

GOT GAME. A wide variety of game can be had by doing your research and leasing the right property.

RIGHT: Steve Meng, Founder of Base Camp Leasing, poses with a nice 6 pointer. **BELOW:** A Spring gobbler struts in the tall grass during the April-May wild turkey season in Indiana.



Time was in these parts when you could park your car by the side of the road, amble up to the farmer's house to get permission, and be granted the right to hunt wildlife in his woods. In compensation, you would share your kill with the farmer and over time, your families would grow to be fast friends.

That quaint scenario is not so common today.

The increase of urbanization in America, the dwindling availability of open and forested land, and a much more litigious society has put the pinch on hunters when facing landowners. Those with property protect what's theirs and often respond negatively to those requesting hunting privileges.

Hence, the option to lease land gains in popularity to both hunters and landowners in the Midwest, a concept that Steve Meng, manager of Base Camp Leasing, says has been around for years in other parts of the country.

Base Camp Leasing was founded in 1999 and is headquartered in central Indiana. The company currently leases land in six states from Ohio to Kansas and represents hunters throughout the United States. As the premier hunting lease broker in the Eastern Belt, Base Camp Leasing caters to both individuals and hunting clubs.

"For the landowner," Meng says, "leasing provides a way to increase the profit from his property, especially forested land and wetlands. For the hunter, it gives security and peace of mind, access to excellent hunting sites, and less hassle all around. Owning a lease assures the hunter that the property is available without competition for space and game."

Just ask Phil Jordan, who leases acreage in both Jefferson and Parke counties in Indiana. "Some folks are afraid of the lease issue," Jordan said, "but I grew up in Texas where my father leased land for hunting purposes from the time I was a child. We hunted dove and white tail (deer) near Beaumont. When I came to Indiana, I found very little to no success in securing private land for hunting privileges. I had no connections, friends or relatives here, at first," he said, "and what land was accessible had so many people hunting on it, you risked your life every time you went out."

Jordan found out about Base Camp Leasing by surfing the Internet. The BCL site had six or seven properties listed that were not too distant from Frankfort where he lives.

Land. Leasing

By Karen S. Walker

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“I called Steve Meng at the contact number listed on the website, and he helped get it all set up. Now, when I’m going to hunt on the 100 acres I’ve leased in Jefferson County,” Jordan says, “I just call up the landowner as a courtesy to let him know that I’m planning a trip down.”

The 280 acres Jordan leases in Parke County is owned by Danzer Forestland, a subsidiary of The Danzer Group, managed by Mark Golitz in Bradford, Pennsylvania. The Danzer Group manages nearly 15,000 acres of forestland in Pennsylvania, New York, Indiana, and Illinois. The corporation has an active lease program on its 7,600 acres in Indiana and Illinois and is in the process of developing a leasing program in Pennsylvania and New York. Nationally, they manage a half million acres, 95 percent of which is forested.

Golitz also found Base Camp Leasing via an Internet search. “Originally, an individual approached us about leasing some of our land,” Golitz recalled. “We were on the Internet looking for a draft hunting lease when we came across Steve Meng’s Base Camp Leasing website. They had good rates, and when I called Steve up and talked with him, I was very encouraged at the prices he was able to get for the land,” Golitz said.

“We own the land as an investment,” Golitz said. “As the landowner, there’s a certain cost and the lease to the hunter helps to defray some of that cost. Having the property leased controls access to the property,” Golitz added. “The hunters are good conservationists. They care for the land and help manage the wildlife population. They’ve invested some money in it, and they want to conserve the natural resources.

“Steve inspects the property, prepares the leases, sends the directions to hunters, and because of him, as an absentee landowner, we don’t have to worry so much or advertise.” Golitz says. According to Golitz, representatives of Danzer Forestland are happy with the arrangement and plan to enroll more land as it’s acquired.

Albert Armand says for hunting, “Leasing your farmland is like finding out your favorite uncle is rich, and he died and left you all of his money,” then he chuckles. And if that wasn’t enough, there’s a bonus,” he says. “You can control the hunters. Traditionally, if someone asked to hunt, we’d say ‘yes, you can hunt,’

but then the hunters would get in each other’s way and before you knew it, there was conflict and they’d have us in their argument. Now we no longer have to worry about who’s hunting where. Each spot will handle just so many hunters and that’s the way we lease it,” he said.

“I learned about Base Camp Leasing from an ad that Steve Meng placed in one of the publications I receive, can’t remember which,” Armand said. “Steve takes care of the lease contract, the inspection, and everything and that makes the deal easy for us.”

Armand’s Harper Valley Farms is located three miles south of Westport, Indiana, and is popular with Indianapolis hunting enthusiasts. Along with cropland and woods, Armand’s property produces hundreds of pumpkins and is known as Indiana Pumpkin Patch providing a favorite outing for families in the fall when Halloween rolls around.

Joe Hankins voices the hunter’s perspective when he says leasing land and is definitely cheaper than buying land, and it gives them more flexibility to really look at different properties and choose in advance just which land would be most accessible and provide the most successful hunting experiences. Hankins leases land in both Lawrence County and

Clark County in Illinois. A building contractor in Martinsville, Indiana, Hankins plants clover on some of the acreage he leases. “The wildlife needs food,” Hankins explains, “and it’s a way of assuring that the game continues to flourish. With proper management techniques the potential for trophy game is substantially increased,” Hankins said.

“Leasing your farmland is like finding out your favorite uncle is rich, and he died and left you all of his money...”



HEALTHY HERD. By practicing proper herd management techniques, landowners can produce quality trophy animals, like those seen here at Base Camp Leasing.

Land Leasing; Gaining Popularity With Landowners and Hunters

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Base Camp Leasing representatives visit and evaluate all land that it contracts, and the company provides \$1,000,000 liability insurance for the landowner. "One of the most common advantages for landowners is that it allows them to earn additional income from an otherwise unrealized source," Meng says, "and gives them the assurance of knowing who will be hunting on their property."

The hunter gets the privilege of viewing an aerial photograph of the property to evaluate the potential hunting quality, the opportunity to inspect the property prior to leasing, and the knowledge that he or she will have exclusive hunting privileges.

For more information about the benefits of leasing your land or your hunting rights, contact Steve Meng at Base Camp Leasing at www.basecampleasing.com or e-mail info@basecampleasing.com or call 1-866-309-1507.



IN THE BAG. Successful clients of Base Camp Leasing, proudly display a big bodied 12 pointer that was harvested during the 2002 Indiana Archery Season.

Karen S. Walker is a writer associated with Branson Pritchett Public Relations in Evansville, Indiana.

LEASE OPPORTUNITIES

Advantages of a BCL hunting lease include:

- Potential trophy quality animals
- Safety
- Locations close to home
- Abundant game densities
- Exclusive hunting rights

Hunting leases are available in:

- Michigan
- Ohio
- Kansas
- Illinois
- Kentucky
- Indiana



Base Camp Leasing is the premier hunting lease provider in the Eastern Belt, originating in Indiana, and expanding its territory throughout the midwest, from Ohio to Kansas.

Base Camp Leasing currently offers hunting leases in Michigan, Ohio, Kansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana. It serves both individuals and hunting clubs across these states.

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