

# FUEL BREAK

## PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service—Practice Code 383



### FUEL BREAK

A fuel break is a strip or block of land on which the vegetation, debris, and detritus have been reduced and/or modified to control or diminish the risk of the spread of fire crossing the strip or block of land.

### PRACTICE INFORMATION

This practice applies on all land where protection from wildfire is needed. A fuel break is typically an easily accessible strip of land of varying width (depending on fuel and terrain) in which fuel density is reduced, thus improving fire control opportunities.

Fuel breaks are used to control and reduce the risk of the spread of fire by treating, removing, or modifying vegetation, debris and detritus.

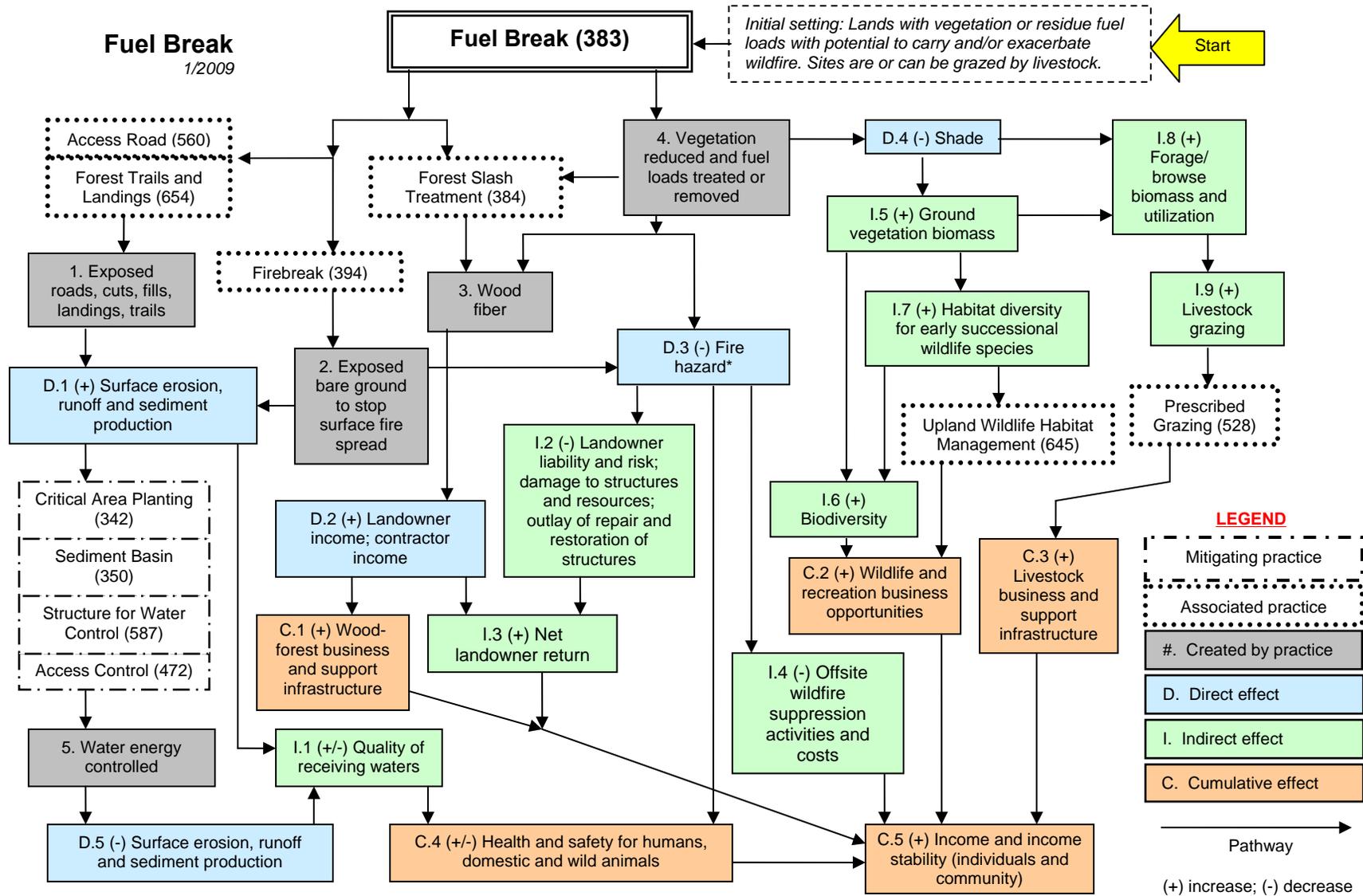
Fuel breaks are planned and located at strategic locations on the landscape as part of a conservation management system for a land unit having an undesired risk of wildfire. They break up large, continuous tracts of dense natural fuels, thus limiting uncontrolled spread of wildfire.

### COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

Fuel Break is commonly associated with Firebreak (394). A firebreak is a narrower permanent or temporary strip of bare or vegetated land to retard spread of surface fire. To gain access for equipment, Access Road (560) and Forest Trails and Landings (655) may be needed. Some degree of Forest Slash Treatment (384) usually accompanies application of a fuel break. For areas with erosion potential after a fuel break is installed, the following practices may be used: Critical Area Planting (342), Sediment Basin (350), Structure for Water Control (587), Access Control (472). For areas with grazing or wildlife objectives/concerns, Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) and Prescribed Grazing (338) may be applicable.

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 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.



**Notes:**  
 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 landowner 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.