

MULCHING (with Organic Materials)

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service – Practice Code 484



MULCHING

Mulching is applying a protective cover of plant residues or other suitable material not produced on the site to the soil surface.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

Mulching is used to help control soil erosion, protect crops, conserve moisture, moderate soil temperature, prevent soil compaction and crusting, reduce runoff, and suppress growth of weeds. The practice is utilized on sites subject to erosion and high runoff rates that need the additional protection from material brought in from off the site. The material may be manufactured and commercially available, or it may be hay or crop residues hauled to the site and applied. Selection of materials is dependent upon site condition and the availability of materials.

This is a high input practice used primarily on construction sites. However, the practice is often used in production of specialty crops including grapes, other fruits, and vegetables.

COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

Mulching is often used in conjunction with other practices. It is commonly used in Conservation Management Systems with a new vegetative seeding, Critical Area Planting, Nutrient Management, Pest Management, Irrigation Water Management, and Contour Farming.

Refer to the practice standard in the local Field Office Technical Guide and associated specifications and Job Sheets for further information.

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.

Mulching, Organic Materials

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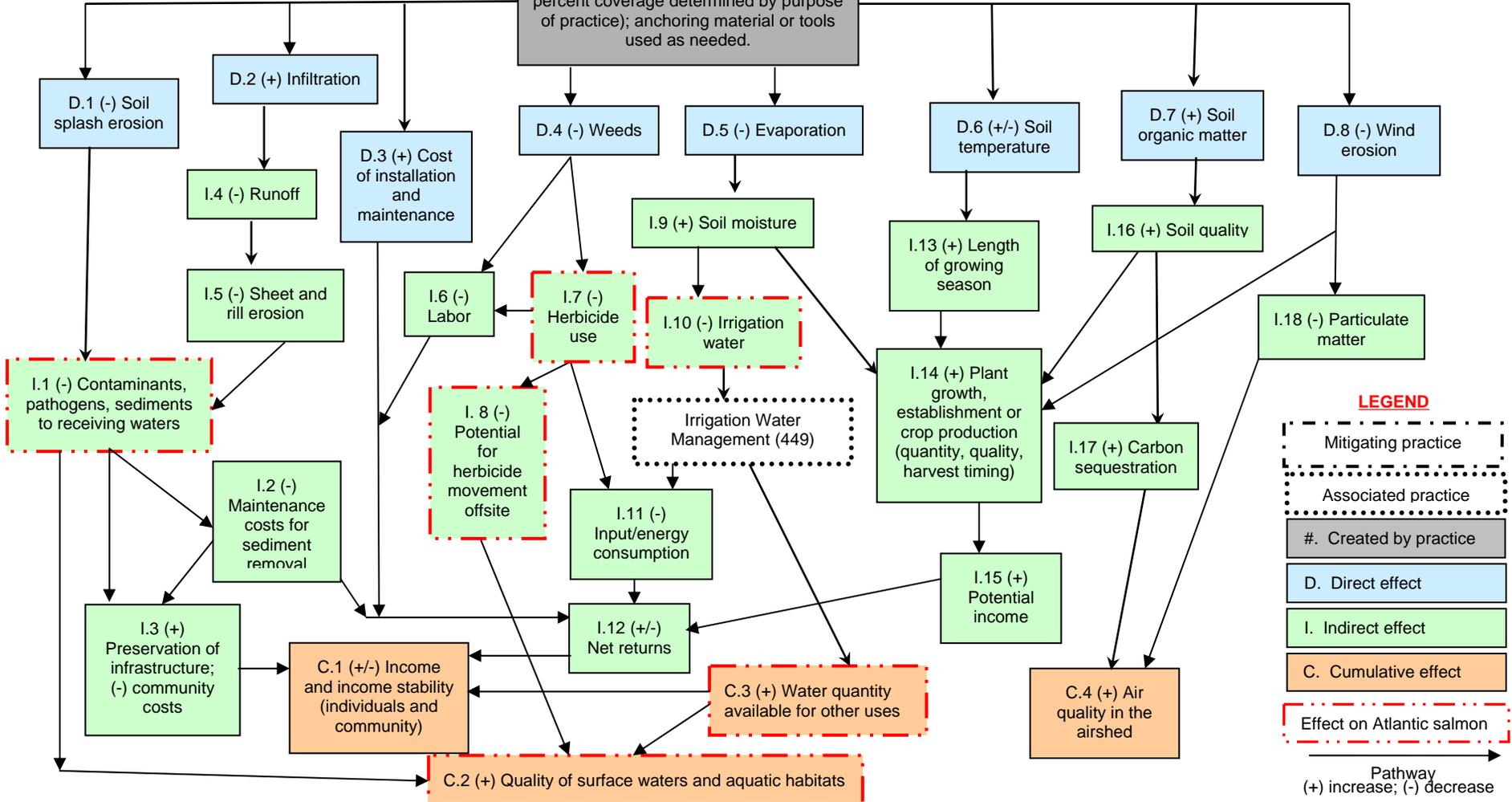
Note: Effects are qualified with a plus (+) or minus (-). These symbols indicate only an increase (+) or a decrease (-) in the effect upon the resource, not whether the effect is beneficial or adverse.

Mulching, Organic Materials (484)

Initial Setting: On cropland or disturbed land where there is a need to control weeds, conserve soil moisture, moderate soil temperature, or reduce erosion using organic materials as mulch.



1. Large percentage of ground surface covered with organic material (with percent coverage determined by purpose of practice); anchoring material or tools used as needed.



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.