

## TUSOCK SEDGE WET MEADOW

**Site Characteristics:** This wet sedge meadow community is found in the southern Great Lakes region and parts of the central Midwestern United States. Sites occur in stream valleys, along lake margins, and in depressions and channels in glacial outwash or alluvium. Stands occur along slow streams and near inlets and outlets of lakes or ponds and may be inundated with water during floods. These wetlands can also be the result of beaver-caused flooding. Soils include wet mineral soils, muck, or well decomposed shallow (<0.5 m) sedge peat. The water table lies below the surface for most of the growing season, with long duration saturation to the soil surface occurring throughout the year. This plant community may flood or pond seasonally in the spring or after heavy rains.

**Vegetation Characteristics:** The vegetation is dominated by sedges and grasses, but the shrub component can be as high as 25%. Dominant plants include Bluejoint and Tussock Sedge (Upright Sedge), with a minimum of 4.7 sedge tussocks per square meter occurring in quality examples of this community type. Associated graminoids include Water Sedge, Woolley Sedge, Bebb's Oval Sedge, Common Lake Sedge, Spikerush spp., True Rush spp., and Broad-leaf Cattail. Typical forbs include Canada Anemone, Swamp Milkweed, White Panicle Aster, Field Horsetail, Spotted Joe-Pye-Weed, Boneset, Blue Flag, Water Horehound, Tall Goldenrod, Angelica, Purple Meadow-rue, Wild Madder, and Marsh Fern. Non-native Reed Canarygrass can be common in degraded examples.

**Range within Iowa:** Statewide

**Conservation Status:** Apparently Secure

**Management Considerations:** Tussock sedge tussocks create microtopographic heterogeneity, which increases surface area and variability in light, temperature, litter cover, and soil water content within a meadow. Consequently, an individual sedge tussock may support 10 additional plant species, greatly increasing species richness within this community. Wet meadows tend to succeed to shrub swamp communities in the absence of fire. Lowering of the water table by ditching or drought may speed up succession to shrub swamp. Extensive trampling by livestock may compact and erode soil between tussocks, which may encourage the development of surface channels that exacerbate peat decomposition. To the contrary, excessive sediment delivery may bury tussocks, reducing habitat heterogeneity and plant community diversity. Wet meadows on muck or peat recover very slowly, if at all, once altered by artificial flooding or ditching.



### Iowa NRCS Plant Community Description

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

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TUSsock SEDGE WET MEADOW SPECIES LIST						
Scientific Name	Common Name	Strata	Functional Group	IA CC	Seeds/Lb	State Status
<i>Anemone canadensis</i>	Canada Anemone	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	2	128,000	
<i>Angelica atropurpurea</i>	Angelica	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	5	86,400	SC
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp Milkweed	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	4	76,800	
<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 bebbii</i>	Bebb's Oval Sedge	Herbaceous Layer	P-Sedge, Cool Season	8	544,000	
<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 stricta</i>	Common Tussock Sedge	Herbaceous Layer, Dominant	P-Sedge, Cool Season	6	848,000	
<i>Eleocharis spp.</i>	Spikerush	Herbaceous Layer	Sedge, Cool Season			
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Common Horsetail	Herbaceous Layer	Fern	0		
<i>Eupatorium maculatum</i>	Spotted Joe-Pye-Weed	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	5	1,520,000	
<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	Boneset	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	6	2,560,000	
<i>Galium obtusum</i>	Wild Madder	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	7	500,000	
<i>Iris shrevei</i>	Blue Flag	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	6	16,000	
<i>Juncus spp.</i>	True Rush	Herbaceous Layer	P-Sedge, Cool Season			
<i>Lycopus americanus</i>	Water Horehound	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	4	2,080,000	
<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	Tall Goldenrod	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	0	4,600,000	
<i>Symphyotrichum lanceolatum</i>	White Panicle Aster	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	4	700,000	
<i>Thalictrum dasycarpum</i>	Purple Meadow-Rue	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	4	176,000	
<i>Thelypteris palustris</i>	Marsh Fern	Herbaceous Layer	Fern	6		
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	Common Cattail	Herbaceous Layer	P-Forb	1	7,559,873	

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