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Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**



DISTRICT 13 HUNTING PROSPECTS

Snohomish, San Juan, and Island Counties; Skagit County
Islands

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DISTRICT 13 GENERAL OVERVIEW

District 13 contains all of Snohomish, Island, and San Juan counties along with some islands of Skagit County, and Game Management Unit (GMU) 448 (Stillaguamish), GMU 450 (Cascade), and the southern section of GMU 407 (North Sound) in Snohomish County. District 13 also includes the islands of the San Juan Archipelago and Island County—GMUs 410 (Islands), 411 (Orcas), 412 (Shaw), 413 (San Juan), 414 (Lopez), 415 (Blakely), 416 (Decatur), 417 (Cypress), 419 (Guemes), 420 (Whidbey) and 421 (Camano).



SNOHOMISH COUNTY

In Snohomish County, a great tool for determining property ownership and boundaries can be found on-line at SCOPI, a mapping tool provided by the County Assessor's office: <http://gis.snoco.org/maps/property/>.

Much of the eastern portion of District 13 is public land managed by the US Forest Service on the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest. Hunters should contact the Darrington Ranger District (360-436-1155) for updates on road and trail conditions in GMU 448 and 450. Many roads have been decommissioned or damaged by floods in recent years. Trail conditions also vary, and information on specific trails can be found at the [Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Recreation web page](#).

The remaining public land in Snohomish County is managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Northwest Region (360-856-3500). Hunters should be aware that many access roads to DNR lands are gated and should contact the DNR to obtain the latest information about gates and road conditions. Additional contact information is found on

the [DNR Recreation](#) web page. Unusually hot and dry conditions have resulted in camp fire restrictions on state-owned lands. Due to the extreme drought in the summer of 2015, some DNR lands may be closed to all access. Contact DNR for updated fire information.

A number of private industrial timber land owners also manage land in GMU 448 (Stillaguamish). Many of their roads are closed to motorized vehicle traffic, but walking or biking access is allowed. Hunters are advised to scout their areas early and be aware that parking at access gates may be very limited, and gates should never be blocked. Hunters are further advised not to drive beyond any gate that is open unless they are certain the gate will remain open on their return. Active logging is taking place in some areas, so gates may be open in the morning, but closed and locked later in the day. Some access gates on private industrial timber lands will have signs that specify ownership and the rules that apply to the property. Hunters should strictly observe “No Parking” signs as local landowners will tow vehicles found on their property.

Early scouting will be particularly important this year due to the extreme drought conditions. If fire danger is extraordinarily high, access may be closed to the public for all activities. If this happens, notices may be posted at property gates.



TYPICAL NO PARKING/NOTRESPASSING SIGNS IN RURAL AREAS OF DISTRICT 13

Weyerhaeuser Corporation has recently acquired lands formerly owned by Longview Timber throughout western Washington. This includes holdings in Snohomish County. Weyerhaeuser has indicated that it is their intent to convert the lands to a “fee access” management system, wherein hunters would have to apply for and purchase a permit to access their lands. The timing for implementation of a fee access program in District 13 remains unclear.

Much the Snohomish County portion of GMU 407 (North Sound) is dominated by homes on small acreages or relatively small farms. Hunters should obtain permission from landowners to hunt on private land and should be very mindful of where houses, livestock, and outbuildings are situated in relation to the areas where hunting will take place. Portions of the GMU are under firearm restrictions. Hunters should research landownership, and understand firearm limitations prior to hunting. A map showing “no shooting” areas and shotgun only areas within Snohomish County is found at: [http://sheriff.snoco.org/Sheriff's Office/Maps.htm](http://sheriff.snoco.org/Sheriff's_Office/Maps.htm).

ELK

District 13 does not have an established elk herd within GMU 448 (Stillaguamish) or 450 (Cascade) boundaries. Small bands occur sporadically along Highway 2 at the south end of GMU 448. These groups typically range between the towns of Baring and Grotto, but occasionally move north as far as Sultan. Elk also sometimes come south of GMU 437 (Sauk) onto the Sauk Prairie in the north end of GMU 448. Three elk were harvested from GMU 448 in 2014 (two 4-point; one 2-point) and 36 hunters reported hunting there. We recommend scouting these areas early and thoroughly because elk occurrence in GMU 448 is spotty and unpredictable. GMU 450 is closed to elk hunting because elk do not occur there.

