea markets, and geocaching locations (a total of 226!) in the nation. Additionally, our state has the second-highest number of treasure hunting groups and geo-tours, and the third-highest number of storage unit auctions.

For those who are new to the hobby and want to find some new gear, we also have the second-highest number of mining, metal detecting, and hardware supply stores out of all 50 states. Just be aware that you can't metal detect in our state parks without a permit. It's always a good idea to brush up on the rules before you start on your treasure-hunting journey.

The only state to outrank Texas is California, which the report called "a fitting outcome" for the Golden State, considering its history of gold mining in the mid-19th century and popularity in local communities. Washington, also known as "the birthplace of geocaching" ranked No. 4.

The top 10 states for urban treasure hunting include:

- No. 1 – California
- No. 2 – Texas
- No. 3 – Florida
- No. 4 – Washington
- No. 5 – New York
- No. 6 – Pennsylvania
- No. 7 – Virginia
- No. 8 – Ohio
- No. 9 – Missouri
- No. 10 – Arizona

At the bottom five of LawnStarter's list are Rhode Island (No. 46), Delaware (No. 47), Montana (No. 48), Wyoming (No. 49), and North Dakota (No. 50).

The full report can be found on lawnstarter.com.

Key Insights
The Gist

A golden opportunity awaits in the Golden State, our top destination for urban treasure hunters. That’s a fitting outcome for California, which drew in hundreds of thousands of gold prospectors from around the world in the mid-19th century. Treasure seekers remain active here, evidenced by California’s dominance in the Community and Supplies categories.

Buried at the bottom of our ranking are America’s biggest and smallest states. Wyoming and Montana — both national treasures to nature lovers — along with Delaware and Rhode Island make up four of our five worst states for finding urban treasures. North Dakota finished last. General lack of access to and interest in valuables dragged these five states down.
Standout Stats

Finders Keepers: Only seven states have sites where “real” treasure is said to be buried — and in some cases even accessible to the public. One such state is Arkansas, where tourists are allowed to hunt for diamonds in a particular state park and retain their haul. In California’s Big Sur, beachgoers often spot jade washing up ashore.

Blinged and Bejeweled: The Gold Rush might have ended in the 1850s, but California is clearly still the go-to state for precious metals and gemstones. The Golden State outranked the country in jewelry shops, totaling 2,510. That’s over 500 more than in New York and over 600 more than in Florida, our silver and bronze medalists in this metric.

Trash to Treasure: One person’s garbage, they say, is another person’s treasure. Most of our top 10 states also lead in used-merchandise stores and flea markets. At No. 25 overall, North Carolina is the exception among these diamonds in the rough.

Heavy Metal Band: Four states — California (No. 1), Texas (No. 2), Florida (No. 3), and Arizona (No. 10) — are ideal for metal detecting hobbyists. All earned high scores in gear access and metal detecting clubs. Each also allows metal detecting in state parks, but only Arizona doesn’t require permission. Regardless, it’s always good hygiene to check with state park authorities beforehand.

Treasure Troves: If you want to get your hands on lost treasure like rare coins or silver, the South is your prime destination. Texas (No. 2), Kentucky (No. 18), Alabama (No. 14), and Mississippi (No. 31) make up four of the five states with the most metal detecting sites. However, the Lone Star State is the only one with over 1,000 sites.

Storage Wars: You won’t have to outbid competitors for the auctioned contents of self-storage units in Georgia. At the time of writing, the Peach State listed the most auctions, 487. That’s 159 more than in New York in second place. Be willing to stretch your budget in Oregon and Vermont — these states listed only one auction each.

Texas and Florida, settings for the “Storage Wars” reality show, also ranked among the top 10 in this metric, while California placed 21st.

Cache App: With the most geocaching locations, 226, Texas is the best state for geocachers. The birthplace of geocaching, Washington, ranks third in this metric, with 70 fewer geocaching locations than in the Lone Star State. Today, there are over 3 million active geocaches hidden in 191 countries across all seven continents.

Behind the Ranking

First, we determined the factors (metrics) that are most relevant to rank the Best States for Urban Treasure Hunters. We then assigned a weight to each factor based on its importance and grouped those factors into three categories: Access, Supplies, and Community. The categories, factors, and their weights are listed in the table below.

For each of the 50 U.S. states, we then gathered data on each factor from the sources listed below the table.

Finally, we calculated scores (out of 100 points) for each state to determine its rank in each factor, each category, and overall. A state’s Overall Score is the average of its scores across all factors and categories. The highest Overall Score ranked “Best” (No. 1) and the lowest “Worst” (No. 50).

Notes:
Sources: Census Business Builder, Detect History, Flea Market Zone, Geocaching (Groundspeak), Kellyco Metal Detectors, Meetup, MetalDetector.com, StorageAuctions.com, Treehugger, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Yellow Pages

What Is Urban Treasure Hunting?
Treasure hunting today doesn’t quite mean what it did centuries ago — we all value different things these days.

While many of us still hope to literally strike gold, some feel fortunate just to encounter a vintage vinyl record, a copy of a lost childhood book, or a mid-century modern chair.

Our “digging” tools have evolved with technology, too. Today, we turn to metal detectors, drones, and apps like OfferUp or online marketplaces like eBay to find rarities.

Some of us aren’t even interested in the actual treasure — we simply love the thrill of the hunt. That’s why geocaching and Pokémon GO became so popular. During the pandemic, these apps gave people a fun reason to get outside. [State Rankings + Infographic](#)

