

TREE TIPS

MAKING MONEY FROM HUNTING LEASES

Do you have lots of animals on your woodland? Maybe you can benefit from leases!

What Are Hunting Leases?

A hunting lease is an agreement between a woodland owner and a hunter or hunt club (a group of hunters). This agreement says:

- Where and when hunting is allowed.
- What animals can be hunted.
- How much the hunters have to pay the landowner.



Are Hunting Leases Possible on My Woodland?

This depends on your land and whether it offers a good home for animals, also called game or wildlife.



Your Land. Hunters are usually interested in large areas. If you have only a few acres, you could talk to your neighbors about putting your land and theirs together as one larger hunting lease.

Wildlife. Different hunters look for different types of game. Does your land have small game (rabbits, squirrels, quail, dove), large game (turkeys, deer, bear), or waterfowl (ducks, geese, swans, and other birds)? This depends partly on whether you have forest, row crops, swampy areas, or a mix. These provide homes for different kinds of animals.

Do I Need to Improve My Land for Hunting?

You may not have to do anything to sell a hunting lease. But if you can get more animals to live on your land, you may be able to get more money for the hunting lease. The government has several programs to help you pay for improving your land for wildlife. These include the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Talk to your local extension agent or someone from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for information.



Are Hunting Leases Right for Me?

Advantages

- You can make extra money. Hunters pay good money for leases.
- Hunters may help cut down the numbers of animals that damage crops or trees.
- Just having hunters on your property may stop others from being on your land without permission.
- Hunters who have long leases may help watch, protect, and improve your land.



Disadvantages

- If you and your family hunt, you will have to share your land with other hunters.
- You may need to watch the hunters who lease your land to make sure they follow your rules and do not damage your land.

What Are the Different Types of Leases?

Day leases

If you have dove or quail on your land, you may want to give hunters a chance to hunt for one day at a time. However, managing day leases can take quite a bit of your time. You may need to limit the number of hunters per day, or allow hunting on only a few days of the week. You might need to watch day hunters closely.



Season Leases

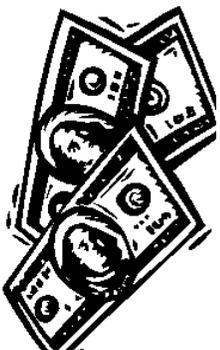
Season leases are usually for one kind of game. For example, turkey hunters may want to lease your land only for the turkey season, just to hunt turkeys.

Annual Leases

Some hunters may want to lease your land for the entire year. This kind of lease allows hunting of all types of game during the whole year during hunting seasons. This is the easiest type of lease to set up.

How Much Can I Charge for a Lease?

The price you can charge depends on the size of your land, how much game you have on your land, and how much people like to hunt in your area. You could charge at least enough to equal the property taxes that you pay on your land each year. Talk to your neighbors, hunt clubs, a consulting forester, your county ranger, or your local Extension agent to help figure out the right price.



What Should Be in the Hunting Lease?

You should have a written lease or contract. A consulting forester or lawyer can help you with this. There are basic questions that should be answered in the lease.

These include:

- Is it a day, season, or year lease?
- How many years does the lease last?
- What is the price of the lease; and when should it be paid?
- What are the property boundaries and how can hunters get onto your land?
- What kind of game can be hunted, and how many animals can be taken?
- Do you and your family still have hunting rights?
- What do the hunters have to do, like helping keep roads, fences, and signs in shape?
- What kinds of weapons are allowed and how many?
- Do hunters have permission to use four wheelers (ATVs and ORVs)?
- How many hunters are included in the lease?
- How many guests may the hunters bring to your land?
- What other things must be done by you as the landowner (lessor) OR by the hunter, hunt club, or other group (lessee)?
- What insurance do the hunters have, and are you included in their policy?



Do I Need Insurance?

Yes! Liability insurance is very important. This insurance covers you if there is a hunting accident on your land. Hunters and hunt clubs should have insurance, and they may be able to list you on their insurance policy. But you may also need your own insurance. Ask a consulting forester, Extension agent, or county ranger for advice. Some groups offer liability insurance if you become a member of the group and pay membership dues. For example, you could contact:

- Forest Landowners Association Inc.
PO Box 450209
Atlanta, GA 31145
1-800-325-2954
- North Carolina Forestry Association
1600 Glenwood Avenue, Suite I
Raleigh, NC 27608
1-800-231-7723



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2500 copies of this document were printed at a cost of \$636.28, or \$.25 per copy.