DEER

BLACK-TAILED DEER GMU 448

District 13 includes GMU 448 (Stillaguamish) and GMU 450 (Cascade), and the majority of the harvest comes from GMU 448. In 2014, 1090 hunters reported harvesting 171 deer in GMU 448, and 81 hunters took 17 deer from GMU 450. Hunters who take the time to scout and learn the area will increase their likelihood of success. We strongly encourage planning and familiarization with local conditions well in advance of hunting season.

Much of GMU 448 is forested, with trees in a 30-50 year age class on public lands. This results in relatively tightly stocked stands where seeing deer may be challenging. On private timberlands, clear cutting has increased dramatically. However, food may be limited in clear cuts, so deer may be harder to find than anticipated. For hunters who enjoy walking or hiking in un-crowded conditions, GMU 448 offers a very rewarding opportunity to get outside and enjoy the season. Parking and walk-in access to DNR and private forest land is available at the intersection of Menzel Lake Road and the P-5000 Road. This gate is located 4.6 miles south of the intersection of Alder Place and Menzel Lake Road in Granite Falls. Parking at other gated access areas in this general area may be limited.



P-5000 ROAD ACCESS GATE

At the south end of GMU 448, walk-in access is available off the Sultan Basin Road. This area has mixed public and private ownership, and hunters should pay close attention to signs designating areas where discharge of firearms is prohibited. Access to DNR lands requires a Discover Pass, and these areas will be signed. DNR properties are gated, and shooting is permitted only during legal hunting seasons.

Vehicle access is available on US Forest Service Roads around Snohomish County.



TYPICAL DNR SIGNS

BLACK-TAILED DEER ISLAND UNITS

Beginning in 2013, GMU 410 was divided into several distinct new units assigned to individual islands. This change will provide more accurate harvest information and assist with the development of management strategies on the islands. GMU 410 is now comprised of those remaining islands that were not assigned a specific number. New GMUs are as follows:

GMU 411	ORCAS ISLAND	GMU 412	SHAW ISLAND
GMU 413	SAN JUAN ISLAND	GMU 414	LOPEZ ISLAND
GMU 415	BLAKELY ISLAND	GMU 416	DECATUR ISLAND
GMU 417	CYPRESS ISLAND	GMU 420	WHIDBEY ISLAND
GMU 419	GUEMES ISLAND	GMU 421	CAMANO ISLAND

We ask that hunters pay close attention to the GMU they hunt and report accurately so we can improve our understanding of harvest in each island.



PHOTO BY DOUG HARMS

GMUS 410-419

Public access on islands within the San Juan Archipelago (San Juan and Skagit counties) is extremely limited. Deer in the islands are plentiful, but typically smaller than their mainland cousins. Most hunting occurs on private property. In San Juan County, written landowner permission is required in order to hunt on private property.

Small parcels of public land are open to hunting on Lopez Island (GMU 414) on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) ownership within the National Monument. BLM lands in the San Juan Islands are administered out of the Wenatchee field office. Hunters should call (509) 665-2100

for information. Additional information is available at: <http://www.blm.gov/or/resources/recreation/sanjuans/>.

The San Juan County Land Bank manages Lopez Hill, which continues to allow limited hunting. Lopez Hill will be open for hunting from September 1 through October 31. More information can be found at: http://sjclandbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/LopezHill_map.pdf, and at <http://lopezhill.org/directions-and-maps/>. Questions can be sent to timc@rockisland.com or timc@sjclandbank.org.

Overnight camping is not allowed in the National Monument or on Lopez Hill. Please check state (<http://www.parks.wa.gov/844/San-Juan-Islands-Region>) and county parks (<http://www.co.san-juan.wa.us/parks/camping.aspx>) for camping.

Cypress Island (GMU 417) is largely owned by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), but some parcels are privately owned. Maps, trails, and access rules can be found at: http://www.dnr.wa.gov/AboutDNR/ManagedLands/Pages/amp_na_cypress_island.aspx.

