

Central Cordgrass Wet Prairie

Site Characteristics: Stands occur on lowland areas that are flooded in spring and saturated for much of the growing season. The soils are typically deep, fine-textured, poorly drained, and have high organic content. On some sites there is an impermeable subsurface layer that impedes soil drainage. Stands of this wide-ranging alliance are found on level to gently sloping sites with sand, loam, or clay soils. Wet sand prairies may be more acidic and more likely to become dry in summer; however, floristic characteristics that reflect those factors are not known. Stands may occur near lakes or rivers or in depressions. Locations supporting this alliance are sometimes slightly - moderately alkaline areas along ephemeral, intermittent or perennial streams, and overflow areas of large river floodplains. This alliance can also be found in swales, meadows, and on the margins of marshes, ponds or lakes. The water table is typically high, within 1 m of the surface; the sites are typically flooded for part of the winter and spring. Soil water movement is rapid enough to preclude the accumulation of salts in the surface horizon.

Vegetation Characteristics: A dense layer of graminoids dominates this community. Forbs (min 60% cover) and small trees or shrubs are also common. The vegetation is typically 1-2 m tall. Canada Bluejoint and Prairie Cordgrass are the two most abundant species. Several common Sedge species (*Carex spp.*) found in this community include Common Lake Sedge, Water Sedge, Woolly Sedge, and Hairy-leaved Lake Sedge. Other species that occur with less frequency in this community include Big Bluestem, New England Aster, Wild Strawberry, Northern Bedstraw, Saw-tooth Sunflower, Blue Flag Iris, Prairie Blazing Star, Winged Loosestrife, Cowbane, Switchgrass, Virginia Mountain Mint, Smooth Goldenrod, Purple Meadow-rue, and Culver's root.

Range:

Conservation Status: G3 - Vulnerable

Management Considerations: Periodic prolonged flooding and fire prevent woody vegetation from dominating this community. Prairie Cordgrass is an early colonizer of suitable habitat and is tolerant of sediment deposition. Stands of Prairie Cordgrass have high production rates, however the rough-edged leaves make for poor forage quality, and it is not readily eaten by livestock or wildlife. Its tall height and thick growth provide shade and cover for wildlife and certain bird species.



Iowa NRCS Plant Community Description

This community description is a compilation of the Community Association and its over-riding Community Alliance description as provided by NatureServe (www.natureserve.org/explorer). Where necessary, community descriptions were adapted as recommended by Iowa plant community experts.

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Central Cordgrass Wet Prairie Species List

Scientific Name	Common Name	Strata	Functional Group	IA C Of C	Seeds/Lb	State Status
<i>Amorpha fruticosa</i>	Indigo bush, false indigo	Shrub Layer	Sub-Shrub, Legume	5	59,200	
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big bluestem	Herbaceous Layer	P-Grass, Warm Season	4	160,000	
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp milkweed	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	4	76,800	
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly weed	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	6	68,800	
<i>Baptisia alba</i>	White wild indigo	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb, Legume	6	27,200	
<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>	Bluejoint	Herbaceous Layer, Dominant	P-Grass, Cool Season	5	4,480,000	
<i>Carex aquatilis</i>	Water sedge	Herbaceous Layer	P-Sedge, Cool Season	7	795,776	
<i>Carex atherodes</i>	Hairy-leaved lake sedge	Herbaceous Layer	P-Sedge, Cool Season	8	464,000	
<i>Carex lacustris</i>	Common lake sedge	Herbaceous Layer	P-Sedge, Cool Season	7	512,000	
<i>Carex pellita</i>	Wooly sedge	Herbaceous Layer	P-Sedge, Cool Season	4	448,000	
<i>Carex sartwellii</i>	Running marsh sedge	Herbaceous Layer	P-Sedge, Cool Season	7	1,014,748	
<i>Carex spp.</i>	True Sedges	Herbaceous Layer	Sedge, Cool Season			
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Buttonbush	Shrub Layer	Shrub	6	96,000	
<i>Cornus spp.</i>	Dogwood	Shrub Layer	Shrub			
<i>Dichanthelium clandestinum</i>	Deertongue grass	Herbaceous Layer	P-Grass, Cool Season	4	350,000	
<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	Wild strawberry	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	3	927,592	
<i>Galium boreale</i>	Northern bedstraw	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	7	1,120,000	
<i>Helianthus grosseserratus</i>	Saw-tooth sunflower	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	4	240,000	
<i>Helianthus mollis</i>	Downy sunflower	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	6	112,000	
<i>Iris shrevei</i>	Blue flag	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	6	16,000	
<i>Leersia oryzoides</i>	Rice cut-grass	Herbaceous Layer	P-Grass, Cool Season	2	544,000	
<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	Prairie blazing star	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	6	176,000	
<i>Lythrum alatum</i>	Winged loosestrife	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	3	48,000,000	
<i>Oxypolis rigidior</i>	Cowbane	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	8	233,600	
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass	Herbaceous Layer	P-Grass, Warm Season	5	224,000	
<i>Poa palustris</i>	Foul meadow grass	Herbaceous Layer	P-Grass, Cool Season	5	2,080,000	
<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>	Common mountain mint	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	4	3,520,000	
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed Susan	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	2	496,000	
<i>Rudbeckia subtomentosa</i>	Fragrant coneflower	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	4	433,600	

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<i>Salix spp.</i>	Willow	Shrub Layer				
<i>Sium suave</i>	Water parsnip	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	8	453,592	
<i>Solidago gigantea</i>	Smooth goldenrod	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	3	4,000,000	
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indian grass	Herbaceous Layer	P-Grass, Warm Season	4	192,000	
<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	Slough grass, cord grass	Herbaceous Layer, Dominant	P-Grass, Warm Season	4	105,600	
<i>Spiranthes cernua</i>	Nodding ladies'-tresses	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	4		
<i>Stachys palustris</i>	Woundwort	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	4	256,000	
<i>Symphotrichum ericoides</i>	Heath aster, frost weed	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	3	3,200,000	
<i>Symphotrichum novae-angliae</i>	New England aster	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	3	1,056,000	
<i>Thalictrum dasycarpum</i>	Purple meadow-rue	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	4	176,000	
<i>Tripsacum dactyloides</i>	Gama grass	Herbaceous Layer	P-Grass, Warm Season	3	5,920	
<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>	Culver's root	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	5	12,800,000	
<i>Viola sagittata</i>	Arrow-leaved violet	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	7		

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