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Vegetation patterns in the salt marsh at La Pocatière, Québec

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There has been little information published on vegetation of Québec salt marshes. The salt marsh at La Pocatière (located at 47° 21' N, 72° 02' W), Québec has been studied by McGill Geography students since 1998, as part of their course, Ecological Biogeography. La Pocatière is located on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River estuary. Average temperatures range seasonally between -11° C and +19° C. The record low for this location was -36.7° C and the record high was 35° C. The average salinity of the St. Lawrence at La Pocatière is 15‰.

Vegetation, was sampled in plots spaced along transects perpendicular to the shore. Data, such as, cover, end-of-season standing crop, stem density and species richness was used to characterize the marsh plant community. Species distribution throughout the marsh was examined with respect to elevation and site characteristics. In Québec, seasonal disturbance caused by ice, such as, scouring and sediment deposition may affect distribution patterns of some marsh forbs. We believe this is the most comprehensive, quantitative study of a *Spartina* - dominated marsh at this latitude thus contributes to our knowledge of the ecological biogeography of North American salt marshes.