GMU 420 (WHIDBEY ISLAND) & 421 (CAMANO ISLAND)

Deer are abundant on both islands. However, very little public land is available for hunting on any island, including Whidbey and Camano Islands. Hunters should obtain permission from landowners prior to hunting private property. [The Island County Public Works Department](#) owns a few small parcels on Whidbey and Camano islands that are open to hunting. Hunters should contact them directly for maps and restrictions.

Limited deer hunting will also be allowed on the Trillium Community Forest property, owned by the Whidbey/Camano Land Trust. Hunters should contact the Whidbey Camano Land Trust for additional information regarding access dates, maps, etc. at <http://www.wclt.org/stewardship-trillium-community-forest/>.

Note: hunting on this property is for the purpose of habitat improvement, thus hunting is limited to a few specific days within the total deer season. Deer hunting at Naval Air Station Whidbey is restricted to military personnel.

Hunters reporting incorrect GMU numbers continued to be a problem in the 2014 harvest report. Two hundred sixty-eight deer were reported as taken from GMU 410, an unlikely number probably due to incorrect reporting. In general, the more populated islands with automobile access showed higher harvest trends, with 293 deer reported from GMU 420, 84 deer reported from GMU 411, 75 reported from GMU 413 and 60 reported from GMU 414.

BEAR

This year's drought could affect how and where bears move through their environment as we are seeing unprecedented low water levels in streams and rivers, along with bone dry springs and seeps. As a result of the extremely dry summer, berries are expected to peak and dry out earlier than usual. In fall, bears typically key in to huckleberry fields as a primary food source, and then move to lower elevations as weather cools or snow arrives. This year berries will likely be patchily distributed and less abundant compared to normal years, potentially causing bears to move farther and more often than usual in search of high calorie foods. About 10% of hunters in GMUs 448 and 450 were successful last year, taking 50 animals from GMU 448 and eight from GMU 450.

COUGAR

GMUs 448 and 450 are hunt areas with a harvest guideline of 9-13 animals. In these GMUs, the Director may close the cougar late hunting season after January 1 if cougar harvest meets or exceeds the guideline. Cougar hunters may hunt cougar from January 1 until the hunt area harvest guideline has been reached and the GMU is closed by the Director, or until April 30, whichever occurs first. It is each cougar hunter's responsibility to verify if the cougar late hunting season is open or closed in GMUs 448 and 450. Cougar hunters can verify if the season is open or closed by calling the toll free cougar hunting hotline (1-866-364-4868) or visiting this website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/cougar/>. The hotline and website will be updated weekly beginning January 1, 2016. Last year, the cougar harvest did not exceed the guideline and the units remained open throughout the season. A 2016 cougar tag is required to hunt cougars in April 2016.

