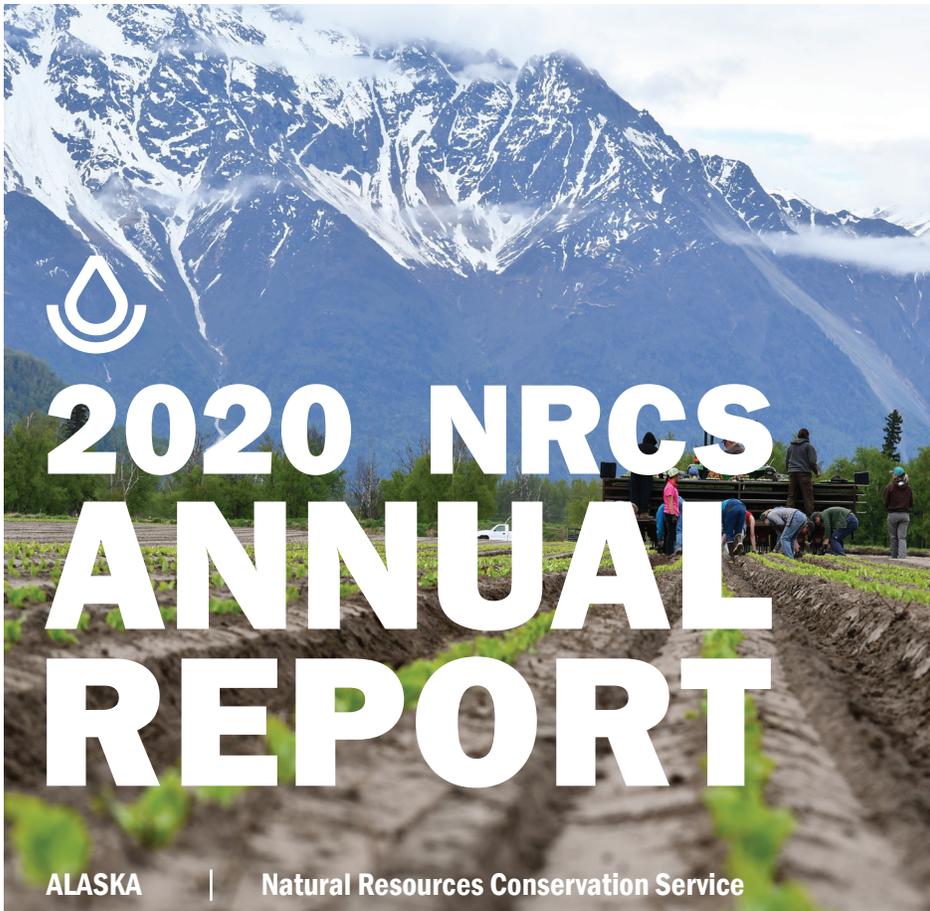




United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service



ALASKA

Natural Resources Conservation Service



**We are incredibly grateful to the landowners and partners who value conservation and work with NRCS to achieve outcomes on the ground.**

Alaska NRCS continues to be a leader in providing fair and equitable services to Historically Underserved producers such as Alaska Natives and new farmers.

We have renewed our focus on soil health and technical assistance to producers. We have also expanded partnerships knowing we can accomplish more conservation on the Alaska's working lands together than we can alone.



