

KATE HOLZMANN  
*Farm & Ranch Realtor*



# Land Buying Guide for Texas Hunters

# Your Guide to Purchasing Texas Hunting Land

## **Hunting in Texas.**

Unlike other states, door-knocking for permission will likely bring scoffs or a possible 9 mm to the chest. We might have southern hospitality, but Texans take pride in their land and what they own. Public land is basically a myth, and lease prices have skyrocketed with very limited tags per family—possibly forcing you to pick a favorite child.

## **There is another way: owning your own piece of it.**

This guide is designed to help you navigate the financial logistics and—more importantly—the on-the-ground realities of finding a hunting property in Texas.



# Why Buy Texas Land?

Here is what the latest data from the Texas Real Estate Research Center at Texas A&M (Winter 2026) tells us about the market through the third quarter of 2025:

- **Prices Keep Climbing:** The statewide average price per acre reached \$5,158, reflecting a year-over-year increase of 5.9%. This marked the third consecutive quarterly improvement in the price growth rate. Over the last five years, the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) has been an impressive 11.2%.
- **Sales Volume Is Down—Creating Opportunity for Buyers:** The market has entered a period of stabilization. The total number of sales declined slightly (down 2% year-over-year), and the total acres sold fell by 3.6%. This slowdown gives serious buyers more choices and less competition than they've faced in years.
- **The "Price Stickiness" Factor:** The interesting part... prices are proving "sticky." Many sellers are still anchored to the peak values of 2022-23. When a listing price is too high based on these outdated expectations, "the phone might not ring." This creates an advantage for buyers who know how to identify fairly priced properties (or are working with an agent who can).
- **The Outlook is Stable:** Experts forecast that prices will continue to rise modestly (about 2% over the next four quarters). A major price bust is unlikely. The market is simply returning to normal, with sales activity expected to slowly pick up again in late 2026.

## What This Means for You

**Buyers have more leverage than they have had in years, but quality still commands a premium.** Fewer people are buying overall, but the properties that are selling tend to be the better ones—tracts with reliable water, good fencing, and prime location. These sales help prop up the statewide median price. Meanwhile, properties priced based on unrealistic 2022-23 expectations are sitting on the market with little activity. If you know what to look for, you can find a gem while the phone stays quiet for overpriced listings.

# Step 1: Establish Your Budget and Secure Financing

Before you start scrolling through listings online, you need to know your numbers.

- **Cash is King:** If you can pay cash, you are in the strongest position to negotiate a better price on a property that has been sitting on the market. Of course, this is not always the most realistic option for buyers.
- **The Right Lender:** Skip the big banks. My suggestion is to go with lenders in the Farm Credit System; our brokerage commonly works with Texas Farm Credit and Capital Farm Credit. Your agent can also point you in the right direction.
  - **Notes on Land Loans:**
    - Downpayment: Typically 20% or greater.
    - Rates: Keep in mind that these vary from typical, conventional mortgage rates.
    - Rate locks: You can lock in your interest rate for a flexible period, usually ranging from 1 to 20 years.
    - Co-Op Advantage: Some places, like Texas Farm Credit, are cooperative lenders. This means that you become a member-owner, often bringing you an annual cash-back dividend that consequently lowers your effective interest rate.
- **Owner Financing:** Owner-financing has recently grown in popularity, increasing options to those with credit concerns. These sellers will offer lower downpayment requirements (typically around 5%), but higher-interest rates, for (typically) 30 year terms. With a larger downpayment, your buyers agent should negotiate lower rates and terms. Keep in mind, owner-financing is a property-by-property basis, and still not expected (but could be requested).

Getting pre-approved before you start looking shows sellers you are serious, gives you negotiating power, and sometimes is a requirement by landowners/agents in order to view properties.

