

Federation of Metal Detector and Archaeological Clubs Inc.

FMDAC News Gram

United States Metal Detecting Association

March 2021

FMDAC News Gram

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FMDAC

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The Federation of Metal Detector and Archaeological Clubs Inc. (FMDAC) was organized in 1984 as a legislative and educational organization and incorporated, as a non-profit, non-commercial, non-partisan organization.

The Mission: The FMDAC is dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and protection for the hobby of recreational metal detecting and prospecting.

The Purpose: To unite, promote and encourage the establishment of metal detecting clubs. To preserve the sport / hobby of recreational metal detecting and prospecting. To make available to FMDAC clubs and Independent members information pertaining to the hobby and to keep members informed as to active legislation.

The Goal: is to Educate and inform the public as to the merits of recreational metal detecting.

What is a News Gram? The news gram provides a brief look into news events for the past month. The intent of the news gram is to provide you, the FMDAC reader, with news clips on what took place last month in the hobby . The News Gram is configured like a webpage and must be read online for the article links to work.

Mark Schuessler, FMDAC President's Message

Hello Everyone.

The weather has sure been strange around the country. Traditional warm areas have been hit with a paralyzing deep freeze. Hard to believe that I was seeing areas like Dallas that looked like my home area of western New York. What they received is just another winter day to us here but we are set up for it. We have the equipment to deal with the snow and more importantly our infrastructure is built to withstand the freezing temps for extended periods. Our water lines are protected. Our buildings and roofs are designed for the falling and blowing snow. I really do get tired of all this cold snowy winter stuff so maybe I will move to Texas! Then again..... I think it was actually colder there for a stretch! I hope all of our friends in the areas that got hit with this freaky weather got through it ok.

One positive issue that came up is a policy to allow metal detecting on city property in Isanti, MN. There is an article below that covers the happenings. I will add in a few items that do not show up within that article. This came about apparently when someone contacted the city to search some newly acquired property. There were 2 council meetings at which it was discussed. They had the typical questions that you would expect. Happy to say that they actually did some research and contacted the metal detecting community for input. They were not at all opposed too it but wanted to have a workable policy. They thought we went down several feet putting utilities at risk. They wondered who should have ownership of the found items, what historical sites might be on city property and also about the ground getting dug up.

The people that talked at the meeting did a great job of presenting the hobby and answering the council's questions. They gave them copies of recovery methods specifically stating the "plug" and the "slit" method. Those would be the sheets that we have been handing out for a couple decades and are available on our website. They answered the question of depth and stated there is no problem with returning jewelry to the owners of they can be located or have reported the item lost. The council was definitely in favor of making it happen but wanted to make sure the city was protected.

Now I have not seen the actual finished regulation/waiver but they said it would be exactly as was discussed. Each person will have to sign the waiver and agree to abide by a set of rules/ethics. The city also retains first right of refusal to any artifacts or finds of value.

Now the FMDAC was not involved in this one. We did not learn of it until it was virtually over and it went well without our assistance. We did send an email with some input and clarification to some of their question and thanking them for being reasonable and fair.

A second issue is that Virginia is playing around with their laws again. This time it is to make it illegal to detect on lands under the control of battlefield trusts. Now I am unsure exactly what that means as it is already illegal unless you have permission from the trust. This one perplexes me a bit as it appears it nothing more than adding another layer of charges. The vote I saw in the legislature was 100 in favor and 0 against and 37 for and 0 against in the

South Region: Art Di Filippo
California, Hawaii, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida

senate. The articles I read had the same old tired rhetoric along with complaining about night hunters who are already breaking the law. So tell me what another law is going to accomplish?

Happy Hunting
Mark Schuessler, FMDAC President

Hobby Related News

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](#)

Jewelry Returns

Other Media 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 Update**
- **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](#)

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](#)
- NASA asks Queensland school for explanation after 'meteorite' falls on grounds. [Article Link](#)

North America Archaeology News

- 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](#)
- 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](#)
- 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](#)

[Isanti, Minnesota postpones metal detecting policy until next meeting](#) [Web Link](#)

Those wishing to use a metal detector on property within the city of Isanti may be able to do so in the future by signing a waiver and abiding by certain conditions.

