

V.A.5.N.n.6. PANICUM VIRGATUM TIDAL HERBACEOUS ALLIANCE

Switchgrass Tidal Herbaceous Alliance

Physiognomic Class	Herbaceous Vegetation (V.)
Physiognomic Subclass	Perennial graminoid vegetation (grassland) (V.A.)
Physiognomic Group	Temperate or sub-polar grassland (V.A.5.)
Physiognomic Subgroup	Natural/Semi-natural (V.A.5.N.)
Formation	Tidal temperate or subpolar grassland (V.A.5.N.n.)

Alliance **PANICUM VIRGATUM TIDAL HERBACEOUS ALLIANCE (V.A.5.N.n.6)**

Panicum virgatum - Carex silicea Herbaceous Vegetation

Switchgrass - Beach Sedge Herbaceous Vegetation

Brackish Meadow

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL: 2

USFS WETLAND SYSTEM: ESTUARINE

RANGE:

Fire Island National Seashore

This association occurs at the Robert Moses State Park and in the Wilderness Area of Fire Island.

Globally

Brackish meadows of the northeastern Atlantic coast

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:

Fire Island National Seashore

This association is a brackish meadow that occurs inland from salt marshes or salt shrublands. This vegetation is often periodically flooded by tides. There is some soil development; the substrate is characterized by loamy sand over outwash sands.

Globally

This brackish meadow occurs at the higher reaches of salt marshes and is irregularly flooded by the tides. It occurs on sandy substrates.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES:

Fire Island National Seashore

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Herbaceous	<i>Panicum virgatum, Spartina patens, Euthamia tenuifolia</i>

Globally

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Herbaceous	<i>Panicum virgatum, Spartina patens, Carex silicea</i>

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES:

Fire Island National Seashore

Panicum virgatum, Euthamia tenuifolia, Agalinis maritima, Juncus canadensis

Globally

Panicum virgatum, Spartina patens var. monogyna, Carex silicea, Euthamia tenuifolia

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION:

Fire Island National Seashore

This brackish meadow community is generally dominated by *Panicum virgatum* or *Spartina patens* with *Panicum virgatum* as an associate. This vegetation is characterized by a relatively high species diversity, with a mixture of upland and facultative wetland species present, including *Phragmites australis*, *Juncus canadensis*, *Sabatia stellaris*, *Juncus greenei*, *Triadenium virginicum*, *Euthamia tenuifolia*, *Strophostyles*

helvola, *Panicum columbianum*, *Agalinis maritima*, *Cyperus polystachyos*, *Viola lanceolata*, *Eragrostis spectabilis*, *Lechea maritima*, *Solidago sempervirens* and *Andropogon virginicus*. A shrub layer is common, but usually sparse, with *Myrica pensylvanica*, *Baccharis halimifolia*, or *Rosa rugosa* commonly occurring.

Dowhan and Rozsa (1989) note the occurrence of a large number of species at the “brackish upland border of salt marshes” on Fire Island. Presumably, their vegetation is related to, if not synonymous, with this association. In addition to those species listed above, the authors note *Eleocharis rostellata*, *Agrostis stolonifera*, *Andropogon glomerata*, *Erechtites hieracifolia*, *Echinochloa walteri*, *Elymus virginicus*, *Spartina cynosuroides*, *Euthamia tenuifolia*, *Iris prismatica*, *Calystegia sepium*, *Boehmeria cylindrica*, and *Limonium carolinianum*.

Globally

The dominant species are *Panicum virgatum*, *Spartina patens* (= var. *monogyna*), and *Carex silicea*. Other associates may include *Schizachyrium scoparium*, *Andropogon gerardii*, *Distichlis spicata*, *Setaria parviflora*, *Eragrostis spectabilis*, *Elymus virginicus*, *Panicum amarum*, *Cladium mariscoides*, *Cyperus polystachyos*, *Cyperus dentatus*, *Schoenoplectus pungens* (= *Scirpus pungens*), *Juncus gerardii*, *Polygala verticillata*, *Solidago sempervirens*, *Euthamia caroliniana* (= *Euthamia tenuifolia*), *Agalinis maritima*, *Sabatia* spp., *Artemisia campestris* ssp. *caudata*, *Aster* spp., *Liatris scariosa* var. *novae-angliae*, *Fimbristylis castanea*, and *Oenothera oakesiana* (= *Oenothera parviflora* var. *oakesiana*). Shrubs that may occur at low cover include *Morella pensylvanica* (= *Myrica pensylvanica*), *Baccharis halimifolia*, and *Prunus maritima*.

Synonymy: Salt marsh complex, high marsh, in part (NJ)

COMMENTS:

Fire Island National Seashore

Globally

States/Provinces: CT:S?, DE:S?, MA:S?, MD:S?, NJ:S?, NY:S?, RI:S?

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES:

CONSERVATION RANK: G?

DATABASE CODE: CEGL006150

MAP UNITS: FIIS plots 30, 43, 50

REFERENCES:

Dowhan and Rozsa 1989

Hunt 2000

Johnson 1985

Nixon 1982