# Step 2: Have an Idea of Texas Regions + Markets

People often ask, “What’s the price of an acre in Texas?” While we can tell you the average price per acre across the entire state (\$5,158), this number will vary heavily across the different regions. For example, statistics from the Texas Real Estate Research Center reported the following averages:

## Nominal Price per Acre, 2025 Q4:

**Region 1:** \$1,800

**Region 2:** \$751

**Region 3:** \$2,900

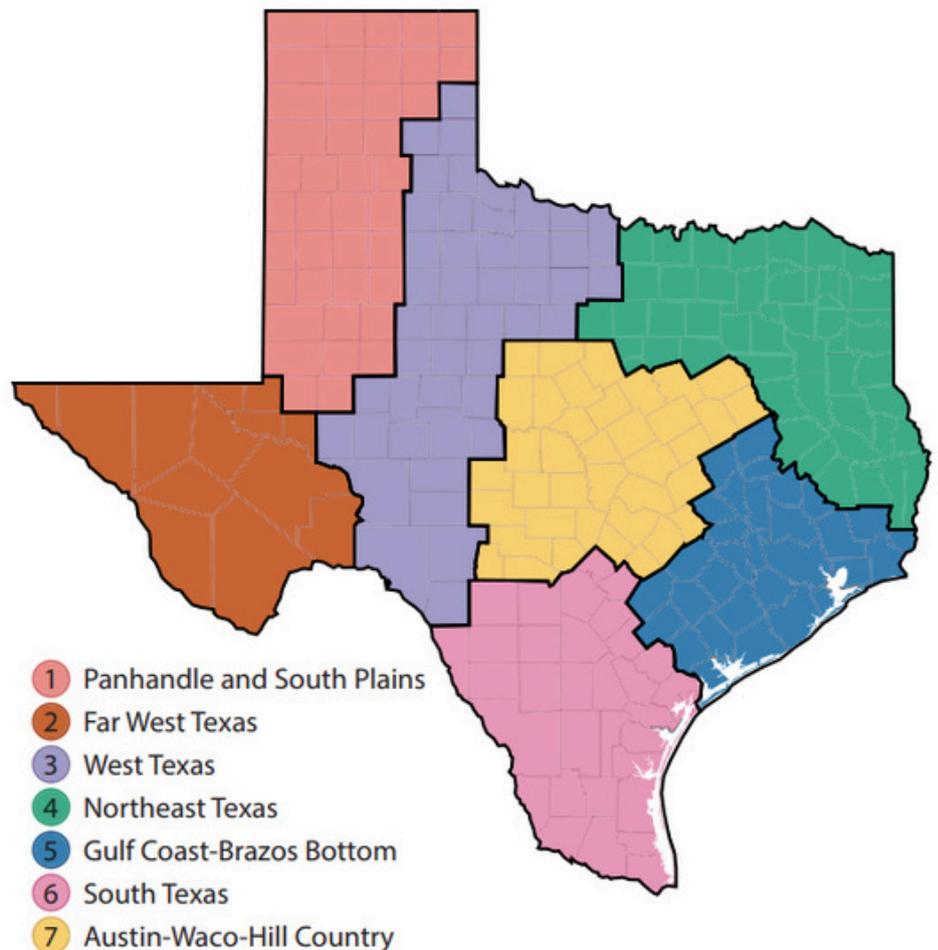
**Region 4:** \$9,200

**Region 5:** \$11,500

**Region 6:** \$6,100

**Region 7:** \$7,900

## Texas Land Market Regions



Source: Texas Real Estate Research Center

**Having these numbers in mind helps you determine  
your desired region and tract size.**

# Step 3: Get a Buyer's Agent

This is the biggest "no-brainer" as a land buyer. The listing agent works for the seller—their loyalty is to them, and their goal is to sell the property. You need someone in your corner, working for you, and able to protect your interests. The cost of a buyer's agent is typically covered by the seller at closing- not another cost for you to incur.

A good buyer's agent knows the market, understands hunting land and its unique considerations, has access to the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), and will help you navigate the complexities of the purchase. They should also have access to off-market listings that you might not find on public sites.

