V.A.7.N.g.1. SCHIZACHYRIUM SCOPARIUM SSP. LITTORALE SHRUB HERBACEOUS ALLIANCE

Seaside Little Bluestem Shrub Herbaceous Alliance

Physiognomic Class	Herbaceous Vegetation (V.)
Physiognomic Subclass	Perennial graminoid vegetation (grassland) (V.A.)
Physiognomic Group	Temperate or sub-polar grassland with a sparse shrub layer (V.A.7.)
Physiognomic Subgroup	Natural/Semi-natural (V.A.5.N.)
Formation	Medium-tall temperate or subpolar grassland with a sparse shrub layer (V.A.5.N.g.)

Alliance **SCHIZACHYRIUM SCOPARIUM SSP. LITTORALE SHRUB HERBACEOUS ALLIANCE (V.A.7.N.g.1.)**

Myrica pensylvanica / Schizachyrium scoparium ssp. littorale - Danthonia spicata Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation

Northern Bayberry / Seaside Little Bluestem - Poverty Oatgrass Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation

Northern Sandplain Grassland

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL: 2

USFS WETLAND SYSTEM: N/A

RANGE:

Fire Island National Seashore

This association occurs southwest of the cemetary on the William Floyd Estate. It also occurs in small patches (<0.5 ha) in the inner more protected portions of the Wilderness Area of Fire Island.

Globally

North Atlantic coast of Massachusetts, Long Island New York and possibly in Rhode Island.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:

Fire Island National Seashore

This sandplain grassland occurs on flat areas of loamy sand over sand and gravel outwash deposits on the William Floyd Estate, and on stabilized protected areas of the dune system on Fire Island.

Globally

Occurs in coastal areas on very sandy soil of outwash plains within the influence of offshore winds and salt spray. Also occurs in frost pockets.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES:

Fire Island National Seashore

Stratum	Species
Shrub	*Myrica pensylvanica*
Herbaceous	*Schizachyrium scoparium* ssp. *littorale, Aster spectabilis, Poa pratensis*

Globally

Stratum	Species
Herbaceous	*Schizachyrium scoparium* ssp. *littorale, Danthonia spicata*, and/or *Deschampsia flexuosa*

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES:

Fire Island National Seashore

Schizachyrium scoparium ssp. *littorale, Aster spectabilis, Euthamia tenuifolia*

Globally

Myrica pensylvanica, Schizachyrium scoparium ssp. *littorale, Danthonia spicata*, and/or *Deschampsia flexuosa*

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION:

Fire Island National Seashore

At the William Floyd Estate, this coastal sandplain grassland is a patchy mosaic dominated by *Schizachyrium scoparium* with patches of *Aster spectabilis, Euthamia tenuifolia* and some *Panicum virgatum* and *Sorghastrum nutans*. *Poa pratensis* is common within the community, which occurs adjacent to a mowed lawn. There is a scattered short shrub layer dominated by *Myrica pensylvanica* with *Rubus flagellaris* present. The vegetation at the Floyd Estate is of human origin, but native species mimic the natural condition of this association.

At Fire Island, this vegetation occurs in small patches that are generally less than 0.5 ha in size. *Panicum virgatum* is the most characteristic species, but *Schizachyrium scoparium* occurs in several areas as well. The vegetation noted as "sand flats" by Dowhan and Rozsa (1989) is likely to be synonymous with this assoction. The authors list the following species as frequent as common: *Euthamia tenuifolia, Euthamia graminifolia, Solidago odora, Oenothera parviflora* var. *oakesiana, Carex silicea, Panicum virgatum, Linaria canadensis, Conyza canadensis, Aster dumosus, Eupatorium hyssopifolium, Gnaphalium obtusifolium,* and *Lactuca canadensis.* Other associates include *Bromus tectorum, Andropogon virginicum, Agrostis hyemalis, Danthonia spicata, Dichanthelium acuminatum, Dichanthelium sphaerocarpon, Juncus dichotomus, Chrysopsis mariana, Cirsium horridulum, Apocynum cannabinum, Rumex acetosella, Eragrostis spectabilis, Triplasis purpurea, Cyperus filiculmis, Polygonella articulata, Artemisia caudata,* and *Myrica gale.*

Globally

This northern coastal sand plain grassland community is usually found on very sandy soil of outwash plains within the influence of offshore winds and salt spray. Shrubs are usually present and of variable cover, and include *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi, Myrica pensylvanica, Quercus ilicifolia, Comptonia peregrina, Gaylussacia baccata* and *Vaccinium angustifolium*. Grasses collectively account for more than 50% cover and characteristically include *Schizachyrium scoparium ssp. littorale, Danthonia spicata*, and *Deschampsia flexuosa*. Other typical species include *Carex pensylvanica, Ionactis linariifolius, Solidago puberula, Lechea maritima, Aster paternus, Aster dumosus, Helianthemum dumosum, Juncus greenei, Euthamia tenuifolia* and *Rubus flagellaris*.

COMMENTS:

Fire Island National Seashore

This community occurs adjacent to a mowed lawn on the William Floyd Estate. On Fire Island, it occurs in very small patches that are difficult to differentiate from interdunal swales on aerial photography.

Globally

States/Provinces:	MA:S?, NY:S?
OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES:	
CONSERVATION RANK:	G2 (99-12-02)
DATABASE CODE:	CEGL006067
MAP UNITS:	FIIS plot 57

REFERENCES:

Askings 1997
Dowhan and Rozsa 1989
Dunwiddie 1996
Dunwiddie and Caljouw 1990
Dunwiddie et al. 1997
Goldstein 1997
Reschke 1990