

USE OF METAL DETECTORS

POLICY

The use of electronic metal detectors to find lost coins, rings, watches, or other valuables is a popular activity. Favorite search areas are intensive use areas, especially beaches. Parks and Recreation Bureau (PRB) has long recognized this as a recreational activity at appropriate locales. However, there is increasing concern that metal detectors are facilitating illegal removal of archaeological and historic resources from Bureau-administered lands.

Public Act 451, 324.74102 mandates the protection of historic resources within State Parks.

Public Act 238 of 1957 provides a means of disposing of personal property lost or abandoned on state property and this is included in the Park Field Manual, Ranger Guide, and Parks and Recreation Policy #1.10.

Public Act 451 of 1994, Part 761 Aboriginal Records and Antiquities, prohibits a person from removing, exploring or excavating any relic or aboriginal antiquities and abandoned property of historical or recreational value found upon or within the lands owned by or under the control of the state.

In addition to the concerns regarding the unauthorized removal of historical artifacts, there is a concern related to the potential damage to lands resulting from the act of "digging up" items identified by various metal detectors.

Public Act 451 of 1994, Part 324.74121, State parks; prohibited conduct, in section 74121 states:

"A person shall not do the following in a state park:

(a) Destroy, damage or remove any tree, shrub, wildflower or other vegetation or property without the permission of the department."

Metal detectors may provide the public with a chance of recovering some lost possessions in intensively used areas. Items of historic value may not be removed.

For the foregoing reasons, it shall be the policy of the Parks and Recreation Bureau to **prohibit** the use of metal detectors on all Bureau-administered lands except:

1. Designated swimming beaches
2. Designated day use areas
3. Campgrounds
4. Parking lots
5. Boating access site parking lots

Exceptions to the areas listed above may be given in specific instances based upon new information that was unknown on the approval date of this policy.

It shall be the responsibility of the individual field unit to provide a map specifically designating areas in which this activity is allowed.

For requests to conduct archaeological research, refer to Parks and Recreation Policy #8.7, Use Permits. Archaeological research requires a permit jointly issued by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Department of History, Arts and Libraries.

The following conditions apply to the use of metal detectors in state parks:

1. All recovered items must be checked by a park employee before being removed from the park.
2. Any items the park has recorded lost and that can be returned to the rightful owner will be turned in to the park, or the park will notify the owner of the name and address of the finder.
3. Coins may be retained by the finder unless rare and historic. If coins are turned in, PRB staff should contact the Michigan Historical Center, Department of History, Arts and Libraries to determine historic value and disposition instructions.
4. Any artifacts found will be retained by the State.
5. The use of probes or small hand trowels to retrieve objects discovered beneath the surface shall be allowed if the land is not unduly disturbed. Disturbed material must be replaced.
6. Large-scale digging to retrieve objects shall not be allowed unless being done as part of a Department authorized archaeological research project.

Metal detectors are prohibited from:

1. Fayette State Park and Fort Wilkins State Park
2. Beaches, day use areas, boating access sites or campgrounds known to have artifacts.
3. Designated historic or archaeological sites. Designated includes sites listed on the State or National registers of historic places, or indicated by the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries as eligible for listing on the State or Federal register.
4. Areas specifically closed to the use of metal detectors by a Land Use Order of the Director.