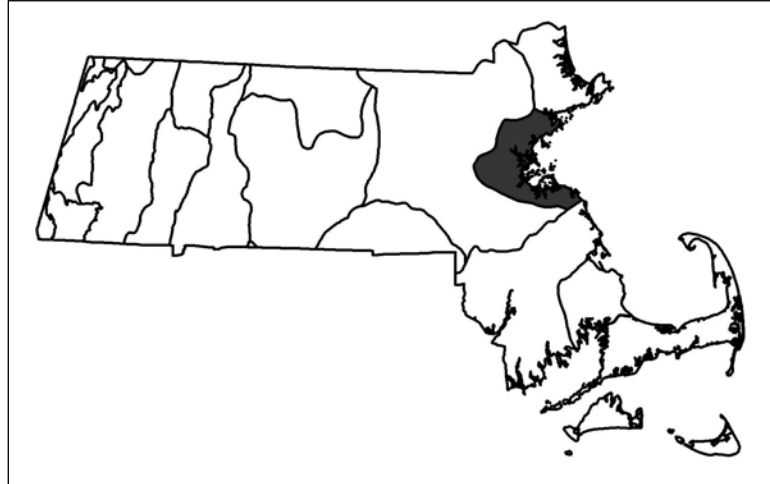


**Community Name:** Sassafras-Hackberry Maritime Cove Forest  
**Community Code:** CT1A2A1200  
**SRANK:** S1



**Concept:** A closed to semi-open forest/woodland in the salt spray zone composed of patches of single tree species and a dense understory of shrubs.

**Environmental Setting:** This one known occurrence of this community is located on the north side of a cove in the Boston Harbor. It extends along the shoreline and short steep slope immediately above the shoreline (east-west parallel to the beach), and 100-200 feet in width (north-south on the slope). The lowermost part of the stand is along the upper edge of the beach, which is stony and covered with mussel shell middens. The uppermost part of the stand is the top of the slope; the extent downslope is limited by the beach and adjacent salt marsh.

**Vegetation Description:** Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) and Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) dominate the closed-canopy forest on the lower slopes a maritime cove. Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*) and Black Oak (*Quercus velutina*) are canopy associates. Exotic Small-leaved Linden (*Tilia cordata*) is also in the canopy. The understory is mostly non-native shrubs that form a very dense thicket of Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), Morrow Honeysuckle (*L. morrowii*), Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*) and Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*). Hackberry and sassafras are regenerating to a limited extent, but shrubs limit their recruitment potential. Herbaceous plants cover less than 1% of the area, and primarily occur along the lower edge of the stand at the beach/slope interface. Seaside Goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*) is very thinly scattered, as are several invasive species.

**Associations:** This is a variant of Maritime Forest, in the salt spray zone.

**Habitat Values for Associated Fauna:** Provides parts of habitats needed by species of shores. Maritime shrublands are heavily used during fall migrations for cover and forage -- many of the plants have fruit attractive to migrants. White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) maintain large populations in shrubland habitats. In such shrub areas, white-footed mice (*Peromyscus leucopus*) are also very abundant, and in the openings meadow voles (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) are common. Eastern moles (*Scalopus aquaticus*) has an affinity to the sand substrate in the southern part of the state. Long-tailed weasels (*Mustela frenata*) occur in the grass dominated areas where they hunt meadow voles. Eastern hognose snake (*Heterodon platirhinos*) occur in sandy, open areas of shrubland communities areas.

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

**Associated Rare Plants:** none known

**Associated Rare Animals:** none known

**Examples with Public Access:** Webb Memorial State Park, Weymouth.

**Threats:** Invasives.

**Management Needs:** Remove non-native shrubs in the understory to promote the regeneration of this unusual sassafras and hackberry forest association. This will be a major effort.

**Synonyms:**

**USNVC/TNC:**

**MA (old name):** new, but a variant of SNE Maritime Forest on Uplands

**ME:** Not described

**NH:** Not described

**VT:** not applicable

**NY:** Related to and Included in: Maritime oak-holly forest (in part), includes parts of Successional maritime forest

**CT:** Related to: Scarlet oak-Sassafras Woodland--Metzler and Barrett 2006

**RI:** Related to: Maritime Woodland/Forest, Enser and Lundgren 2006

**Weatherbee:** not applicable

**Author:** T. Elliman, P. Swain, ed.

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