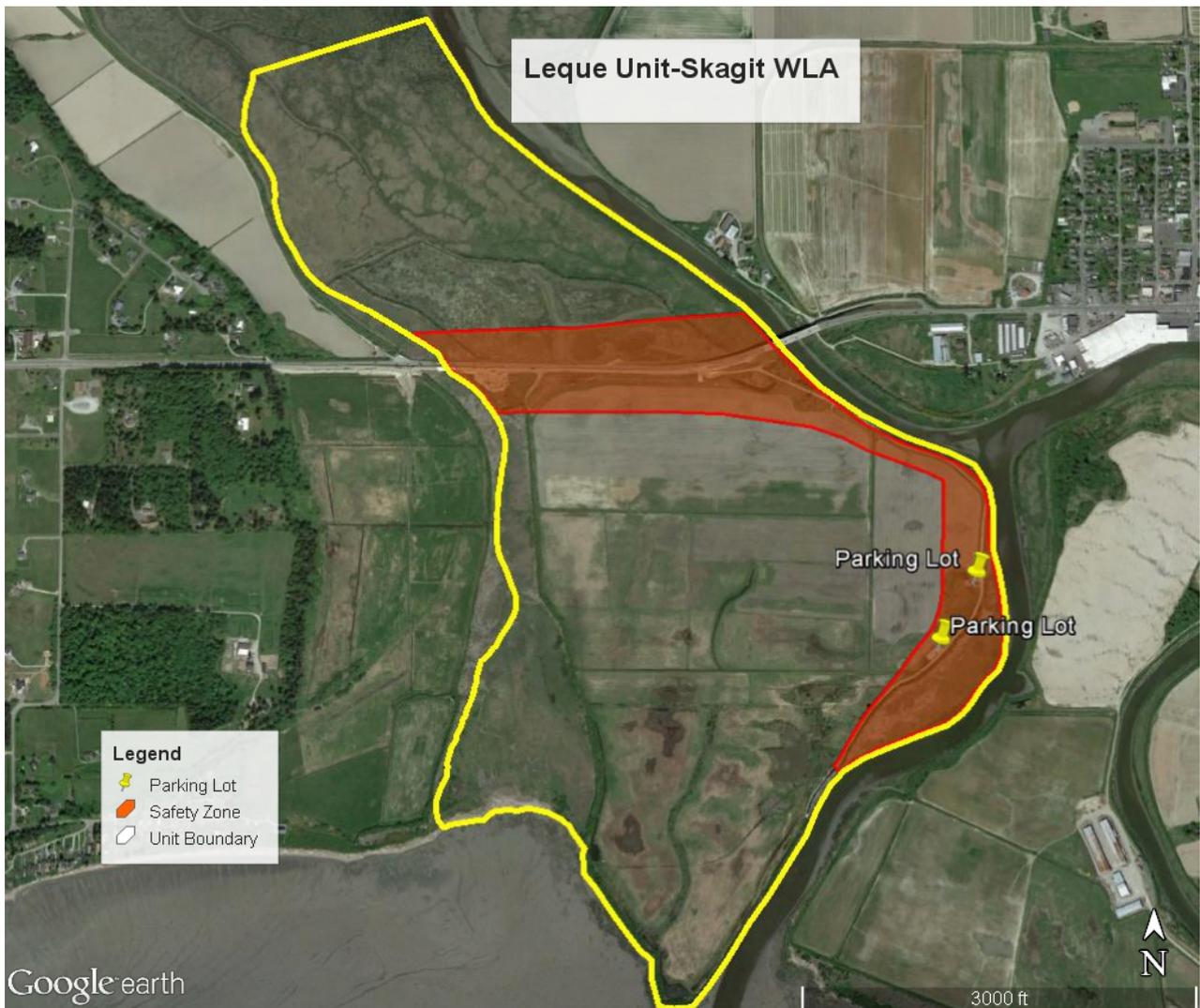
PHEASANT

Game farm produced pheasants will be released this fall on sites which are mapped on the [Go Hunt](#) website and in the [Western Washington pheasant program booklet](#).

In Snohomish County, public pheasant and waterfowl hunting is available on the Ebey Island and Crescent Lake units of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area, and on Leque Island on the Skagit Wildlife Area. There are two access sites on the east side of the Ebey Island Unit. The first access site is under State Highway 2 on the northeast side of the property. The second access site is off of Home Acres Road just off of Highway 2. Access will be open on the west side of the property in the WDFW parking lot near the intersection of Home Acres Road and 43rd St SE. Pheasants will be released on both the west and east parcels of the unit. The Crescent Lake Unit has two parking areas along Crescent Lake Road that provide access to this unit. The Ebey Island and Crescent Lake Units will each receive 35-45 birds that will be released on Friday and

Saturday evenings, and on a varied schedule for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings. All pheasant release sites on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area will be open following the 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. hunting hours.

Leque Island will receive 45-60 birds that will be released on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings. Eide Road will be the only access to Leque Island for this hunting season. The Davis Slough parking area will be closed during the remainder of road and bridge construction on Highway 532. Cover on the unit is in good condition comprised of a mix of native grass fields and agricultural crops planted (barely and fava beans).



LEQUE ISLAND PARKING LOCATIONS



PARKING AND PHEASANT RELEASE AREAS AVAILABLE AT EBHEY ISLAND

In Island County, pheasant release sites on Whidbey Island include a new site off Zylstra Road, along with the Bayview, OLF Coupeville, and Sea Plane Base (SPB) sites. Hunters should check <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/pheasant/western/> for the location of specific sites. Fifteen to 20 birds will be released on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings, except for Bayview, where releases will be Saturday and Sunday mornings.

