

Fire Island Photo Interpretation Key

Class: *Spartina alterniflora* / (*Ascophyllum nodosum*)
Acadian/Virginian Zone Herbaceous Alliance
(*Spartina* Low Salt Marsh)

TNC Alliance Code: V. A. 5. N. n. 1. 4192

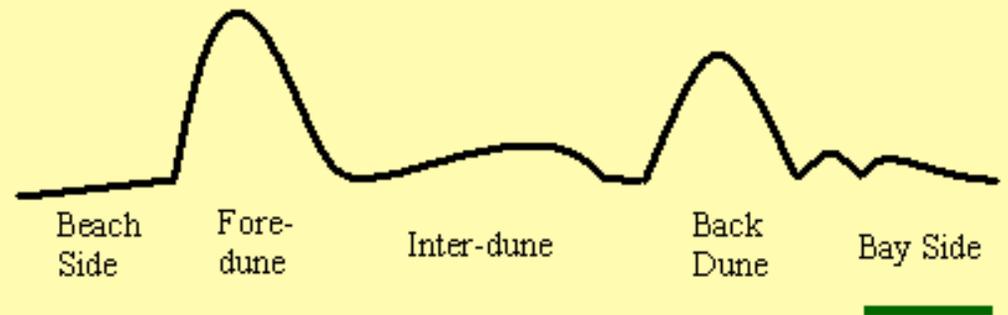
CMI Code: 4192

Island Locator:

Fire Island and the Floyd Estate commonly found on bay side of island and along other protected shores



Cross-Section:

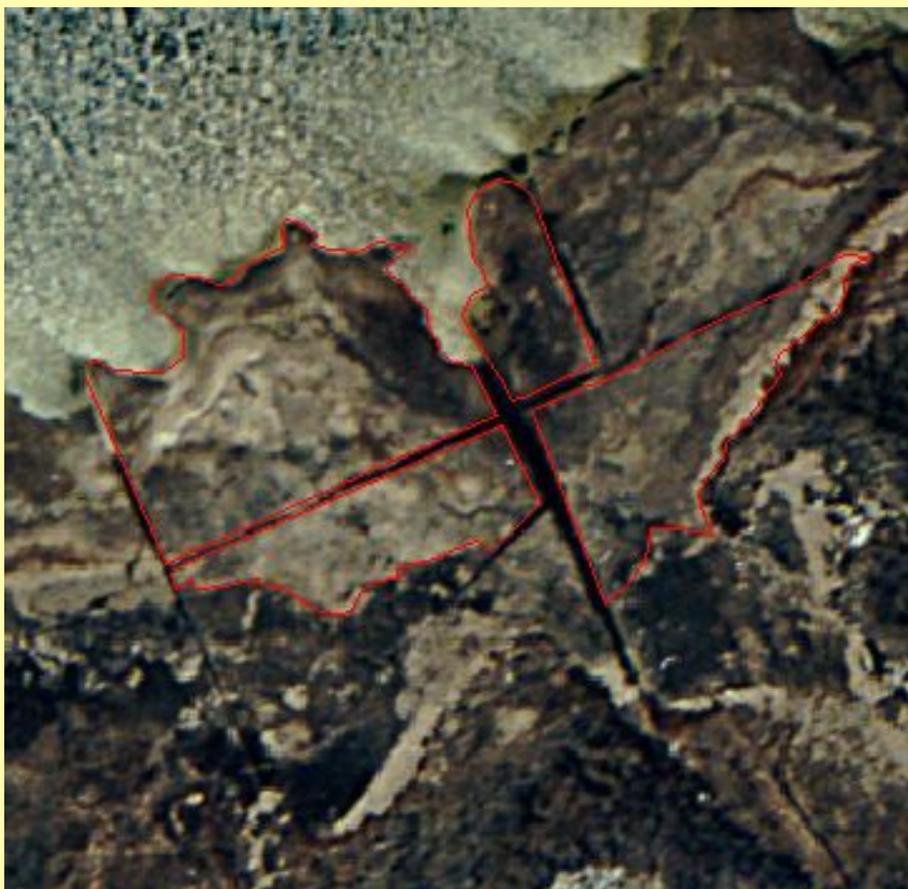


TNC Alliance Description: This low salt marsh occurs on the bay side of the barrier islands often adjacent to salt pannes. The substrate is characterized by shallow peat over old overwash / inlet flood delta deposits. This low salt marsh community has low species diversity and is strongly dominated by *Spartina*

alterniflora. *Spartina patens*, *Distichlis spicata*, and *Salicornia* spp. occur with low cover. *Ulva lactuca* occurs sporadically throughout, but with low percent cover.

Photo Interpretation: One of the two common salt marsh types found on both the William Floyd Estate and Fire Island. This type is associated with more regularly flooded parts of the marsh. The color of this type is usually a medium to dark gray adjacent to water bodies, mosquito ditches, and salt pannes. The *Spartina patens* types are found in close proximity but tend to be lighter in color and more tan.

Aerial Photos:



Spartina low marsh on Fire Island outlined in red



Spartina low marsh on Floyd Estate along bay.

Field Notes: Almost exclusively *S. alterniflora*, occurring in dense mats. Often compacted nearest to shore. Regularly flooded during high tide. Often adjacent to *Spartina* High Salt Marsh association, which occurs just above this association in tidal salt marshes.

Ground Photos:



S. patens (this class) on left, *S. alterniflora* on right
(tall, wide leaves)



S. alterniflora field

Similar Alliances: *Spartina patens* - *Distichlis spicata* - *Plantago maritima* **Herbaceous Vegetation:**

Dominated by *S. alterniflora* rather than *S. patens* or *D. spicata*. *S. alterniflora* is a taller, broader leaved grass than either *S. patens* or *D. spicata*. Occurs above this (opposite side of ocean/bay), in irregularly tidally flooded salt marshes. In photos, the *S. patens*-*D. spicata* alliance appears lighter in color than this alliance, and smooth in texture.



Spartina
patens

Spartina
alterniflora