

USGS-NPS Vegetation Mapping Program

Isle Royale National Park

Carex lasiocarpa - Carex oligosperma / Sphagnum spp. Herbaceous Vegetation

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COMMON NAME | Wiregrass Sedge - Few-seed Sedge / Peatmoss species Herbaceous Vegetation |
| SYNONYM | Northern Poor Fen |
| PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS | Herbaceous Vegetation (V) |
| PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS | Perennial graminoid vegetation (V.A) |
| PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP | Temperate or subpolar grassland (V.A.5) |
| PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBGROUP | Natural/Semi-natural (V.A.5.N) |
| FORMATION | Saturated temperate or subpolar grassland (V.A.5.N.m) |
| ALLIANCE | CAREX OLIGOSPERMA - CAREX LASIOCARPA SATURATED HERBACEOUS ALLIANCE |

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 2

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM PALUSTRINE

RANGE

Isle Royale National Park

This community is rare and scattered in the central to northeast portions of the park.

Globally

This association is found in North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Manitoba, and Ontario.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

Isle Royale National Park

This community occupies wet depressions at elevations ranging from 650 to 740 feet. Soils are very poorly drained peats that are saturated.

Globally

Stands are found in peatlands with low exposure to mineral-rich groundwater, including basin fens, shores above the level of seasonal flooding and larger peatlands. Water hydrology is saturated (Harris *et al.* 1996). The surface water is slightly acidic (pH 4.1-5.9) and nutrient poor [calcium < 13 mg/l] (MN NHP 1993).

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Isle Royale National Park

| <u>Stratum</u> | <u>Species</u> |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Short shrub | <i>Chamaedaphne calyculata</i> |
| Graminoid | <i>Carex oligosperma</i> |
| Nonvascular | <i>Sphagnum</i> spp. |

Globally

| <u>Stratum</u> | <u>Species</u> |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Short shrub | <i>Chamaedaphne calyculata</i> , <i>Andromeda polifolia</i> |
| Graminoid | <i>Carex lasiocarpa</i> , <i>Carex oligosperma</i> |
| Nonvascular | <i>Sphagnum</i> spp. |

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

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Carex oligosperma, *Sphagnum* spp.

Globally

Carex lasiocarpa, *Carex chordorrhiza*, *Carex limosa*, *Carex oligosperma*, *Rhynchospora alba*, *Scirpus cespitosus*, *Sphagnum* spp.

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Isle Royale National Park

This poor fen is a peatland dominated by sedges and peat moss. *Carex oligosperma* is the most abundant sedge (over 50% cover), other common herbs are *Calamagrostis canadensis* and *Campanula aparinoides* (each with < 25% cover); other characteristic herbs are *Drosera rotundifolia*, *Iris versicolor*, *Platanthera psychodes*, *Dulichium arundinaceum*, and *Comarum palustre* (= *Potentilla palustris*); the most abundant shrub is *Chamaedaphne calyculata* (< 25% cover); *Sphagnum* spp. are very common in the groundlayer (average 37% cover).

Globally

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The vegetation is dominated by graminoids, with up to 25% shrub cover, and scattered trees. The dominant graminoid is *Carex lasiocarpa*, and typical associates include *Carex chordorrhiza*, *Carex limosa*, *Carex oligosperma*, *Rhynchospora alba*, *Scirpus cespitosus*, and *Scheuchzeria palustris*. Forbs include *Sarracenia purpurea*. The low shrub layer contains *Andromeda polifolia*, *Betula pumila*, *Chamaedaphne calyculata*, *Larix laricina*, *Salix discolor*, *Salix pedicularis*, and *Vaccinium oxycoccos*. The moss layer is virtually continuous, and is dominated by *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *Sphagnum fuscum*, and *Sphagnum magellanicum* (Chapman *et al.* 1989, MN NHP 1993, Harris *et al.* 1996).

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES

Isle Royale National Park

Information not available.

CONSERVATION RANK G3G4.

DATABASE CODE CEGL002265

MAP UNITS 42

COMMENTS

REFERENCES

- Chapman, K. A., D. A. Albert, and G. A. Reese. 1989. Draft descriptions of Michigan's natural community types. Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Lansing, MI. 35 pp.
- Harris, A. G., S. C. McMurray, P. W. C. Uhlig, J. K. Jeglum, R. F. Foster, and G. D. Racey. 1996. Field guide to the wetland ecosystem classification for northwestern Ontario. Ont. Minist. Nat. Resour., Northwest Sci. Tech. Field Guide FG-01. Thunder Bay, Ont. 74 p.
- Minnesota Natural Heritage Program. 1993. Minnesota's native vegetation: A key to natural communities. Ver. 1.5. Minn. Dep. Nat. Resour., Nat. Heritage Prog. St. Paul, Minn. 110 p.