— **Alan McBee**  
NRCS Alaska  
State Conservationist

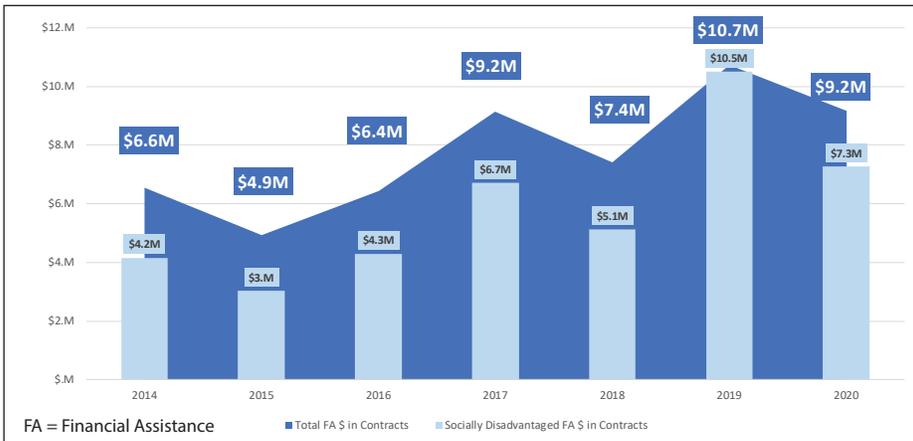
## FY20 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- ▶ **72** contracts funded
- ▶ **118,000** acres
- ▶ **\$9.1** million
- ▶ **84%** to Historically Underserved landowners

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## EQIP dollars in Alaska with Socially Disadvantaged customers



“Socially Disadvantaged” means an individual or entity who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.

Socially disadvantaged groups consist of the following:

- American Indians or Alaska Natives
- Asians
- Blacks or African Americans
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics

## EQIP with Alaska Natives

### FY2020

- ▶ 20 contracts
- ▶ \$6.8 million

### 2014 - 2020

- ▶ 121 contracts
- ▶ \$40 million

# FY20

## Top 10 Practices

NRCS “conservation practices” are specific activities that landowners can implement on-the-ground to address natural resource concerns. Includes EQIP practices from fiscal year 2020 and on active or completed contracts.

### Top Practices by Instance / Count

1. Forest Stand Improvement (98)
2. Nutrient Management (94)
3. Conservation Crop Rotation (48)
4. Irrigation Water Management (43)
5. High Tunnel System (30)
6. Tree/Shrub Establishment (25)
7. Fence (25)
8. Cover Crop (23)
9. Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (21)
10. Structures for Wildlife (19)

### Top Practices by Dollars Obligated

1. Forest Stand Improvement \$3.5M
2. Tree/Shrub Establishment \$1.4M
3. Fence \$1.4M
4. Pasture and Hay Planting \$793K
5. Aquatic Organism Passage \$321K
6. On-Farm Secondary Containment Facility \$250K
7. High Tunnel System \$231K
8. Brush Management \$221K
9. Tree/Shrub Site Preparation \$183K
10. Heavy Use Area Protection \$168K

## Growing Partnerships with Alaska Natives



Trails constructed in Hooper Bay prevent soil erosion and protect critical migratory bird habitat. Photo by Jeff Oatley.

As the largest private landowners in the state, Alaska Natives play a critical role in getting NRCS conservation programs on-the-ground. Private lands owned by Alaska Natives span more than 44 million acres, or more than 70,000 square miles. Success in implementing voluntary NRCS conservation programs in Alaska has been built on a foundation

of locally-led partnerships and supported by the efforts of many. In the center of this circle of collaboration is trust that has grown through the years as USDA has worked with its partners to deliver significant resources to Alaska Native owned and managed private lands.

Read the full story here:  
<https://arcg.is/1GeOaq0>



# FY20

## Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

- ▶ **1 new project awarded for \$17,000**

(Recipient: Homer Soil and Water Conservation District)

## Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- ▶ **2 new contracts awarded for \$27,271**

Both contracts with Historically Underserved landowners

## Emergency Watershed Protection Program

- ▶ **\$149,812 - Akiak Native Community**
- ▶ **\$110,341 - Village of Kwethluk**

Both projects with Historically Underserved landowners

## New project on Kenai Peninsula to improve rangeland health with GPS cattle tracking



This year Alaska NRCS revived its state-level Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) competition and awarded a grant to the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District, in partnership with the Fox River Cattlemen's Association.

The project will track the movements of cattle herds seasonally grazed in the remote 15,670-acre Fox River Flats state grazing lease at the head of Kachemak Bay in Southcentral Alaska,

where cell coverage is limited. Tools tested will provide data that can be used for remote livestock management, resulting in the potential to improve and maintain herd health and productivity and plant health and vigor on remote grazing lands. Data may also be used to help protect other rangeland resources, including habitats for salmon and migratory and nesting birds—especially waterfowl and shorebirds.



