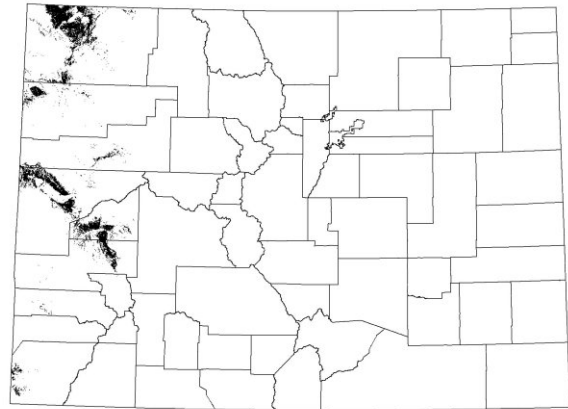


# INTER-MOUNTAIN BASINS MAT SALTBUSH SHRUBLAND



K. Decker



extent exaggerated for display

- ATRIPLEX CORRUGATA DWARF-SHRUBLAND ALLIANCE
  - Atriplex corrugata* Dwarf-shrubland
- ATRIPLEX CUNEATA SHRUBLAND ALLIANCE
  - Atriplex cuneata* - *Frankenia jamesii* / *Sporobolus airoides* Shrubland
- ATRIPLEX GARDNERI DWARF-SHRUBLAND ALLIANCE
  - Atriplex gardneri* / *Achnatherum hymenoides* Dwarf-shrubland
  - Atriplex gardneri* / *Leymus salinus* Dwarf-shrubland
  - Atriplex gardneri* / *Pleuraphis jamesii* Dwarf-shrubland
  - Atriplex gardneri* Dwarf-shrubland

**Overview:** This ecological system occurs on gentle slopes and rolling plains in the northern Colorado Plateau and Uinta Basin on Mancos Shale and arid, wind-swept basins and plains across parts of Wyoming. In western Colorado these communities are common on sites with shale-derived clay soils. These landscapes typically support dwarf-shrublands composed of relatively pure stands of low-growing *Atriplex* species, typically with a sparse herbaceous layer. In some areas, inclusions of non-saline, gravelly barrens or rock outcrops dominated by cushion plants such as *Arenaria hookeri* and *Phlox hoodii* without dwarf-shrubs may be present.

**Characteristic species:** This ecological system typically supports dwarf-shrublands composed of relatively pure stands of *Atriplex* spp. such as *Atriplex corrugata* or *Atriplex gardneri*. Other dominant or codominant dwarf-shrub may include *Artemisia longifolia*, *Artemisia pedatifida*, or *Picrothamnus desertorum*, sometimes with a mix of other low shrubs such as *Krascheninnikovia lanata*, or *Tetradymia spinosa*. *Atriplex confertifolia* or *Atriplex canescens* may be present, but do not codominate. The herbaceous layer is typically sparse. Scattered perennial forbs occur, such as *Stanleya pinnata*, *Xylorhiza glabriuscula*, *Oenothera* spp., *Phacelia* spp., and the perennial grasses *Achnatherum hymenoides*, *Bouteloua gracilis*, *Elymus elymoides*, *Elymus lanceolatus* ssp. *lanceolatus*, *Pascopyrum smithii*, or *Sporobolus airoides* may dominate the herbaceous layer. In less saline areas, there may be inclusions of grasslands dominated by *Hesperostipa comata*, *Leymus salinus*, *Pascopyrum smithii*, or *Pseudoroegneria spicata*. Annuals are seasonally present and may include *Eriogonum inflatum*, *Plantago tweedyi*, and introduced species such as *Malcolmia africana* and *Bromus tectorum*.

**Environment:** This ecological system occurs on gentle slopes and rolling plains in the northern Colorado Plateau and Uinta Basin on Mancos Shale and arid, wind-swept plains and basins across parts of Wyoming. Substrates are shallow, typically saline, alkaline, fine-textured soils developed from shale or alluvium and may be associated with shale badlands. The infiltration rate is typically low. In Wyoming and possibly elsewhere, inclusions of non-saline, gravelly barrens or rock outcrops may be present.

**Dynamics:** The naturally sparse plant cover along with fine-grained salt soils make these shrublands especially vulnerable to water and wind erosion, especially where vegetation has been depleted by grazing or disturbances. These shrublands typically occur on flatter slopes with less severe erosion than those occupied by Inter-Mountain Basin Shale Badland communities.



CNHP files

Rank:	A	B	C	D
<b>① CONDITION</b>				
<b>Community structure</b>	Native plants dominate the occurrence.	Native plants dominate the occurrence. Small patches (< 5% of occurrence) may show human disturbance in the form of non-native plants.		
<b>Non-native spp.</b>	<1% relative cover.	<3% relative cover.	Usually present, but not dominant except in small patches.	
<b>Natural processes</b>	Natural disturbances, generally landslides, have the ability to occur on a natural time frame.		Present.	
<b>Disturbance</b>	Fragmentation from roads or human development is non-existent or occurs on the edge of the occurrence.	Fragmentation from roads or human development, if present, is limited to a small area that occupies less than 0.5% of the occurrence.	Fragmentation from roads or human development (e.g., oil and gas) are frequent enough to cause an increase in non-native plants. Unnatural erosion, compaction, and altered species composition is usually noticeable.	Human induced disturbance is >30% of occurrence.
<b>② SIZE</b>				
<b>Acres</b>	>2,000	1,000-2,000	100-1,000	< 100
<b>③ LANDSCAPE CONTEXT</b>				
<b>Connectivity</b>	Highly connected, with species interactions and natural processes occurring across communities.	Moderately connected; with species interactions and natural processes occurring across many communities.	Moderately fragmented. with barriers between species interactions and natural processes across natural communities.	Highly fragmented.
<b>Surrounding land</b>	Area around the occurrence is largely intact natural vegetation.	Area around the occurrence is moderately intact natural vegetation.	Area around the occurrence is largely a combination of cultural and natural vegetation.	Area around the occurrence is entirely, or almost entirely, surrounded by agricultural or urban land use and is at best buffered on one side by natural communities.