

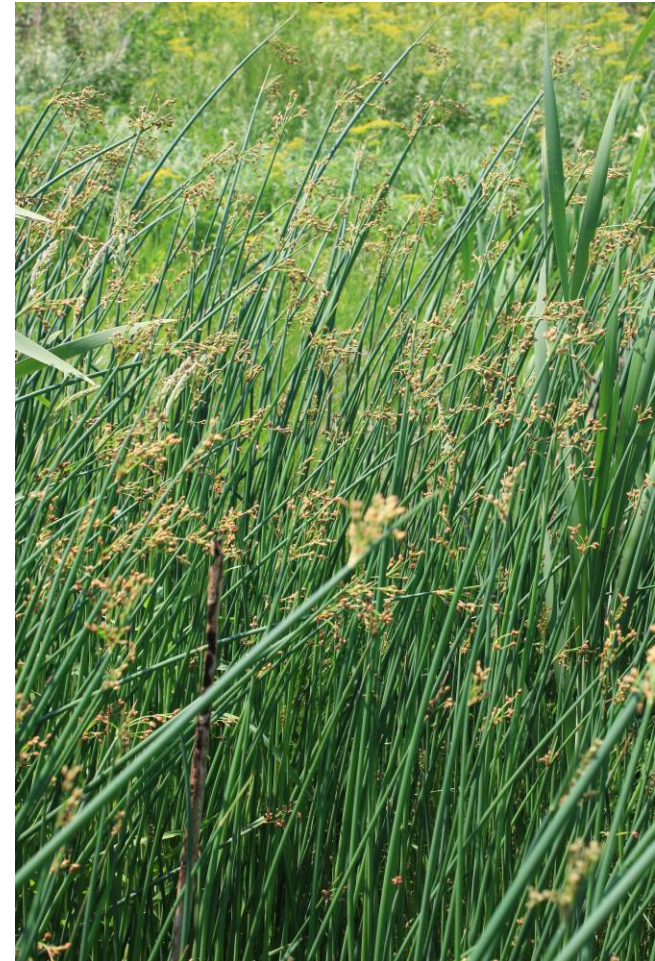
## Freshwater Bulrush Marsh

**Site Characteristics:** This community occurs on pond or lake margins or in river backwater areas. It also occupies basins where the water table may remain relatively high, but can drop below the soil surface late in the growing season. Stands occur on wetland sites that are flooded for most or all of the growing season, with water from 0 (exposed soil) to approximately 5 feet deep. Inundation is usually less than 3 feet and water levels can vary by up to 3 feet during the year. This community's soils are deep, poorly drained, muck, peat, or mineral. This community often occurs as dense stands with interspersed channels or pools of open water.

**Vegetation Characteristics:** Vegetation is characterized by medium to tall graminoids which typically range from one to over two meters. Species composition and abundance can vary from year to year depending mostly on water level fluctuations. Tall graminoids, particularly hard-stemmed bulrush and, less frequently, river bulrush, dominate the vegetation. These two species may grow taller than 2 m and can sometimes exclude other species. Additional species that may be present include hairy-leaved lake sedge (especially in the shallower areas), duckweed species, soft-stemmed bulrush, common cattail, and common bladderwort. Soft-stemmed bulrush can be codominant in places. During drought, species more tolerant of low water, such as water smartweed, may invade and alter the species composition of stands. Floating-leaved and submergent plants typically have low cover, although in deeper water, where the tall graminoids are not densely packed, rooted aquatic species may be common. Shrubs are typically not present, but they may occasionally be found in shallow water areas. Adjacent wetter locations are typically dominated by common cattail, while drier locations support herbaceous communities dominated by true sedge species, Kentucky bluegrass, or other grasses.

**Range:**

**Conservation Status:** Apparently Secure



### Iowa NRCS Plant Community Description

This community description is a compilation of the Community Association and its 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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**Management Considerations:** Areas of monotypic or nearly monotypic stands may be caused by dams or impoundments. Separating natural occurrences from semi-natural ones may be difficult, especially on rivers that have been permanently altered due to dams. Hard-stemmed bulrush and soft-stemmed bulrush are early colonizers of suitable habitats and are able to persist under wet conditions. Bulrush stands are generally considered permanent wetland communities and will remain in place unless the hydrologic regime is severely altered. Under low water conditions, stands of this community can burn in either late fall or early spring. Bulrush stands are important to wildlife species, especially birds, as cover and nesting habitat.

FRESHWATER BULRUSH MARSH SPECIES LIST						
SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	STRATA	FUNCTIONAL GROUP	IA Cof C	SEEDS PER POUND	STATE STATUS
<i>Carex atherodes</i>	Hairy-leaved lake sedge	Herbaceous Layer	P-SEDGE, COOL SEASON	8	464000	
<i>Lemna spp.</i>	Duckweed	Floating-Leaved	P-FORB			
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Giant Reed	Herbaceous Layer	P-GRASS, COOL SEASON	0		
<i>Polygonum amphibium</i>	Water smartweed	Herbaceous Layer	P-FORB	3	125000	
<i>Potamogeton spp</i>	Pondweed	Herbaceous Layer	P-FORB			
<i>Salix spp.</i>	Willow	Shrub Layer				
<i>Schoenoplectus acutus</i>	Hard-stemmed bulrush	Herbaceous Layer, Dominant	P-SEDGE, COOL SEASON	4	206400	
<i>Schoenoplectus americanus/pungens</i>	Threesquare	Herbaceous Layer	P-SEDGE, COOL SEASON	7	192000	
<i>Schoenoplectus fluviatilis</i>	River bulrush	Herbaceous Layer, Dominant	P-SEDGE, COOL SEASON	5	68800	
<i>Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani</i>	Soft-stemmed bulrush	Herbaceous Layer, Dominant	P-SEDGE, COOL SEASON	3	496000	
<i>Triglochin maritima</i>	Common arrow-grass	Herbaceous Layer	P-FORB	10	650778	T
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	Common cattail	Herbaceous Layer	P-FORB	1	7559873	
<i>Utricularia vulgaris</i>	Common bladderwort	Floating-Leaved	P-FORB	4		

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