

## Midwest Dry Sand Prairie

**Site Characteristics:** Stands occur on steep slopes, sandy outwash, sandy lake plains, and alluvial deposits. They may occur on sand ridges (including inland dunes and sandy areas of coarse-textured end moraines) and areas of blowouts. This community may also result from abandonment of farming on sandy soils. Sand prairies occur on more stable sandy soils that are well-drained to excessively drained, coarse-textured sands, loamy sands, and sandy loams. Gravels are very minor. Soils of this community generally lack a dark A horizon, have brownish, yellowish, grayish, or reddish thin B horizons, and no mottling. The low nutrient levels, low levels of organic matter, and very low water-retaining capacity of the deep sands undoubtedly influence the species composition and structure of this alliance.

**Vegetation Characteristics:** The vegetation is typically an open graminoid layer with a mixture of forbs and occasional prominence of lichens, blue-green algae and dwarf-shrubs. Graminoids dominate the herbaceous layer, which can be open to closed. Dominant species include Pennsylvania Sedge, Poverty Oat Grass, June Grass, Little Bluestem, and Porcupine Grass. Other graminoids include Hairy Grama, Fall Witchgrass, Panic Grass, Rough Sedge and Sand Dropseed. In more open dune-like habitats Prairie Sandreed may be present. A wide variety of forbs are present including Whorled Milkweed, Western Ragweed, Prairie Sagewort, Everlasting, Flowering Spurge, Hawkweed, Slender-leaved Pinweed, Tall Blazingstar, Ontario Blazingstar, Toadflax, Hoary Puccoon, Wild Lupine, Sand Primrose, Purple Milkwort, Prairie Ragwort, Gray Goldenrod, Goats Rue, Ladies' Tobacco, Large-flowered beardtongue, Hairy Puccoon, and Sand Bracted Sedge.. False Heather, and other sand barrens species, are more often restricted to local disturbances such as blowouts or slipfaces.

**Range:**

**Conservation Status:** G2 - Imperiled



### Iowa NRCS Plant Community Description

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**Management Considerations:** Sand blowouts may occur during wind storms, exposing the subsoil layers and converting the type to a sand barrens.

