



United States Department of Agriculture

USDA News Release

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USDA announces nearly \$9 million of investments for Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy's \$25 million commitment

JUNEAU, Alaska, March 31, 2022 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced 25 projects totaling nearly \$9 million of investments that are to be funded through the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy (SASS). Work continues with southeast Alaska partners on additional projects to meet the strategy's initial \$25 million commitment.

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack is permanently chartering a regional OneUSDA team to continue this collaborative approach to achieving social, economic, ecological, and cultural sustainability in Southeast Alaska.

Leaders from USDA's Natural Resources and Environment, Rural Development, and Natural Resources Conservation Service are visiting southeast Alaska this week and meeting with Tribal Nations, Alaska Native corporations, regional and local partners, including recipients of the initial funding. This visit reinforces USDA's commitment to locally driven collaborative work towards shared outcomes in southeast Alaska communities.

"Listening to the importance of the sustainability strategy to local communities, learning about southeast Alaska culture, and meeting Tribal members and partners is an honor for me," said Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Dr. Homer Wilkes. "I am pleased to have been able to highlight some of the first projects to receive funding, and I will be watching as the rest of the investments move forward in a demonstration of the difference we can make as a collaborative team working toward a common goal."

The projects announced today have been allocated in the categories below:

- **Tribal and Indigenous Interests** – total commitment of \$12.5 million, which includes about \$2.3 million for the six projects announced today.
- **Community Capacity** – total commitment of \$3.125 million, which includes about \$1.7 million for five projects announced today.

- **Infrastructure** – total commitment of \$3.125 million, which includes about \$1.5 million for five projects announced today.
- **Natural Resources** – total commitment of \$6.25 million, which includes about \$3 million for nine projects announced today.

The OneUSDA team is continuing to work with Tribal Nations, Alaska Native corporations, and other partners to distribute all funds in 2022.

“These investments speak to the opportunities for partnership—this isn’t the first time USDA has invested in southeast Alaska, and it won’t be the last,” Under Secretary for Rural Development Xochitl Torres Small said. “The people who live and work here have inspiring visions for the future, and USDA will continue to support them with investments that promote long-term economic sustainability and honor their values, communities and cultures.”

“For years Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) has worked with private landowners in southeast Alaska to enhance the health and vigor of private forestlands and improve fish and wildlife habitat,” said NRCS Alaska State Conservationist Alan D. McBee. “This exciting new partnership will allow us to bring even more conservation benefits to southeast communities that address food security and local agricultural production.”

Visit the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy [website](#) for more information, including an [investment project list](#) and [summary report](#) with additional project information.

*Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy –
Partners for community, culture, conservation, and commerce.*

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