



Types of Plant Communities in Critical Dune Areas

Several plant communities thrive in sandy soils. Critical Dune Areas have upland and wetland plant communities. The Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) has a [key to Michigan's Natural Communities](#) that helps property owners identify their plant community. An abstract with pictures describes each community with information on their location in Michigan and plants commonly found in the community.

The community types listed on the joint permit application follows. To make the application process smoother, the Department of Environmental Quality has grouped the MNFI communities together to make it easier for applicants to report the type of plant community impacted by their project. Ideally, we would like to know the MNFI community at the project site. If you know the MNFI community, please add it to the vegetation assurance description and site plan. Community types from this same list may be used in the vegetation assurance. A project area may have more than one community type.

Dune – Forested includes, but is not limited to, the [Mesic Northern Forest](#), [Mesic Southern Forest](#), and [Dry-mesic Southern Forest](#) communities. These are upland plant communities where dune sand is minimally exposed or not visible and trees are a dominant feature of the site.



Dune – Sparse trees/low growing vegetation includes [Great Lakes Barrens](#) which is an upland plant community with grasses such as marram grass or beach grass, sand reed grass, and little bluestem; low shrubs such as bearberry, creeping juniper, sand cherry, willows, and common juniper; and trees such as jack pine, white pine, red pine, and white spruce.



Dune – Open includes [Open Dunes](#) which are sandy areas next to the shorelines often as foredunes. Growing in open dunes are grasses such as marram grass or beach grass, sand reed grass, and little bluestem; and low shrubs such as bearberry, creeping juniper, sand cherry, willows, and common juniper. A [Sand and Gravel Beach](#) occurs at the water's edge and is sparsely vegetated.

Dune – Wetland includes, but is not limited to, the [Interdunal Wetland](#), [Wooded Dune and Swale Complex](#), [Great Lakes Marsh](#), and [Coastal Plain Marsh](#) communities. These communities are influenced by Great Lakes water levels and typically have few trees except for the Wooded Dune and Swale Complex community. This community has forested upland sandy ridges parallel to low swales.



Dune – Impacted includes areas of the dune that have been altered such as the area of an existing house or driveway, maintained landscaping, revetments, terraced retaining walls, and other structures.