In a shifting market like we have in 2026, having an agent who knows the real sales data—not just the asking prices—can save you thousands of dollars and wasted time.

**A quick word of caution:** Be careful when reaching out directly to listing agents about their properties. Listing agents expect first contacts to come from buyer's agents. If you make that first contact yourself, they may choose to represent you as the buyer—which means you lose the benefit of having your own dedicated advocate.

## *How I Can Help*

My name is **Kate Holzmänn**, and I specialize in Farm and Ranch Real Estate. I help buyers navigate the Texas land market every day, driven by an analytical mind (because numbers don't lie) and a huge passion for Texas land and hunting. From access and easements to water rights and floodplains, I will help find the property that best serves you.

If you are serious about finding the right property and want an experienced guide on your side, I invite you to reach out.

**Kate Holzmänn**

(210) 912-5054 || [kate@texastimerealty.com](mailto:kate@texastimerealty.com)



# Step 4: Look for Properties (with the following considerations)

By now, you have probably been scanning listings online and have a few automated alerts set up. Your agent will send you properties that fit your criteria, but as you evaluate them, here are the key considerations to keep in mind:

## A) Wildlife:

What is your priority? South Texas big-bodied bucks? Exotics like axis or blackbuck? Mule deer over whitetail? Or are you more interested in waterfowl and upland birds?

Different regions of Texas offer different game species—with plenty of overlap—so knowing your focus helps narrow the search.

### How to assess wildlife:

- Ask the seller about game populations, management history, and any trail camera photos they are willing to share. (Keep in mind that photos may be from previous years.)
- Look at neighboring properties. Are they high-fenced? Large ranches or small tracts? Leased hunting operations? The surrounding management practices will impact your property.
- Evaluate the terrain. Deer typically prefer varied terrain and edge habitat, even if it makes your trek painful.
- Look for signs: tracks, trails, rubs, scrapes, and droppings. The land will tell you what is there if you know how to read it.

## B) Water

A necessary complexity.

- **For the Deer Hunter:** Creeks, rivers, or reliable drainages. In parts of West Texas and the Trans-Pecos, perennial water is rare. Landowners in these regions often rely on rainwater catchment systems or hauled water.
- **For the Waterfowl Hunter:** Standing water. Lakes, large tanks, and ponds are essential.
- **For a Cabin or Residence:** If rural water is not available, you will likely want a well. If one exists, ask about its condition and average flow rate (GPM). If no well exists, factor in the cost of drilling—which can vary dramatically depending on depth and what's underground. In some areas, drilling a well can run \$20,000–\$50,000 or more.

## C) Access:

Access is one of the most overlooked aspects of buying rural land. Here is what to consider:

**Drive Time:** Do not underestimate the value of easy access. A property that is technically "close" to town but requires 45 minutes of rough dirt/caliche driving will see fewer visits from you over time.



**Legally Deeded Access:** Texas has many properties where access has been "assumed" for years across a neighbor's land. Assumed access is not legally protected access. Title companies will not insure access without a recorded, deeded easement, and lenders will not fund a loan without it. If the property lacks legal access, you will need an attorney to resolve it—or you may need to walk away.

**All-Weather Roads:** Can you get to the property when it rains? If the road turns to mud or washes out, your ability to use the property—especially during hunting season—will be severely limited.

## D) Minerals

Minerals can be a common confusion point for buyers- and sometimes, an unrealistic expectation.

In Texas, the surface estate and the mineral estate are separate. The mineral estate is the dominant estate, meaning the mineral owner has the legal right to use the surface to access and extract minerals—even if it disrupts your hunting or improvements. That said, the Accommodation Doctrine requires operators to work around existing surface uses when practical.