Crews relocate a house in the village of Akiak.

## Saving Homes from Rapid Erosion

This year NRCS provided assistance to two Federally-recognized Tribes in rural Alaska to relocate 11 homes threatened by rapid riverbank erosion, via the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. NRCS used satellite imagery to certify the work remotely and alleviate safety concerns involved with traveling to remote villages during the pandemic.

Read the full story here: <https://arccg.is/19KGGL>



## New RCPP project awarded in the Tanana Watershed



The Tanana River Watershed RCPP project was selected through a national competition to receive \$1.3 million in NRCS funding, with an additional \$1.3 million match from partners including The Conservation Fund and the U.S. Air Force. The project will use conservation easements to protect critical wetland sites on private lands adjacent to

Eielson Air Force Base and the Tanana River. The overall goals of the project are to limit impacts to soil and water quality and quantity from forecasted military and urban expansion; support state-wide and local food security; and establish reliable funding for long-term resource conservation.

## Hoonah RCPP Project Renewed



Crews use hand tools to add large woody debris to streams to improve fish habitat. Photo by Ian Johnson.

This year the Hoonah Native Forest Partnership RCPP project was selected for renewal. The lead partner, Sealaska, applied for and approved the renewal, which will aid in additional forest conservation work and stream restoration activities.

Read the full story here: <https://arcg.is/1jnK500>

# FY20

## Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

► **1 new project awarded for \$2.6 million**

Tanana River Watershed  
(Lead Partner The Conservation Fund)

► **1 project renewed for \$1.8 million**

Hoonah Native Forest Partnership  
(Lead Partner: Sealaska)

► **3 other projects in progress:**

**Implementing Education, Outreach, and Conservation Practices on Tribal Land for Socially Disadvantaged Producers and Alaska Tribal Conservation Districts**  
(Lead Partner: Tyonek Tribal Conservation District)

**Keex' Kwaan' Community Forest Partnership**  
(Lead Partner: Sealaska)

**Cooper Basin Subsistence Landscape Resiliency**  
(Lead Partner: Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission, CRITR)



# FY20

## Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

Technical assistance is the help provided by NRCS staff and employees of other entities or agencies under the technical supervision of NRCS, to clients to address opportunities, concerns, and problems related to the use of natural resources.

- ▶ **33,000+** acres applied
- ▶ **162,000+** acres conservation plans written or updated
- ▶ **30,380** staff hours
- ▶ **36%** of annual staff hours

## Alaska Snow Survey crew completes new installations



Now retired hydrologic technician Dan Kenney measures snow at Archangel Road Snow Course. Photo by Daniel Fisher.

The NRCS Snow Survey Program provides mountain snowpack data and streamflow forecasts for the western United States and Alaska. Common applications of snow survey products include water supply management, flood control, climate modeling, recreation, and conservation planning. New projects this year include installing a new snow telemetry (SNOTEL) site at Chena Lakes in partnership

with the U.S. Army Engineering Research and Development Center's Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL); installing five aerial markers in the Kenai Mountains which increases capacity to monitor snowpack in the upper half of the mountains; and exploring the potential for a SNOTEL site in Sitka to support multi-agency landslide investigations.

## Soil Survey

- ▶ **6.6 million acres Yukon Flats** Soil Survey Completed including State, Federal, private and Tribal lands.
- ▶ **Glacier Bay & Nulato Hills** soil survey work nearing completion.
- ▶ **\$116 million** - total workload for requested soil surveys in Alaska.



Plant Materials Center agronomist Casey Dinkel with cover crops.

## Alaska Farmers on a Quest for Healthy Soils

Soil health continues to gain interest with growers in Alaska, with more partners participating in cover crop field trials. A trial at the Plant Materials Center just wrapped up five years of data, showing positive changes to soil physical properties when using cover crops.

Read the full story here: <https://arcg.is/10Du4K>