| MIDWEST DRY SAND PRAIRIE          |                          |                            |                      |         |              |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---------|--------------|--------------|
| SCIENTIFIC NAME                   | COMMON NAME              | STRATA                     | FUNCTIONAL GROUP     | IA CofC | SEEDS/L B    | STATE STATUS |
| <i>Ambrosia psilostachya</i>      | Western ragweed          | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 2       | 67,429.00    |              |
| <i>Antennaria plantaginifolia</i> | Ladies'-tobacco          | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 2       | 4,400,000.00 |              |
| <i>Artemisia frigida</i>          | Prairie sagewort         | Herbaceous Layer           | SUB-SHRUB            | 4       | 4,536,000.00 | SC           |
| <i>Asclepias verticillata</i>     | Whorled milkweed         | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 0       | 176,000.00   |              |
| <i>Bouteloua hirsuta</i>          | Hairy grama              | Herbaceous Layer           | P-GRASS, WARM SEASON | 7       | 1,120,000.00 |              |
| <i>Calamovilfa longifolia</i>     | Prairie sandreed         | Herbaceous Layer           | P-GRASS, WARM SEASON | 7       | 274,000.00   |              |
| <i>Carex muehlenbergii</i>        | Sand bracted sedge       | Herbaceous Layer           | P-SEDGE, COOL SEASON | 5       | 192,000.00   |              |
| <i>Carex pensylvanica</i>         | Pennsylvania oak sedge   | Herbaceous Layer, Dominant | P-SEDGE, COOL SEASON | 6       | 480,000.00   |              |
| <i>Cyperus lupulinus</i>          | Slender flatsedge        | Herbaceous Layer           | A-SEDGE, WARM SEASON | 8       | 464,000.00   |              |
| <i>Cyperus schweinitzii</i>       | Rough sandsedge          | Herbaceous Layer           | P-SEDGE, WARM SEASON | 5       | 368,000.00   |              |
| <i>Danthonia spicata</i>          | Poverty oat grass        | Herbaceous Layer, Dominant | P-GRASS, COOL SEASON | 5       | 400,000.00   |              |
| <i>Dichanthelium acuminatum</i>   | Panic grass              | Herbaceous Layer           | P-GRASS, COOL SEASON | 3       |              |              |
| <i>Digitaria cognata</i>          | Fall witchgrass          | Herbaceous Layer           | P-GRASS, WARM SEASON | 5       |              |              |
| <i>Euphorbia corollata</i>        | Flowering spurge         | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 3       | 128,000.00   |              |
| <i>Hesperostipa spartea</i>       | Porcupine grass          | Herbaceous Layer, Dominant | P-GRASS, COOL SEASON | 6       | 10,880.00    |              |
| <i>Hieracium longipilum</i>       | Hawkweed                 | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 4       |              |              |
| <i>Hudsonia tomentosa</i>         | False heather            | Herbaceous Layer           | SUB-SHRUB            | 10      |              | E            |
| <i>Koeleria macrantha</i>         | June grass               | Herbaceous Layer, Dominant | P-GRASS, COOL SEASON | 7       | 3,200,000.00 |              |
| <i>Lechea tenuifolia</i>          | Slender-leaved pinweed   | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 7       | 704,000.00   |              |
| <i>Lespedeza capitata</i>         | Round-headed bush clover | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB, LEGUME       | 3       | 128,000.00   |              |
| <i>Liatris aspera</i>             | Blazing star             | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 8       | 256,000.00   |              |
| <i>Liatris cylindracea</i>        | Blazing star             | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 10      | 224,000.00   |              |
| <i>Linaria canadensis</i>         | Toadflax                 | Herbaceous Layer           | A-FORB               | 4       |              |              |
| <i>Lithospermum canescens</i>     | Hoary puccoon            | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 7       | 161,020.00   |              |

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| MIDWEST DRY SAND PRAIRIE             |                            |                            |                      |         |              |              |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---------|--------------|--------------|
| SCIENTIFIC NAME                      | COMMON NAME                | STRATA                     | FUNCTIONAL GROUP     | IA CofC | SEEDS/L B    | STATE STATUS |
| <i>Lithospermum caroliniense</i>     | Hairy puccoon              | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 6       | 80,182.00    |              |
| <i>Lupinus perennis</i>              | Wild lupine                | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB, LEGUME       | 10      | 17,600.00    | T            |
| <i>Oenothera rhombipetala</i>        | Sand primrose              | Herbaceous Layer           | B-FORB               | 8       | 1,600,000.00 |              |
| <i>Opuntia humifusa</i>              | Eastern prickly pear       | Herbaceous Layer           | SHRUB                | 8       | 22,400.00    |              |
| <i>Packera plattensis</i>            | Prairie ragwort            | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 3       | 160,000.00   |              |
| <i>Penstemon grandiflorus</i>        | Large-flowered beardtongue | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 5       | 224,000.00   |              |
| <i>Polygala polygama obtusata</i>    | Purple milkwort            | Herbaceous Layer           | B-FORB               | 10      |              | E            |
| <i>Pseudognaphalium obtusifolium</i> | Everlasting                | Herbaceous Layer           | B-FORB               | 1       | 8,000,000.00 |              |
| <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>       | Little bluestem            | Herbaceous Layer, Dominant | P-GRASS, WARM SEASON | 5       | 240,000.00   |              |
| <i>Solidago nemoralis</i>            | Field goldenrod            | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 4       | 4,800,000.00 |              |
| <i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>        | Sand dropseed              | Herbaceous Layer           | P-GRASS, WARM SEASON | 3       | 5,600,080.00 |              |
| <i>Tephrosia virginiana</i>          | Goat's-rue                 | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB, LEGUME       | 7       | 40,000.00    |              |
| <i>Viola pedata</i>                  | Bird's-foot violet         | Herbaceous Layer           | P-FORB               | 8       | 416,000.00   |              |

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