### What to know:

- Buying 100% of the minerals is rare. Most sellers either do not own their minerals or are unwilling to part with them. If you can negotiate even a fractional interest (e.g., 1/8), it gives you leverage and a share of any future royalties- still, this not typical.
- Buyers and their agents can review nearby well activity through the Texas Railroad Commission to understand the area's development history.
- A title commitment shows recorded mineral-related documents, but confirming true ownership often requires a landman's research.
- Risk varies by region. The Hill Country has very low drilling activity; the Permian Basin is highly active. Smaller tracts are less likely to be drilled but can be pooled into larger units.
- If drilling does occur, operators are required to follow regulations set by the Railroad Commission, and while Surface Use Agreements are commonly negotiated, they are not guaranteed by law.

# E) Exemptions

Two common exemptions can significantly reduce your property tax burden:

**Agricultural Exemption:** This is a misnomer—it is actually a special valuation based on productivity, not a full exemption. To qualify, the land must be devoted to agricultural uses such as livestock grazing, crop production, or beekeeping. Minimum acreage requirements vary by county. Once granted, your taxes are based on the land's productive value rather than market value—often a dramatic reduction.

**\*\*Important:** If you buy property that already has an ag valuation, you must reapply with the county appraisal district, but you can continue the existing qualification if the use remains unchanged. You do not "reset" anything. However, if you change the use (e.g., stop running livestock), the county can impose **rollback taxes** for the previous five years.

**Wildlife Exemption:** If your land already has an ag exemption, you can convert to a wildlife management exemption. This is ideal for hunters because you replace agricultural activities with wildlife management practices. Minimum acreage varies by county (often 20 acres or more). You must perform at least **three of the following seven practices** annually:



- Habitat control (prescribed burning, grazing management)
- Erosion control (pond construction, terraces)
- Predator control (managing coyotes, raccoons, etc.)
- Census counts (spotlight surveys, aerial counts)
- Supplemental water (maintaining wells, troughs)
- Supplemental food (food plots, feeders)
- Shelter (brush piles, maintaining fence lines)

**Other valuations** (such as timber) exist, but these two are the most relevant for hunters.

# F) Other Considerations:

**Electricity:** If you plan to build, find out how far the nearest power line is. Electric cooperatives charge per linear foot to run lines, plus a meter installation fee. In remote areas, this can cost tens of thousands of dollars. Some neighbors might allow you to pull electricity from their lines. Alternatives include solar with battery backup or generators.

**Sewage:** Many rural properties use septic systems. The type and cost depend on soil conditions, which are evaluated by a septic company and approved by the county. Most buyers handle this after the purchase, but testing can be done during the option period if desired. If a system exists, you might have it inspected. Others might prefer to save money and rough it with outhouses or other alternatives.

**Floodplains:** Check FEMA floodplain maps. If you are building, financing, or insuring improvements, floodplain status matters.

**Existing Hunting Infrastructure:** A property that was previously hunted may have established feeding areas, blinds, and trails. Sellers will sometimes leave feeders and blinds behind—ask what is included.

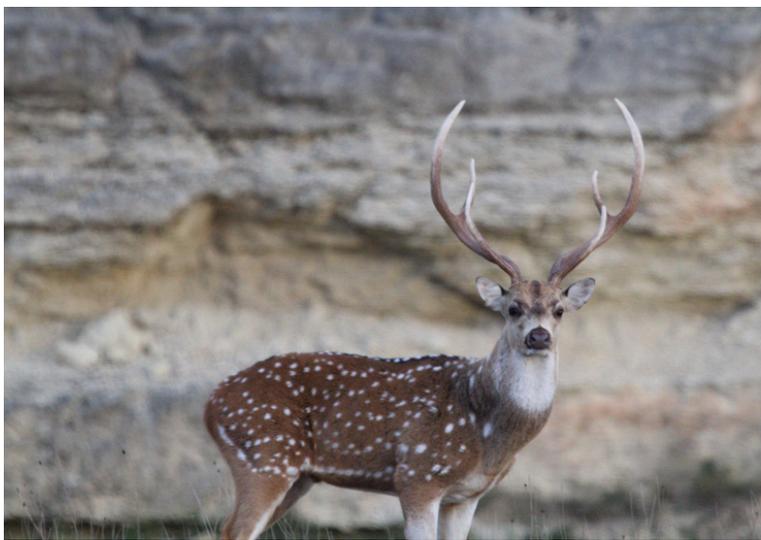
**Deed Restrictions:** Some properties have deed restrictions that limit use (e.g., no mobile homes, minimum acreage for building). Your agent should verify these before you make an offer.

