



TEXAS
EcoLab
PROGRAM



A compelling and cost-effective choice for your property.

As a conservation-minded landowner whose acreage is appraised at market value, you could substantially reduce your property taxes within just 1 year—while fostering meaningful university studies—by allowing confidential ecological research on your property with the highly successful Texas EcoLab program. Under this program, developed by Braun & Gresham, your land could then transition into wildlife management use after just 2 years.

The EcoLab program offers a compelling and cost-effective alternative to the minimum of 5 years of grazing or farming typically required for properties to qualify for favorable Ag tax rates. On average, EcoLab clients see a return on their investment in just over 2 years, a time frame that stands in considerable contrast to the average 10 year ROI for those who utilize Ag for property tax savings.

EcoLab advantages

- Substantial tax savings achieved during first year of program.
- Property qualifies for wildlife management valuation after 2 years.
- Advances important scientific research.
- Enhances relationships with universities and professors.

EcoLab qualifications

- Properties over 50 acres work best, but contiguous landowners with less acreage can cooperate for EcoLab purposes.
- Property must be principally used for research by a college and/or university.
- Landowner commits to funding and accommodating research projects for a 2 year period.

Return On Investment		
	TEXAS EcoLab PROGRAM	Typical Agriculture
Years grazing to see tax benefits.	0 years	5 years
Years for a ROI on your land	2 years	10 years

The Texas Tax Code Section 23.51(1) defines qualified open-space land to include “land that is currently devoted principally to agriculture use...or land that is used principally as an ecological laboratory by a public or private college or university.”

What do researchers study on my land?

Past examples include studies of meadow grasses and the preservation and enhancement of native grasses, long-term studies of ecological succession, studies of canyon vegetation, studies of the effects of urbanization on the Edwards Plateau, and soil sampling.

How will use of my property be restricted or changed?

Principle use of property must be for research, but the program allows you to consult with the researchers to clearly ascertain the scope of their research.

Which universities participate in the program?

As the EcoLab reputation grows, so does the distinguished list of institutions of higher learning. The Texas EcoLab program has partnered with University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M, Texas State, University of Houston, Rice University, Trinity University, Mississippi State, and Penn State.

Braun & Gresham provides all the necessary services to establish an EcoLab

- Evaluate your property to determine the ecological studies and restoration that would be appropriate.
- Identify specific, high-qualified research scientists who have the capability and interest for doing ecological studies and restoration on the property.
- Negotiate and draft an agreement between you and each researcher's university that establishes the terms for use of the land.
- Coordinate and manage all activities of the researchers, including evaluating research proposals, obtaining liability waivers, logistical coordination, and reporting to your appraisal district.
- Apply to your appraisal district for appraisal of the land as an Ecological Laboratory.

EcoLab case study

Our client owns an undeveloped 72-acre property on Lake Austin. Under the firm's guidance, he signed research agreements with two universities, applied for EcoLab with Travis County Appraisal District and was approved. Thanks to his EcoLab status, he realized serious tax savings that same year. For successfully obtaining and administering an EcoLab program on our client's property, Braun & Gresham was paid a percentage of tax savings for two years. He also made a tax deductible charitable donation to the universities which provided grant monies to the professors conducting research on his property. Two years later, our client applied for a wildlife management exemption on his property and continues to enjoy tax savings each year.

Every Braun & Gresham client has their own needs and story. For a personal conversation and more tailored information on the EcoLab program, contact attorney Cassie Gresham at (512) 894-5426.

Braun & Gresham track record

Braun & Gresham has successfully achieved EcoLab status for 60 clients.

Our acceptance rate for EcoLab applications in 15 different appraisal districts testifies to our high standards of excellence.