The SPB (Upper and Lower Game Ranges) and OLF Coupeville on the Whidbey Island Naval Air Station will be open this year. Access to the Sea Plane Base pheasant release sites is open to all hunters. All hunters (military and civilian) need to purchase the installation hunting permit (\$13). This is the required authorization for access and to carry a firearm. Check-in is done at the Torpedo Road gate by signing in and out of the logbook. Pheasant hunting is open to non-military hunters. However, civilian hunters may only hunt waterfowl as a guest of a military hunter. Civilian hunters will be required to submit to a background check prior to hunting Navy property. As a result, hunts should be planned well in advance and all hunters are advised to check with WNAS Biologist John Phillips (360-257-8873) for the most up to date rules and requirements.

BAND-TAILED PIGEON

Band-tailed pigeons may be hunted in late September. A migratory bird authorization card is required and the daily bag limit is two birds. The birds can be found in managed forest lands with mixed conifer age classes that provide feeding areas adjacent to roosting areas. These types of habitat are often found on private timber lands or DNR lands, so expect the same gated conditions described above. Band-tailed pigeons have strong affinities for the same areas, so scouting before your hunt is important.

GROUSE

Ruffed grouse is the common species in District 13, with blue grouse found at higher elevations. Ruffed grouse are typically found at elevations below 2500'. Both species favor mixed timber habitats, often near water. Hot, dry weather in 2015 may negatively affect grouse hunting this year. Hunters should look for mixed conifer and hardwood areas, especially in riparian areas, for the most likely place to find grouse. Abandoned or low use logging roads are good places to look for grouse as well.

WATERFOWL

For an excellent introduction to waterfowl hunting, see "Let's Go Waterfowl Hunting" at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/waterfowl/>.

Strong spring and summer reproduction numbers in British Columbia and Washington suggest a strong 2015-16 season for numbers of birds potentially in the region. However, this year's drought will influence where birds congregate.

Waterfowl hunting in District 13 is expected to be productive as long as weather conditions are favorable. The weather outlook for the coming fall and winter is for continued warm, dry conditions, so we anticipate a slow start to the hunting season. During mild winters, ducks tend to stay in more northerly areas of British Columbia. However, as colder fronts move in and conditions become colder and wetter, hunters can expect increasing numbers of waterfowl to arrive in District 13.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY

Waterfowl hunting is available on the Ebey Island and Crescent Lake units of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area, and on Leque Island on the Skagit Wildlife Area. There are two access sites on the east side of the Ebey Island Unit. The first access site is under State Highway 2 on the northeast side of the property. The second access site is off of Home Acres Road just off of

Highway 2. Access will be open on the west side of the property in the WDFW parking lot near the intersection of Home Acres Road and 43rd St SE. The Crescent Lake Unit has two parking areas along Crescent Lake Road that provide access to this unit.

At this time, we have tentative agreements with landowners for six waterfowl quality hunt units located primarily in the Stillaguamish Delta and five snow goose units in the same general area in the coming season. These sites are all located on private lands that are enrolled in the Private Lands Access Program. Additional units may be added in the fall. More information about individual sites as they are finalized, including maps and access rules, as well as the program in general, may be found at http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/hunting_access/private_lands/. Waterfowl hunt units on private lands will open as crop harvests are completed and other conditions are met, so not every unit will be available on opening day. We anticipate that all units will be open by mid-November.



Reports from Wrangal Island, where our lesser snow geese breed, indicate extremely high numbers of chicks hatched and survived to fledging. Therefore, we are expecting higher numbers of geese coming into Washington than were seen last winter. In addition to the traditional high concentrations in the Stanwood area, snow geese appear to be expanding in Snohomish County and it is likely that at least 5,000-10,000 birds will spend

some time in the Snohomish system.

The Spencer Island Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area will be boat access and walk-in this year. Parking for the Spencer Island Unit will be one quarter mile back from the bridge to the island near the sewage treatment facility buildings.

There are two access sites to the east parcel of the Ebey Island Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. The first access site is under State Highway 2 on the northeast side of the property. The second access site is off of Home Acres Road just off of Highway 2. Access to the west parcel of the unit is from the WDFW parking lot near the intersection of Home Acres Road and 51st St SE.

WHIDBEY AND CAMANO ISLAND

Access to public lands on Whidbey Island is extremely limited. Hunters should be aware that Deer Lagoon is closed to hunting. Hunters interested in accessing Dugualla Bay should contact

the [Whidbey Camano Land Trust](#), which now owns portions of the upland area, for information on property boundaries and whether or not hunting is permitted on their ownership.