## *After Picking a Property:*

### **Step 5: Submit an Offer**

Your agent will prepare the offer using promulgated forms adopted by the Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC), along with any necessary addenda. You'll sign off on it, with the following terms to be communicated:

- Purchase price.
- Expected closing date (this will be calculated based on other conditions).
- Do you request an option period? If so, you will negotiate an option fee, paid to the seller.
- What all is to be conveyed in the sale?
- Survey expectations.
- Financing details.
- Title commitment expectations.
- Any other special provisions, contingencies, and addenda.



#### **Survey Notes:**

- If a recent survey exists, that saves time and money.
- If a new survey is needed, expect 3–5 weeks (or more) for completion.
- Some lenders may accept an existing survey or field notes, but a new survey is always recommended.
- Who pays for the survey is negotiable between buyer and seller.

### **Step 6: Negotiate + Go Under Contract**

The selling side might counter your offer. Once all terms are agreed upon and signed by both parties, the contract is executed and the option and financing timelines begin.

### **Step 7: Head toward Closing**

Take care of the survey, financing, and any other contract requirements on time to successfully close. Review the Title Commitment thoroughly before approving and signing your closing papers.

# Final Notes

If you've made it this far, my hope is that you feel more comfortable with what to look for, what to watch out for, and what questions to ask when you find a property that interests you.

**Keep in mind:** every property is different. This guide covers the major considerations I have seen trip up buyers, but *it is not exhaustive*. There is no substitute for walking the property, pulling data/documents, and having someone in your corner who knows the terrain.

Properties come with their own quirks. Maybe it's an easement, an oil lease, or surprise deed regulations. Those details matter, and walking through them is part of the process.

**If you are ready to start that work, head to the next page.**

I pulled together this guide from my own experiences and what I've learned throughout my career, then cross-checked it against trusted sources to make sure I wasn't missing anything important. The following resources helped me fill in the gaps and verify the details:

Covington, Ed. "The Most Important Things to Consider in Purchasing Hunting Land." A classic from someone who has forgotten more than most of us will ever know.

Texas Real Estate Research Center at Texas A&M University. "Rural Land | Winter 2026." The go-to source for market data and trends.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "Wildlife Management Exemption Information." For keeping up with county-specific requirements.

Longhorn Realty. "Texas Hunting Land and Ranch Buying Tips." Helpful for rounding out the hunting-specific considerations.

# Let's Find Your Piece of Texas

My name is **Kate Holzmänn**, and I am a Farm and Ranch Realtor with **Texas Time Realty**.

I got into this business back in college—combining my love of Texas land and its lifestyle with the desire to help people in a relational way.

I help buyers navigate the Texas land market. That means looking at properties through the lens of what actually matters for hunting—water, terrain, neighbors, access—and making sure nothing gets missed in the due diligence process.

Here is what you can expect working with me:

- **Market knowledge:** I verify comparable sales and other data to help ensure your offer is reasonable.
- **Land expertise:** I understand easements, mineral rights, exemptions, and floodplains—the stuff that can derail a deal if overlooked.
- **Buyer advocacy:** My loyalty is to you. My job is to protect your interests, from the first showing to the final signature.

**There is no cost to you for buyer representation.** The seller pays my commission at closing. In the rare event that a seller does not offer buyer agent compensation, I will discuss that with you upfront so there are no surprises.

If you have questions or want to start looking seriously, reach out anytime.

**KATE HOLZMANN**

(210) 912-5054

kate@texastimerealty.com

*Texas Time Realty*

**Specializing in Farm and Ranch Real Estate across Texas**

