

Why we need a State Metal Detecting Association!

By Mike Smith

Like anything in life, if we band together, we will be stronger as a whole. Meaning that if a metal detecting ban was being considered in your area of the State, you and your club would have the full backing of the state association in trying to resolve your problem. You would not have to tackle the problem on your own. There is strength in numbers when communicating with government officials.

States that have at least five metal detecting/prospecting clubs should consider establishing a "Metal Detecting Association". A state organization would offer you many voices across the State (with your city/county officials and State legislators), retailers, clubs and the individual detectorist. The state association would be the important link in communicating between the clubs, independents and the 2 national Associations. Through a database of member's email addresses the association can respond quickly to issues and problems.

A key component of a state association is to oversee the health of the State's metal detecting environment, and to be a watch dog on legislation, through the membership, by alerting the State Association of any activity needing attention.

Association Mission: To incorporate, as a non-profit, non-commercial, non-partisan organization.

The association will be dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and protection of the hobby of recreational metal detecting and prospecting in the State of Arizona.

Association Purpose: To unite, promote and encourage the establishment of metal detecting and prospecting clubs. The association is to work towards preserving the sport/hobby of recreational metal detecting and prospecting. To make available to association clubs, independent members and the public information pertaining to the hobby and to keep members informed as to active legislation or issues.

Association Goal: Educate and inform the public through the media, retail stores and events held, as to the merits of recreational metal detecting and prospecting.

There is a severe lack of State Metal Detecting Associations; an association could provide a sufficient advantage into keeping metal detecting lawful. State associations can be the cohesive glue that brings together metal detecting clubs, detector retailers, manufacturers and the individual detectorist into a well informed and active state metal detecting community. A well informed metal detecting community can stand up for their right to practice the hobby vs. a fragmented community that in most cases will not even know what is taking place in their state or in adjacent communities.

Another important attribute of a state metal detecting association is that State, County and City legislators/officials prefer to work with state constituents and not with a national association or people from outside the state. State legislators prefer to be working for their citizens' needs rather than be influenced by outsiders.

The association should become involved in a community service project, giving the opportunity to exist, for the association to leverage this community action into strengthening the public opinion of metal detecting and prospecting. Every effort should be made to gain recognition through a local newspaper, radio or TV station. The association should also advertise its community service projects on their website and newsletters.

An association's organizational structure is the heartbeat for the group's membership at large and it is entirely made up of volunteers. The elected officers must provide the leadership atmosphere to move the group forward in the fields of hobby education, legislation activity, community involvement, guest speakers and all the other interesting and important aspects of the hobby.

Metal detecting associations vary greatly in size, with some states association's having well over 16 clubs and other types of memberships (Independent, Dealer, Distributor, etc.) that make up the association. This means that some States have more resources than others but the challenges for each group leadership are much the same.

I say we should form a state metal detecting association before it is too late!
What do you say?