

SHARE CROP LEASE PROGRAM



CROP YEAR 2023



TENNESSEE WILDLIFE RESOURCES AGENCY

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

Annual Report

Sharecrop Lease Program

Calendar Year 2023

This report is provided annually to the State Building Commission (SBC) verifying that all requirements under the “Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Procedures for Crop Leases” set up by the SBC are in compliance. Lease program results are also reported, including number of leases and associated acreages and monetary amounts.

The Sharecrop Lease Program is based on a calendar year rather than a fiscal year to accurately reflect revenue from the year in which TWRA leases operate. This timeline was approved in the By-laws, Policy & Procedure of the SBC in January 2011.

During the 2023 calendar year the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) processed 6 new Service Leases and 16 new Cash Leases for a total of 22 new sharecrop leases (Table 1). This is a significant decrease from the 35 new leases initiated during 2022. Lease numbers fluctuate for several reasons; including when the properties were acquired, and varied habitat goals on the Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). All requirements specified by the SBC were followed in awarding these 22 new leases, including advertising and administering the bidding procedure. All 22 leases were within the maximum period of 5 years.

During 2023, the TWRA oversaw 96 active Sharecrop Leases issued under SBC Procedures. Sharecrop leases were categorized by Service or Cash Leases. During 2023, there were 33 Service Sharecrop Leases, and 63 Cash Sharecrop Leases. In total, the agency managed 15,908 acres under the sharecropping program throughout TWRA’s four regions.

TYPE A. SERVICE LEASES: 33 Service Leases covered 5,126 acres in 2023. Service Leases cover agricultural work from which a percentage of crops are left in the field, and haying operations in which wildlife forage is provided.

TYPE B. CASH LEASES: The 63 Cash Leases covered 10,782 acres. Cash Leases return direct revenue to TWRA. In 2023, there was \$566,124 received from farm leases. There was also \$985,408 worth of services provided by the lease farmer in-lieu of cash payment.

Work performed in lieu of cash is calculated using a State of Tennessee Technical Report that provides estimates for the value of different services either by the acre or by the hour. Some examples of the type of services provided for WMAs include heavy equipment work on failing levees; planting on adjacent land for wildlife habitat; and road grading. Both the cash payments and in-lieu of cash services help TWRA offset program expenses on their WMAs. Management of habitats on these lands through the sharecrop program reduces costs to hunters and taxpayers.

TABLE 1. Five-year history of TWRA crop leases by lease type.

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Service (A) Leases	33	33	35	53	70
Cash (B) Leases	63	58	76	66	56
Total Crop Leases	96	91	111	119	126
Service Lease Acreage	5,126	5,112	4,698	5,133	7,428
Cash Lease Acreage	10,782	9,404	12,594	10,839	11,155
Total Acres	15,908	14,516	17,562	15,972	18,583
Value of Crops left for Wildlife	NA*	\$443,653	\$244,663	\$501,301	\$767,136
Cash Lease Revenue	\$566,124	\$518,949	\$493,061	\$441,099	\$414,574
Value of In lieu services	\$985,408	\$860,139	\$782,643	\$660,101	\$734,435
Total Value of Crop Leases	\$1,524,532	\$1,822,741	\$1,520,367	\$1,602,501	\$1,916,145
Number of New Leases	22	35	19	12	8

*Discontinued in 2023 due to the value not being recognized as federal matching funds.

The Sharecrop Program is administered by TWRA's Federal Aid and Real Estate Division who ensures that documentation and bid requirements for new and existing contracts have been followed. The last audit of the Sharecrop Program by the Comptroller's Office was completed in September 2016. All audit recommendations to improve recordkeeping have been implemented by TWRA's land managers and real estate staff.

The continued use of the Crop Lease Submission Form assists Field Managers as a checklist to ensure that all leases remained in compliance with SBC's Sharecrop Program requirements.

Any delinquent payments from a crop year were pursued by WMA managers and, if unsuccessful, are turned over to TWRA's Legal Division. There have not been any leases turned over to Legal Division for collection in 2023. There have been no cancellations for non-payment in 2023.

As habitat improvement costs increase, management of these wildlife habitats through the Sharecrop Lease Program continues to provide revenue and services which contribute to the reduction of costs to those who purchase hunting licenses. Whether through hunting or through passive wildlife recreation these lands and the wildlife using these lands are enjoyed by a great number of Tennesseans and visitors alike

Included in this report is a list of new leases issued for Cash and Services leases in the 2023 calendar year.

NEW LEASES for CROP YEAR 2023 (TYPE A) SERVICE

Contract #	Start	End	County	WMA
22AB-01-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-02-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-03-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-04-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
23AA-01-23-27	6/1/2023	12/31/2027	Franklin	AEDC WMA
33RX-01-23-27	7/31/2023	12/31/2027	Meigs, Bradley	Hiwassee Refuge

NEW LEASES for CROP YEAR 2023 (TYPE B) CASH

Contract #	Start	End	County	WMA
22AB-01-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-02-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-03-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-04-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-05-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-06-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-07-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-08-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-09-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
22AB-10-23-27	1/1/2023	12/31/2027	Maury	Yahnali WMA
11AB-01-23-27	3/25/2023	12/31/2027	Dyer	Bogata WMA
WR197-23-23	5/15/2023	12/31/2023	Obion	Three Rivers WMA
11AA-01-23-27	5/26/2023	12/31/2027	Lauderdale	John Tully WMA Fig F
WR107 02-27	5/12/2023	12/31/2027	Lake	Phillipy Refuge
WR107-01-27	5/12/2023	12/31/2027	Lake	Black Bayou Refuge
WR107 -03-27	5/30/2023	12/31/2027	Lake	Wheelchair Hunt WM,

Prepared and submitted by Roger Jackson, Real Estate Specialist for the Federal Aid and Real Estate Division of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency