

GRASSED WATERWAY

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service—Practice Code 412



GRASSED WATERWAY

A grassed waterway is a natural or constructed channel established in suitable vegetation for safe water disposal.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

Waterways are constructed to convey runoff from terraces, diversions, or other concentrated flow areas where erosion control is needed.

The most critical time for successful installation of a grassed waterway is immediately following construction when the channel is bare and unprotected from runoff. Waterways are generally planted to perennial grass. It is critical during the vegetative establishment period to restrict outside water from flowing through the channel. Therefore, it may be necessary to delay construction of terraces and/or diversions until the waterway is well established. Another critical consideration is the outlet at the lower end. If water quality or protection of riparian vegetation (streambank) is an issue, the outlet end may need to widen significantly or another buffer or filtering type practice may be necessary.

In addition, the waterway installation must assure that the runoff from the waterway does not cause gullies and/or overfalls to develop.

Grassed waterways are multipurpose and provide one or more of the following benefits:

- Safe disposal of runoff water
- Erosion control in concentrated flow areas of a field
- Improved water quality
- Improved wildlife habitat
- Reduced sediment damage
- Improved landscape aesthetics

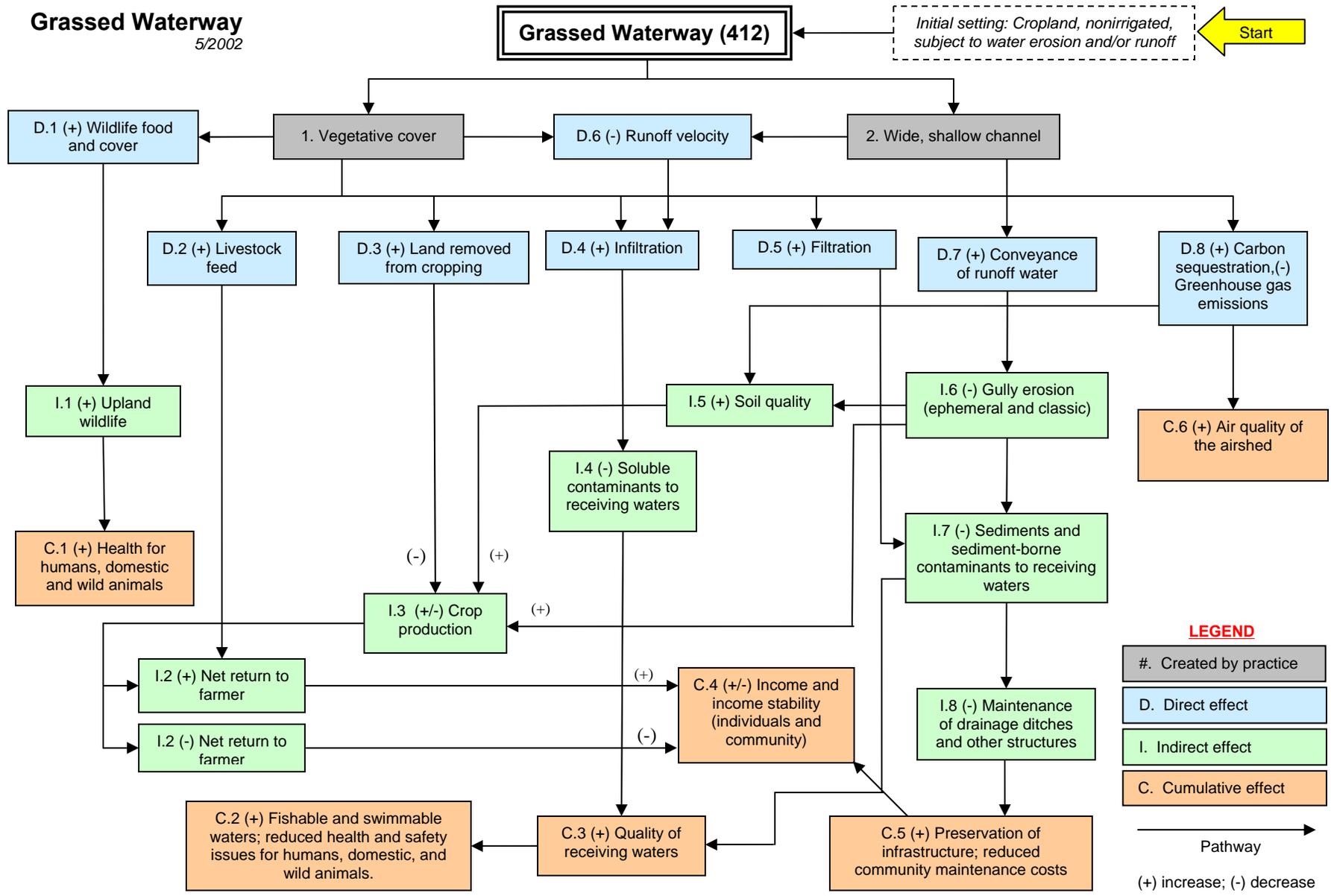
COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

Grassed Waterway is commonly used in a Conservation Management System on a variety of land uses with practices such as Terrace (600), Diversion (362), Critical Area Planting (342), and other erosion control practices.

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.

Grassed Waterway
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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.