

Federation of Metal Detector And Archaeological Clubs Inc.

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On March 25th. I attended a meeting of the Four Lakes Metal Detecting Club in Madison, Wisconsin. The purpose of the meeting was to see what could be done to the new policy change for a law that has been on the books since 1972. The new policy which took effect in November 2008 would stop metal detecting on all DNR land even if it wasn't designated a historical site. The recent change was made by both the State and DNR Archaeologists. In attendance was Amy Winters, a lobbyist from Wisconsin who is helping in the efforts not only to change the new policy but also to seek legislation to make it into a law so it can't be changed every time a new administration comes into office. Also in attendance was John Broihahn the State Archaeologist, Mark Dunzik the DRN Archaeologist, Terry Otto from Outdoor Outfitters, Mike Scott form First Texas, Other Wisconsin Clubs, about 50 members of the Four Lakes Club, Ron David, Central States Chapter President and Myself. It seems that this new policy was adopted when someone put copper points which have great historical value, for sale on e-bay and articles of finds in Wisconsin in the treasure magazines. Weather the law was broken or not, this doesn't look good and these agencies are monitoring these places to look out for artifacts that might have been taken illegally to help in the fight to shut our hobby down. As ethical treasure hunters we are obligated to report these historical finds to the proper agencies for data collection. There will always be outlaws in every hobby and we are always under constant attack from these groups so we need to stay on our toes and use some common sense when detecting. Remember helping these groups can only create good will to let them know we are not the bad guys we are made out to be and this could even make for a good working relationship.

The meeting started with Amy explaining what she has already done and how she's proceeding in her efforts. She explained that this could be a long process and for everyone to exercise a little patience. She is going to keep everyone up to date on her activities and let us know when we are needed for both letter writing and petitions to help but for now she suggested for everyone to step back. Amy was very informative with her efforts and explanations. After Amy finished both Archaeologists had their chance to explain their position and answer questions. After about 2 hours of questions and answers I felt that both sides were enlightened and I feel there is room for negotiations on both sides and each side may give a little to make it work. I have to give both of these Archaeologists credit for coming to the meeting knowing they were going to be grilled on this issue. Both were reasonable and willing to listen to our side and stated they would be glad to set down and maybe work out compromise on the issue. After they left Amy spoke and was confident that change and compromise can be made. I would like to thank the Four Lake club for allowing the FMDAC to be part of this challenge. I think that working together can bring positive results.

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