

RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFER

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service—Practice Code 391



RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFER

A riparian forest buffer is an area of trees and/or shrubs located adjacent to a body of water. The vegetation extends outward from the water body for a specified distance necessary to provide a minimum level of protection and/or enhancement.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

This practice applies to areas adjacent to permanent or intermittent streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and areas associated with ground water recharge.

The riparian forest buffer is a multi-purpose practice design to accomplish one or more of the following:

- Create shade to lower water temperatures and improve habitat for aquatic animals
- Provide a source of debris necessary for healthy robust populations of aquatic organisms and wildlife
- Act as a buffer to filter out sediment, organic material, fertilizer, pesticides, and other pollutants that may adversely impact the water body, including shallow ground water

Dominant vegetation consists of existing or planted trees and shrubs suited to the site and purpose(s) of the practice. Grasses and forbs that come in naturally further enhance the wildlife habitat and filtering effect of the practice. Headcuts and streambank erosion should be assessed and treated appropriately before establishing the riparian forest buffer. Specifications for each installation are based on a thorough field investigation of each site.

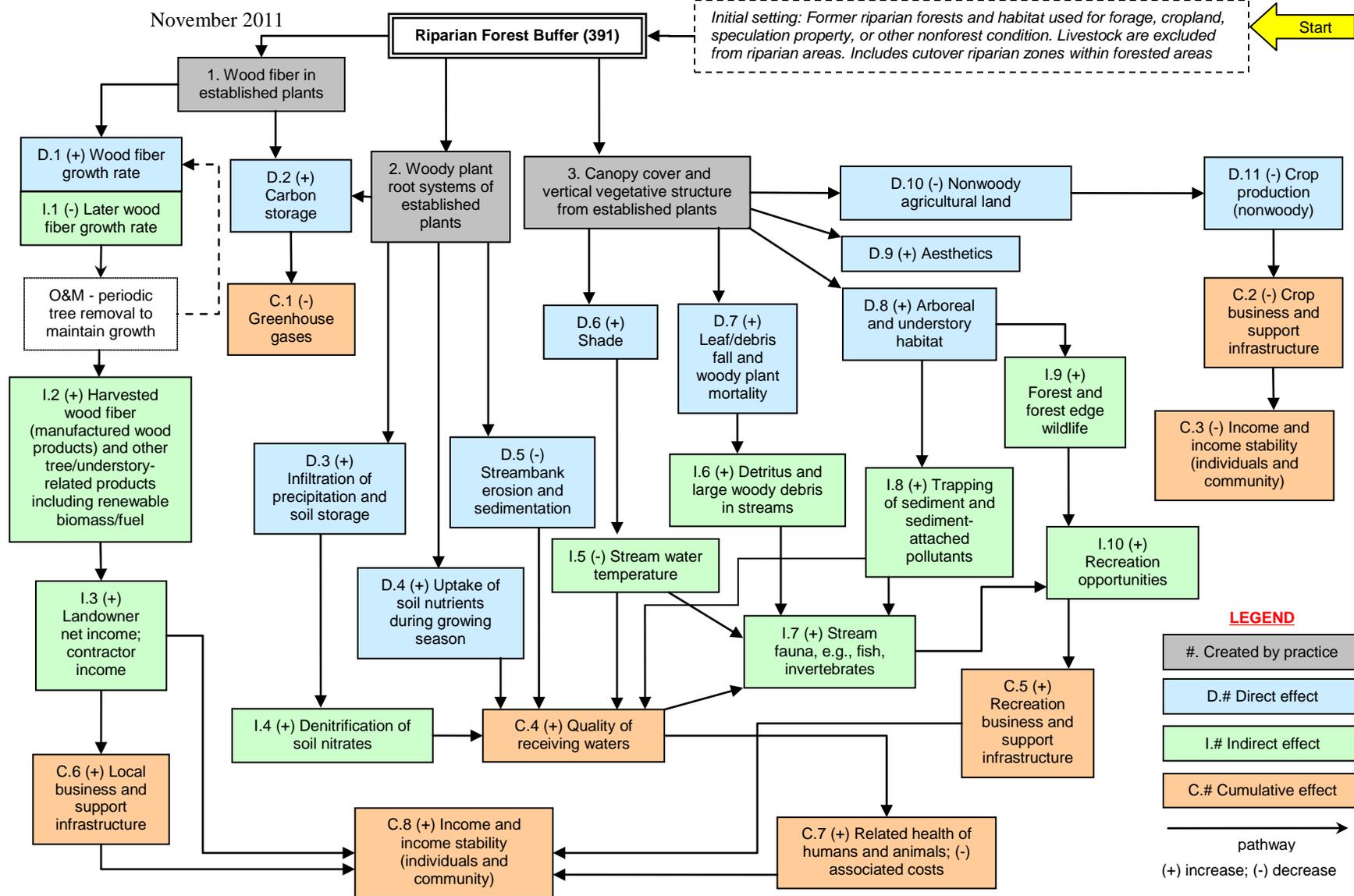
COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

Riparian Forest Buffer is commonly used in Conservation Management Systems on a variety of land uses. Associated practices may include Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390), Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395), Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580), and Tree/Shrub Establishment (612).

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.

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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.