



# Perspectives on Generating Revenue from Hunting Leases

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# Why a Hunting Lease?

- Supplement forest/agricultural income
- Diversification
- Better control of trespassing, poaching, and property damage
- Development of recreation opportunities
  - Increase land value
  - Approx 36% (Jones et al. 2006)
- AL average lease = \$5 - \$12/acre

# Alabama Hunting

- 391,000 hunters
  - 352,000 big game
  - 126,000 small game
  - 73,000 migratory bird
  
- \$678 million annually
  - \$316 million in equipment
  - \$239 million in trip related expenses
  - \$123 million in other items



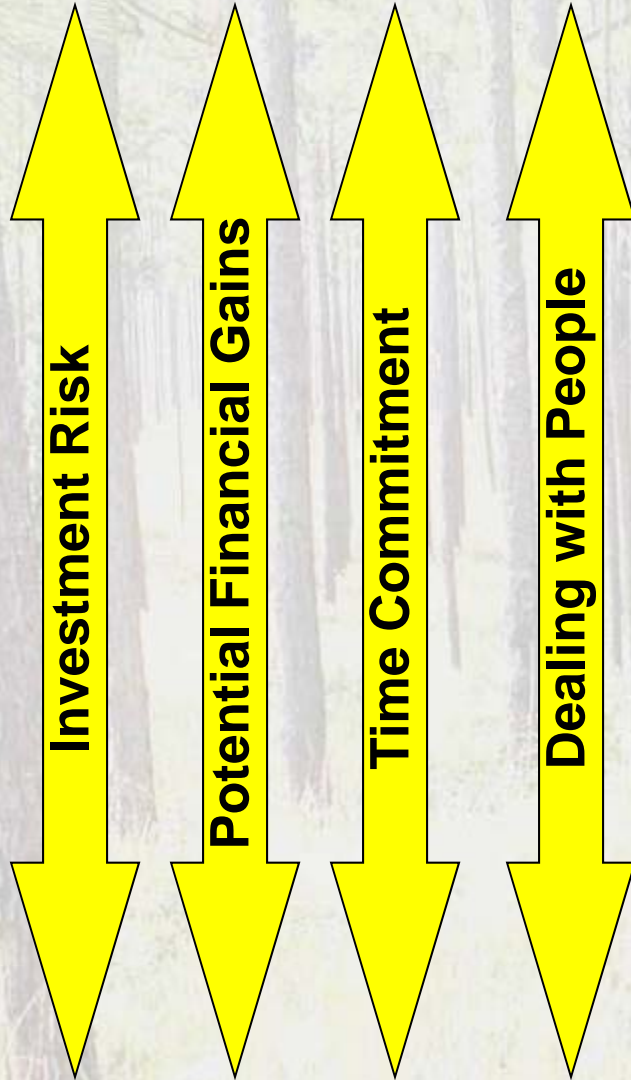
# Primary species hunted

- Deer, deer, and more deer!
- Turkeys, and more turkeys!
- Waterfowl
- Small game



# Hunting Revenue Options

**Fully Guided and Outfitted Hunts**

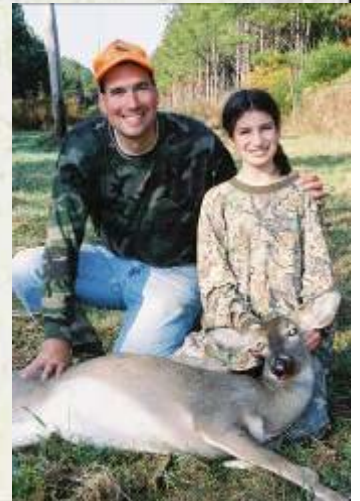


**Land lease plus:  
accommodations  
habitat management**

**Land lease**

# What are hunters looking for?

- **\*\*\*A quality hunting experience\*\*\***
  - See plenty of game
  - See quality game/knowing the big one is out there
  - Time with family and friends
  - Solitude, relaxation
  - Privacy
  - Harvest



Wall-hangers  
are a big plus,  
but not a  
requirement!



# Lease Arrangements

- Multi-year
  - Provides stability
- Yearly
  - Most common, easiest
  - Usually for all species
- Seasonal
  - Deer hunters in fall/winter
  - Turkey hunters in spring
- Daily
  - common for waterfowl, doves





Liability Insurance?

