



March 31, 2025

Obion and Forked Deer River

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (ctas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Obion and Forked Deer River Flood Control and Drainage Improvements Public Acts of 1959 Chapter 129

WHEREAS, Public Law 526, 79th Congress, Second Session, and Public Law 858, 80th Congress, Second Session, authorized the construction of flood control and drainage improvements of the Obion and Forked Deer Rivers and their tributaries in Obion, Weakley, Gibson, Dyer, Crockett, Lauderdale, Haywood, and Madison Counties, substantially in accordance with the reports of the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, House Document No. 757, 79th Congress, Second Session, and House Document No. 627, 80th Congress, Second Session; and

WHEREAS, The construction of such flood control and drainage improvements at federal expense cannot be undertaken by the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, until a responsible sponsoring agency furnished the United States of America written assurances that it will perform the local cooperation required by law:

SECTION 1. That, in consideration of the construction at federal expense by the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, of flood control and drainage improvements of the Obion and Forked Deer Rivers and their tributaries, in the Counties of Obion, Weakley, Gibson, Dyer, Crockett, Lauderdale, Haywood, and Madison, substantially in accordance with the reports of the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, House Document No. 757, 79th Congress, Second Session, and House Document No. 627, 80th Congress, Second Session, as authorized by Public Law 526, 79th Congress, Second Session, and Public Law 858, 80th Congress, Second Session, the State of Tennessee, through its Obion-Forked Deer Basin Authority, be authorized and empowered to defray the cost of the alteration of existing highway bridges in Dyer and Lauderdale Counties required by such improvements, to acquire and furnish without cost to the United States of America all lands, easements, and rights of way required for construction of such improvements, and to maintain all such works after completion; and to execute and furnish to the United States of America written assurances that it will perform the aforesaid acts of local cooperation; and that the State of Tennessee, acting by and through the Governor and the Obion-Forked Deer River Basin Authority, be authorized and empowered to execute and furnish to the United States of America written assurances that it will hold and save the United States of America free from any damages that may result from any special construction, without cost to the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission, by way of continuous spoil banks, culverts, locks and/or other structures under contracts let by the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, along the improved channels of the Obion and Forked Deer Rivers and/or the tributaries thereof over, across or along the boundary of any tract of land owned by or leased to the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission designed to permit the control and/or regulation of the water level on said land in its use as a public hunting area and/or a game refuge or sanctuary.

As amended by: Public Acts of 1963, Chapter 149
Public Acts of 1974, Chapter 415

SECTION 2. That the State of Tennessee, through its Obion-Forked Deer Basin Authority, acting through and in conjunction with the Counties in which such improvements are to be constructed, shall be authorized and empowered to acquire and furnish the lands, easements and rights of way required for such work. To this end, the power of eminent domain is hereby conferred upon the state and the counties in which such improvements shall be constructed for the purpose of acquiring such lands, easements and rights of way as may be deemed necessary for the purposes of this Chapter. The general statutes relating to the acquisition of lands for works of internal improvement shall be applicable both as to the bringing of condemnation actions and the remedies of property owners. The counties in which such improvements are to be made shall be charged with the responsibility of acquiring the necessary lands, easements and rights of way either by gift, purchase or condemnation. The cost of any such lands, easements and rights of way through purchase or condemnation shall be paid by the State of Tennessee. All other expense incident to the cost of acquisition of such lands, easements and rights of way, including title or abstract work, appraisal fees, attorney fees and court costs, shall be borne by the county in which the required lands, easements and rights of way are located. In the event any County fails or refuses to acquire such necessary lands, easements and rights of way, the State, through the Obion-Forked Deer Basin Authority, shall acquire the same, either by purchase, gift or condemnation, and such County shall be liable for and shall reimburse the State for all expenses incurred in the acquisition of such lands, easements and right of way, except the cost or purchase price of the lands, easements and rights of way themselves.

The state shall be primarily liable for the purchase price of such lands as may be needed for such improvements but suits by property owners for any taking without compensation shall be brought against

the county, and the state's Obion-Forked Deer River Basin Authority shall reimburse the county for any final judgment rendered against it. In addition, it shall be the duty of the counties to defend such suits, but the commissioner may defend such suits if the counties fail or refuse to defend them, and the counties shall reimburse the Obion-Forked Deer Basin Authority for all expenses, including attorney's fees, in defending such suits.

As amended by: Public Acts of 1974, Chapter 415

COMPILER'S NOTE: The 1974 amendment deleted references to the state department of highways, but the reference to the "commissioner" contained in the second paragraph of Section 2 remains, probably in error.

SECTION 3. That drainage and levee districts which presently own any property interests or rights of way required for such improvements are hereby authorized, empowered and directed to transfer and convey such property interests or rights of way to the State of Tennessee for the purposes of this Chapter upon the request of the Obion-Forked Deer Basin Authority.

As amended by: Public Acts of 1974, Chapter 415

SECTION 4. That the State of Tennessee through its Obion-Forked Deer Basin Authority be and it is hereby authorized, empowered and directed to maintain all such works upon completion, in which maintenance the Obion-Forked Deer Basin Authority shall use prison labor wherever possible. The Commissioner of the Department of Corrections shall make available prison labor for such purposes and shall furnish such guards and transportation as may be necessary in connection with such maintenance work.

As amended by: Public Acts of 1974, Chapter 415

SECTION 5. That the Obion-Forked Deer Basin Authority and the counties affected be and they are hereby authorized to expend their funds for the acquisition of the necessary rights of way for such channel improvement and to properly maintain the completed improvements.

As amended by: Public Acts of 1974, Chapter 415

SECTION 6. That this Act shall take effect from and after its passage, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed: March 11, 1959.

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