

Argyle Lagoon Marine Preserve

[WAC 220-16-440\(3\)](#): "Those University of Washington-owned tidelands and all bedlands enclosed by the inner spit of Argyle Lagoon on San Juan Island." Effective since 3/31/1990. *Effective since 3/31/1990.*

CLICK IMAGE TO ENLARGE MAP



Geographic Statistics

Area Type	Acres	Hectares
Intertidal	1.31	0.53
Subtidal	12.96	5.25
Total	14.27	5.78

Links to other imagery about this site

- [Oblique aerial photos from the WA Dept. of Ecology](#)
- [Satellite photos of the area from Terraserver at Microsoft](#)

On-site panorama, taken from the southernmost point inside the lagoon



Recreational Restrictions / Openings		
Species	Status	Comments, notes...
Salmon	Open	
Trout	Open	
Bottomfish	Closed	
Shellfish	Closed	
Forage Fish	Limited	Fishing only for herring is allowed.
Unclassified	Open	
Commercial Restrictions / Openings		
Species	Status	Comments, notes...
Salmon	Open	
Bottomfish	Closed	
Shellfish	Closed	

Forage Fish	Limited	Fishing only for herring is allowed.
Unclassified	Closed	

Prominent and unique features

Argyle Lagoon Marine Preserve is a small, intertidal bay that is owned by the University of Washington and its Friday Harbor Laboratories (FHL). The lagoon connects to North Bay, an extension of San Juan Channel through a narrow channel that also serves a boat ramp. A fence surrounds the lagoon and is well-signed as a University of Washington Biological Reserve. Upland shores comprised of sand with riparian vegetation give rise to an intertidal flat made of mud. A tidal channel drains the mudflat into the larger channel. A county park borders the southern and western edges of the lagoon.

Description of fish, bird, and mammal resources at the site

A variety of invertebrates that are typical of mudflats inhabit this small embayment. Flatfish and sculpins likely use the bay as a settlement and nursery area.

Programs in place to manage the site

WDFW manages the site as partially-protected marine reserve for non-tribal citizens. WDFW regulations prohibit commercial and recreational fishing for bottomfish and classified shellfish. Although recreational and commercial fishing can legally occur in the lagoon for the harvesting of salmon, trout, and some forage fishes, the small and limited habitat makes the occurrences of these harvesting activities unlikely. WDFW regulations allow the taking of unclassified fish and invertebrates by recreational fishers.

Most of the upland portions of the site is owned by the University of Washington through its Friday Harbor Laboratories (FHL), and this institution can be considered as co-managers. The preserve was created at the request of FHL as a place for researchers to study and access marine organisms in a natural condition. The university has posted many signs in the upland habitat declaring it a biological preserve and has an agreement with WDFW to provide shore-based signs declaring a restricted fishing zone.

The enforcement of the harvest restrictions is primarily relegated to the Enforcement Program of WDFW. Information on the site boundaries and restrictions is found in WDFW's Sport Fishing Pamphlet and formal regulations are published at the State of Washington's Administrative Code available on the state's web site. WDFW is developing specific pamphlets describing its marine reserves and each specific site.

WDFW scientists do not actively study the organisms within the site, but students and researchers regularly collect and examine organisms at the site.

Issues of concern

The proximity of the lagoon to an active boat ramp increases the chances that chronic oil and fuel spills may affect the ecological integrity of the lagoon. The nearby park may increase the chance of garbage being dumped into the lagoon. Collection activities by FHL students and researchers may also pose a threat to the functioning of the preserve.

Performance measures

- Continued existence of the natural features of the lagoon including marine vegetation and invertebrates.
- Continued use of the site as a place for FHL students and researchers to conduct research and access study organisms.