**GET IT!**

# What influences a lease rate?

- Location, location, location!
- Land cover (forested/agriculture)
- Tract Size
- Distance to urban areas
- Abundance of game
- Accommodations
- Who you market to
- How well you market
- Who you lease to

**THERE IS NO SET STRUCTURE FOR ESTABLISHING A LEASE PRICE**

# Marketing!

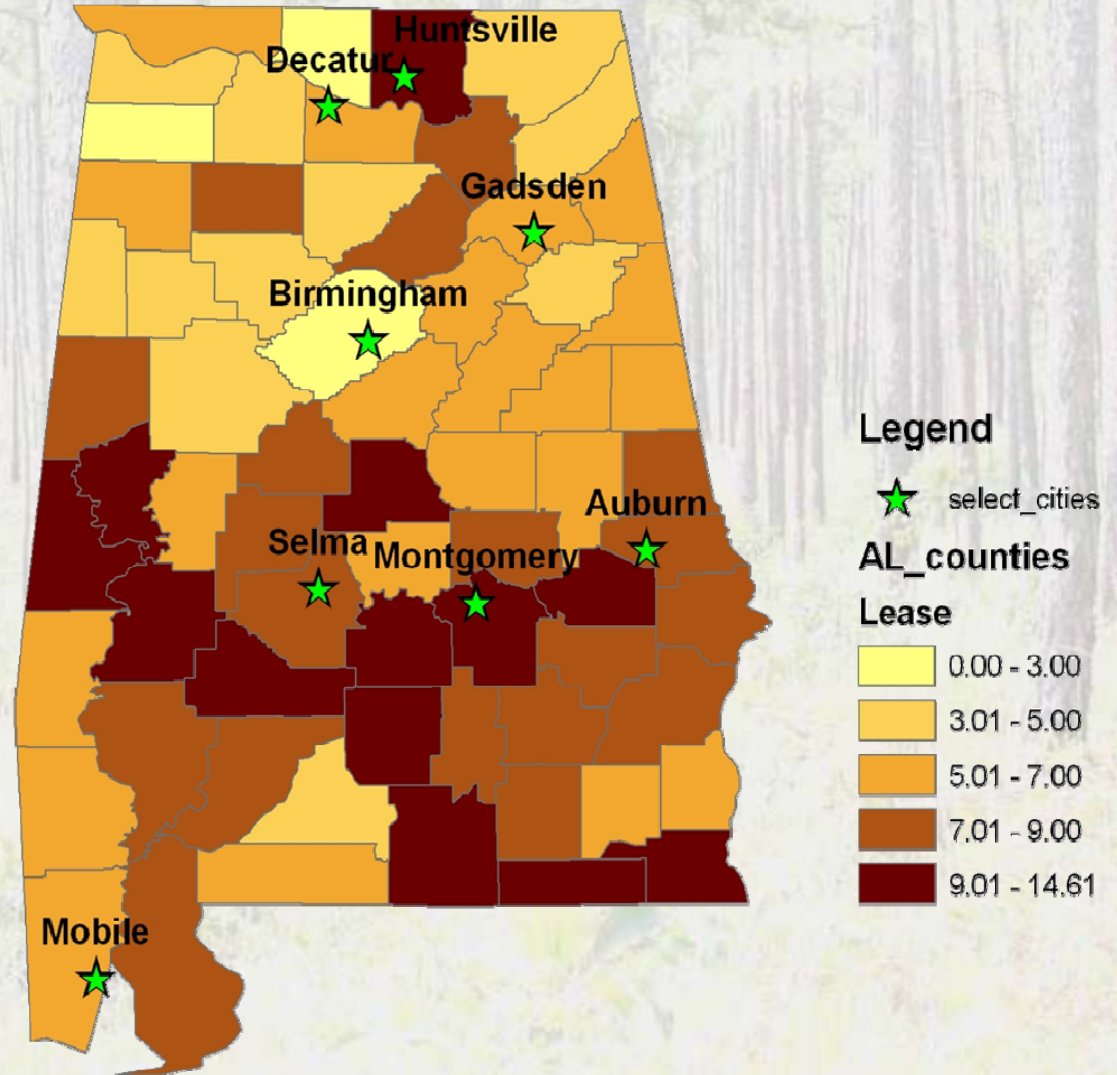
- Where to advertise
  - Newspapers
  - Local/regional hunting magazines
  - Internet! eBay! Craig's List!
- You have to “Sell” your property
  - What do you have to offer?
    - Accommodations are a big plus...and opens up a bigger pool of prospective lessees
    - Fishing opportunities
    - Game camera photos of deer on your property
    - Harvest records!
    - What type of management do you do or require the lessee to do
      - Deer harvest restrictions

