

Multi-story Cropping

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service—Practice Code 379



MULTI-STORY CROPPING

Multi-story cropping means that existing or planted stands of trees or shrubs are managed as an overstory with an understory of woody and/or nonwoody plants that are grown for a variety of products.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

The purpose of multi-story cropping is to:

- Improve crop diversity by growing mixed but compatible crops having different heights on the same area
- Improve soil quality by increasing utilization and cycling of nutrients and maintaining or increasing soil organic matter
- Increase net carbon storage in plant biomass and soil

This practice applies on all lands where trees, shrubs, and woody or nonwoody crops can be grown in combination. This practice does not apply on land that is grazed.

Multi-story cropping can provide a way to cultivate high-value specialty crops under the protection of a forest canopy. Meanwhile, timber stand improvement can result in a higher value timber crop as a long-term economic strategy.

COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

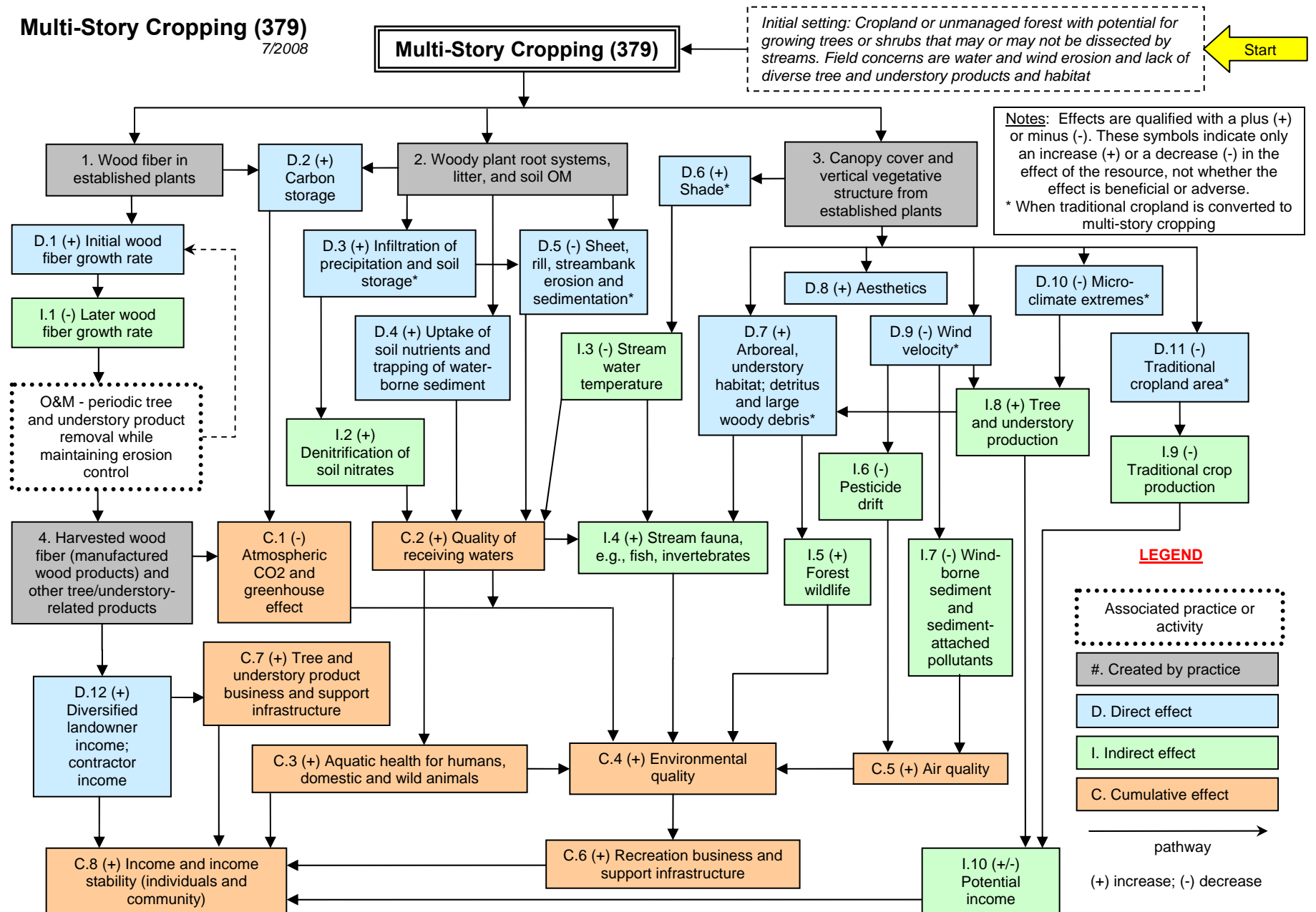
Multi-story cropping is commonly applied as part of a Conservation Management System with practices such as:

- Forest Stand Improvement (666)
- Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
- Tree/Shrub Pruning (660)
- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)
- Access Control (472)

For further information, refer to the practice standard in the local Field Office Technical Guide and associated practice specifications and job sheets.

The following page identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowner and are presumed to have been obtained. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.

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The diagram above identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied according to NRCS practice standards and specifications. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowners and are presumed to have been obtained. All income changes are partially dependent upon market fluctuations which are independent of the conservation practices. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.