Waterfowl hunting on Naval Air Station Whidbey Island is open to military personnel and their guests. All hunters (military and civilian) need to purchase the installation hunting permit (\$13). This is the required authorization for access and to carry a firearm. Duck blinds are accessed by entering the SPB gate and non-military guests must be in the same vehicle as the military hunter. For additional information, contact WNAS Biologist John Phillips (360-257-8873).

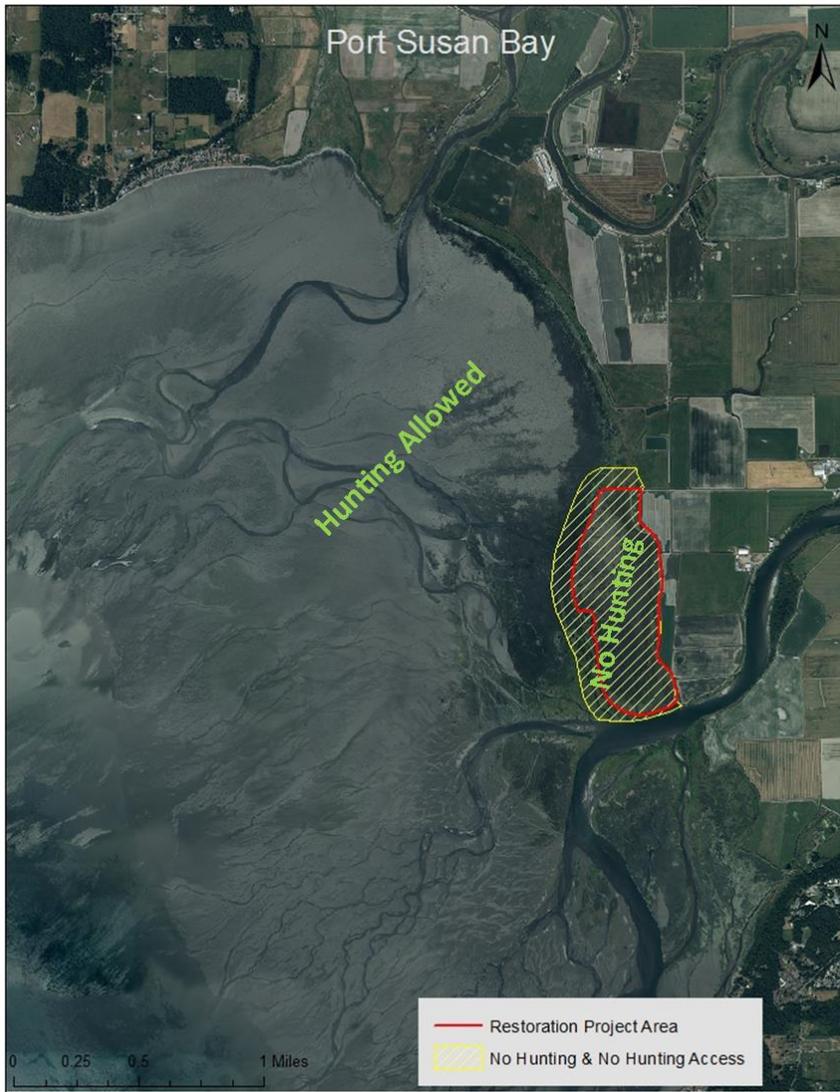
Iverson Spit Preserve is managed by Island County Parks staff within the Island County Public Works Department. Per Island County Code 9.40.320, firearms, weapons, and hunting are prohibited. The signs below were posted in 2014. Questions regarding the preserve should be directed to the Island County Public Works Department (360-679-7331).



IVERSON SPIT PRESERVE PARK BOUNDARIES AND SIGNAGE

PORT SUSAN BAY

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) allows hunting over a majority of tidelands under their ownership at Port Susan Bay. However, the restored area, which used to be diked, and a 150-yard buffer around it is off limits to hunting, and there is no hunting access from TNC property (see map below). For further information regarding hunting TNC ownership contact Jolene Boyd, TNC Puget Sound Stewardship Coordinator, at jboyd@tnc.org or by phone at (360) 419-3125.



MAP OF RESTRICTED HUNTING AREA OWNED BY THE NATURE CONSERVANCY