

# FIREBREAK

## PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service—Practice Code 394



Photo by Steve Nix. Citation credit: <http://forestry.about.com/od/fireinforests/ig/wildfire-/The-Fire-Break.htm>

### FIREBREAK

A firebreak is a permanent or temporary strip of bare or vegetated ground designed to allow for the removal and management of fuel to prevent the progress of forest fires and provide access to inner areas of the forest to fight such fires.

### PRACTICE INFORMATION

This practice is best designed with a qualified/certified forester. It is applied on forest land where protection from fire is needed or prescribed burning is recommended.

The vegetation in the firebreak should be fire-resistant and noninvasive. An alternative is to maintain the firebreak as bare ground.

The firebreaks need to be of sufficient length and width to contain a possible fire. Knowledge of forest fire history and behavior is helpful in locating the break.

Erosion control measures must be incorporated into the design where the firebreaks will be installed on sloping ground. Vehicle access should be limited as much as possible to prevent damage to the firebreak that would hinder access during emergencies.

### COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

Firebreaks are commonly used in a Conservation Management System with the following practices:

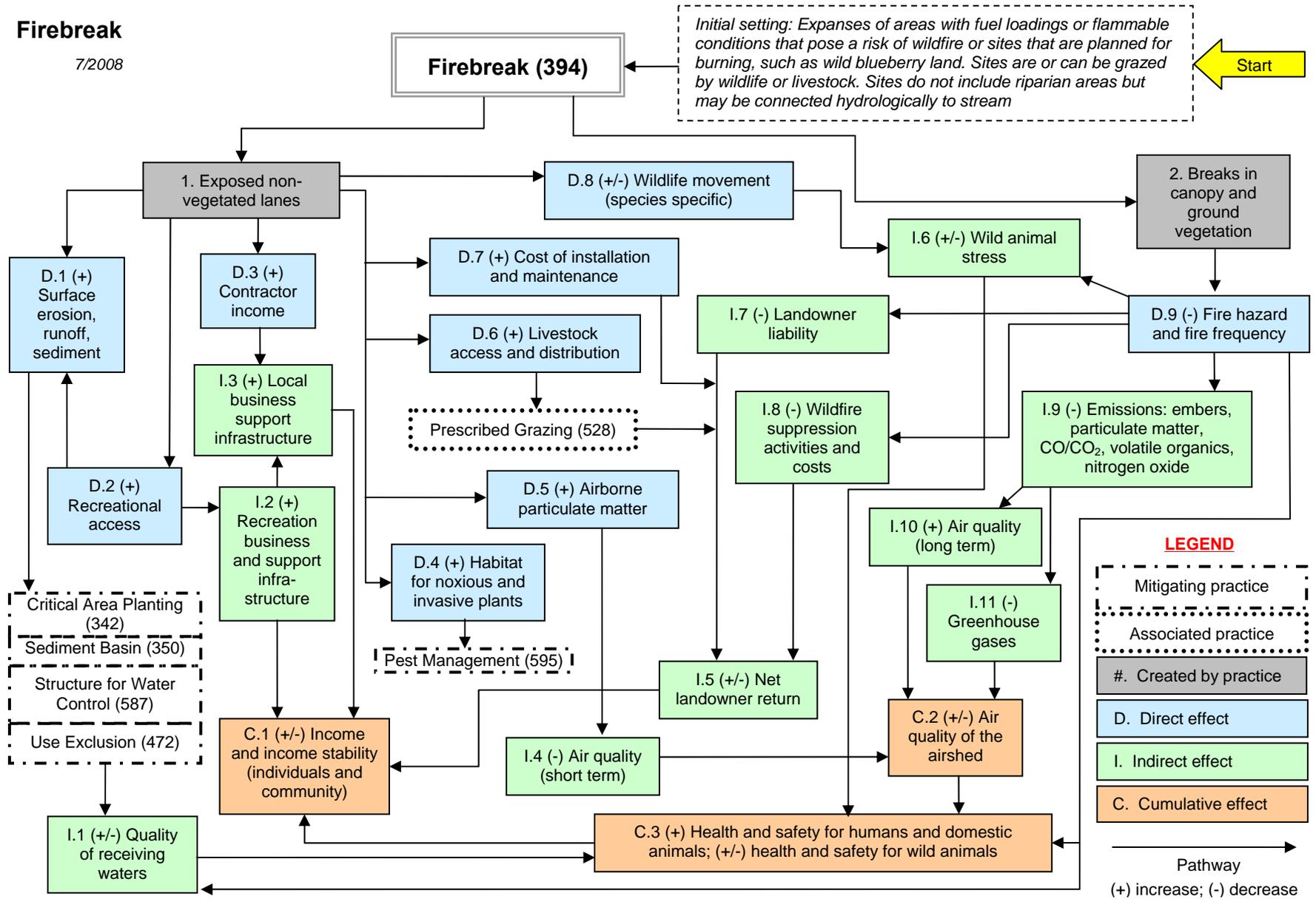
- Prescribed Burning (338)
- Forest Trails and Landings (655)
- Forest Stand Improvement (666)
- Tree and Shrub Planting (612)

For more information, refer to the practice standard in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and associated specifications and design criteria.

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 landowners 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.

# Firebreak

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Note: Effects are qualified with a plus (+) or minus (-). These symbols indicate only an increase (+) or a decrease (-) in the effect upon the resource, not whether the effect is beneficial or adverse.

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.