During the Isanti City Council meeting Jan. 19, the council postponed a decision on a metal detecting policy waiver and release that would permit members of the public to metal detect on city property under certain rules and regulations until its Feb. 2 meeting.

City Administrator Josi Wood said the city sought information from other cities who may have metal detecting policies, but didn't have much assistance with that request. She said she found one city who had a waiver process to allow metal detecting on city property.

Wood said she drafted a metal detecting policy waiver and release all under one document for a member of the public to sign if they wish to metal detect on city property. She said the council should note, under No. 4, it states the person will "agree to follow all state and federal laws including but not limited to not detecting on or near any sacred area or area having archaeological importance."

Wood said Legacy Park has one area that qualifies as a sacred area and having archaeological importance, noting when the park was being developed in 2012, the trails had to go around that significant area in the park. She said she also asked City Engineer Jason Cook if he knew of any other areas and he indicated he wasn't aware of any.

"However, we've never really researched it either, so putting that in there, hopefully people will do their research on their own," Wood said.

Wood said the document also is considered a waiver of liability. Under No. 6, the document states: "I understand and agree that neither the city nor any person acting on behalf of the city, may be held liable in any way for any event which occurs in connection with this activity which may result in harm, death, injury or other damage to me. This waiver of liability does not waive liability for any injuries that I obtain as the result of willful, wanton or intentional misconduct by the city or any person acting on behalf of the city."

Mayor Jeff Johnson said he'd like to talk more to the man who requested to metal detect on city property.

"I'd like to get a hold of the gentleman, I think even before we made a move on it, to see specifically what he's looking for to make sure we cover our bases," Johnson said.

Wood said some people might metal detect for just the fun of it, similar to geocaching, where they try to find an object and then leave it there for the next person.

Council Member Steve Lundeen said the city doesn't want someone digging where there are gas, utility, electricity lines and phone lines. Lundeen said the council should ask the man who brought the request to meet with the council.

"I guess the best thing is for him to come in here and he can answer questions and maybe guide him," Lundeen said.

Isanti Update: [Web Link](#)

Specifics of metal detecting policy hammered out

Another lengthy discussion at the council meeting revolved around the metal detecting policy. After hearing input from local residents who participate in the activity, as well as hearing an email from another, the council agreed that the policy should resemble the code of ethics followed by metal detectors.

It was conceded that the majority of participants in the hobby do so for the excitement that comes with finding something – whether it be something of value or a pop can tab. The most rewarding experience of most metal detectors is helping someone find something they had lost.

As far as finding objects of value on city-owned land, the policy will include a provision that gives the city first right of refusal. If it is something valuable that a resident or visitor to the city may have lost and reported to law enforcement, the policy regarding lost and found property would be followed.

Isanti Final Update: [Web Link to Complete Article](#) Isanti approves metal detecting policy

If you're looking to find the next great "treasure" on city property in Isanti, you are now allowed to do so.

During the Isanti City Council meeting Feb. 2, the council approved a metal detecting policy and waiver for those who wish to metal detect on city-owned property. A waiver and release must be signed and given to city staff before anyone can metal detect on city-owned property.

As part of the city policy, the person doing the metal detecting must agree to follow the code of ethics of the Minnesota metal detecting group. The policy will include a list of the 11 rules that must be followed. As part of the policy, it also states that anything found of historical or monetary significance must be presented to the city first, who will have the first right of refusal.

As part of the waiver, it states the person will "agree to follow all state and federal laws including but not limited to not detecting on or near any sacred area or area having archaeological importance."

Hunt Events and Shows

Metal Detecting & Gold Prospecting Events.

Now is the time to start planning and getting your club's 2021 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.

Other Hobby Related 2021 Show Calendars

- [Antique Bottle Show](#)
- [Coin Shows](#)
- [Insulator Shows](#)
- [CFMS Society & Club Shows](#)

- **March 13, 2021** (One Day) Wabasso, Florida 34th Annual TCAS Hunt TCAS - Treasure Coast Archaeological Society
- **March 13, 2021** (Two Days) Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 22nd Annual NorthWest Gold Prospectors Assn & Treasure Show Northwest Gold Prospectors Assn

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

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

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

"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

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.

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.