# Simple Things Add Up!

- Primary
  - Accommodations
    - Water and electricity!
  - Food Plots
  - Shooting Stands
  - Freezer/cooler/walk-in cooler
  - Skinning/cleaning shed
  - Shooting bench/range
  - Secure storage
  - Outside lighting
- Secondary
  - Skeet/trap shooting
  - Fishing access
  - Outside fireplace/pit

# 2006 AFOA Survey

- AFOA members who purchased liability insurance



# Alabama “Willingness to Pay” Study

- Average hunt club lease = \$9.36/acre
- Willing to pay up to \$23.22/acre!
- Lack of quality game reduced the probability of paying more for a lease by about 17%
- No link between harvest success and hunter satisfaction
- Other factors
  - Hunting experience
  - Household income
  - Number of dependents

# Survey of AL NIPF

- Non-industrial private forest landowners
- County tax records
- Landowners with >100 acres
- Random sample from 119,715 landowners from 55 counties
- Factors leading to increased lease rates
  - Access roads
  - Year-round water supply
  - Secluded site quality
  - Services
    - Food
    - Lodging
    - Stands
    - Guidance
  - Investment in Habitat Management

# Lease Revenues?

- Non-industrial private landowners
- >1995 property tax records
- Landowners with >40 acres
- MS Delta and Coastal regions
  
- Mississippi Statewide study, 1997-1998
  - 2,283 respondents
  - \$18.53 – \$35.28/ acre gross revenue
  - \$6.37 - \$23.57/acre net revenue



# For those doing Wildlife Management and Fee Hunting

- Average gross revenue = \$4,018
- Overhead expenditures = \$863
- Wildlife Management = \$502 (\$2.47/ac)
  - Vegetation management \$44
  - Food and cover plots \$350
  - Stands and blinds \$108
- Net Revenue = \$2,653
- Net Revenue/acre = \$13.07

# Forest Stand Improvement/ Mid-rotation Release





# Opportunities for Landowners with Small Acreage

**DOVE HUNTS!**

**FEE-FISHING!**

# Small Properties

- Consider developing a Cooperative
  - Diffuse management expenses
    - Tractors, spreaders
    - People to do the work
  - Share in financial returns
  - Shared accommodations
  - Provides for better wildlife management opportunities


# Small Properties---Dove Hunting

- Whole field lease
- Individual daily lease
  - How many hunters?
    - About 1 hunter/acre or 1 hunter/100yds of field edge
  - How much to charge?
    - \$25-100+/hunter/day



# Investing in Wildlife Management?

- White-tailed deer---easiest to manage!
  - Population management thru harvest management
  - Encourage older age class bucks
  - Appropriate harvest of does
  - Written into lease agreement and enforced (no cost!)
  - Rhyne and Munn (2004)
    - MS 16<sup>th</sup> Section Lands
    - Increase in avg B&C score = Increase in per acre revenue
- Good Timber Management = Good Wildlife Management
  - Proper thinning
  - Prescribed burning
  - Control of hardwood competition
- **Need to think beyond the lease price!**
  - Increase game populations
  - Increase land value (36%)
  - Increase timber value



# Money isn't everything!

## Finding the “right” lessee is!

- Ideally, you want a person/group:
  - Law abiding
  - Respectful of you and your property
  - Safe
  - Courteous
  - Follow the lease rules
  - Pay their lease on time!

**BE SELECTIVE----FIND THE HUNTERS YOU ARE HAPPY WITH**







# Final Thoughts

- Most hunters want a quality experience
  - See game, relax, be with family and friends
- No set pricing structure for leases
  - Location
  - Accommodations
  - Habitat quality
  - Abundance/quality of game
- Marketing is very important
- It's not all about the money!
  - Finding the right lessees