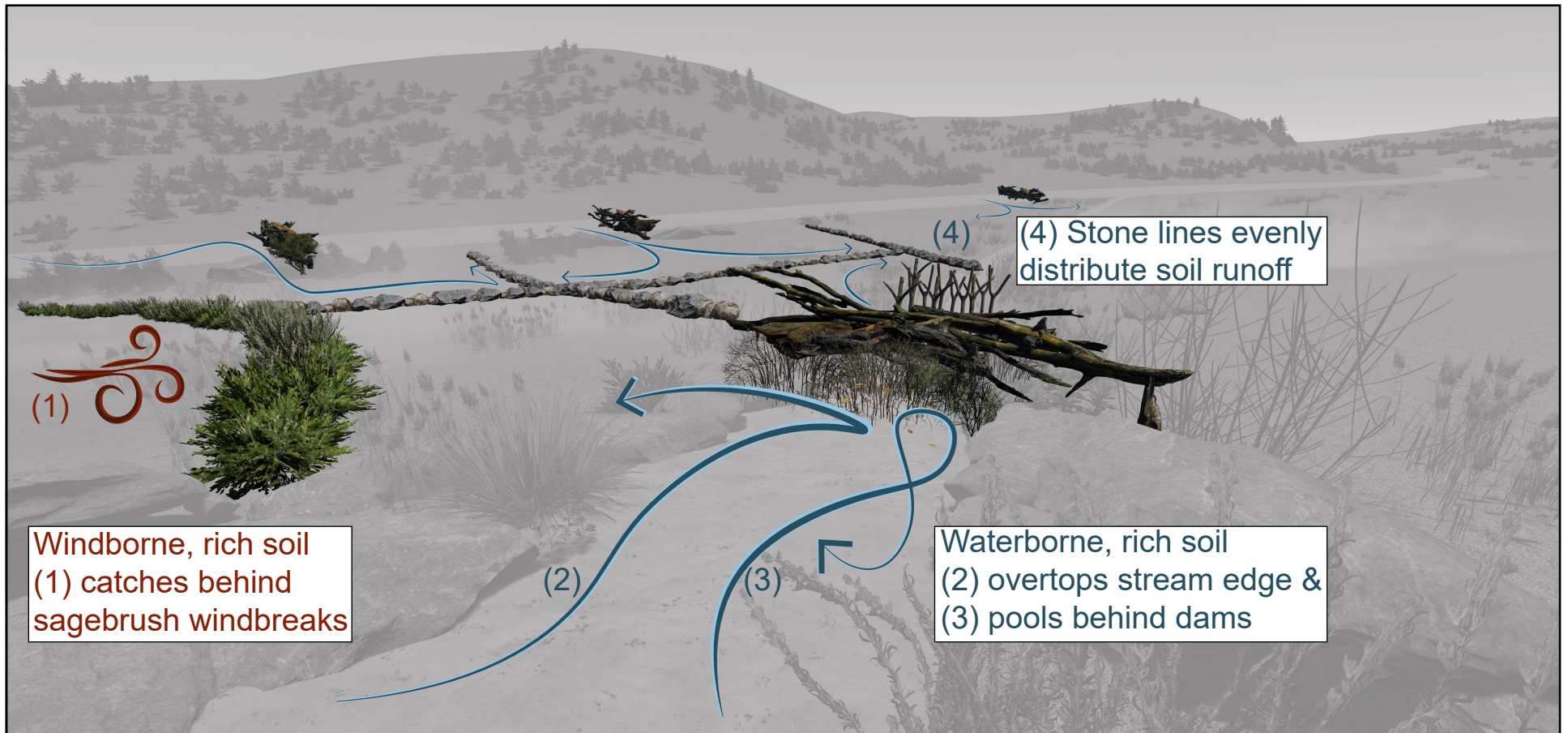




On our site, we can implement three techniques. The first on the left is to create a live, sagebrush windbreak that allows windborne soil to pile up behind it. This specific plant-hedge was recorded at Zuni in the late 19th century and used extensively in history. Next a series of large, brush check dams are placed in opportune locations along the ephemeral stream. The foremost illustrated dam here shows the structure. Shorter layers of dense brush were packed in front of the dam wall.

The wall itself is made of large branches placed horizontally and interwoven loosely with each other. Behind the dam are forked cedar branches called ‘pungie’ posts which will catch any pieces of the dam that come loose in forceful water movement, and in turn form another makeshift dam just downstream. The water/soil mix pools behind the dam walls, overtops its banks, and as it runs toward the grid of stones, will distribute around each field evenly. Studies in the early 2000’s observed Zuni using this exact brush dam method and found increased levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in the fields which receive the soil runoff. So, let’s examine the illustrated results of this system.