The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can provide technical assistance to landowners interested in addressing resource concerns associated with agricultural production, such as maintaining or improving soil or water quality, protecting wildlife habitat, developing pollinator habitat, and managing forest lands.

EQIP is a financial incentive program offered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist agricultural landowners in implementing practices that help conserve natural resources. Both the land and the applicant(s) must meet certain eligibility requirements and establish farm records with the Farm Services Agency. Funding provided through this program is taxable.

High tunnels (seasonal cover structures used to grow crops in the ground) are part of this program, and can assist landowners in producing local food by extending the growing season, controlling water application or irrigation, and facilitating nutrient and pest management.

Applications are accepted continuously, however, the first deadline to apply for EQIP funding for fiscal year 2015 (Oct. 1, 2014 – Sept. 30, 2015) is June 13, 2014. Contact the Juneau Field Office for more information.

In southeast Alaska, NRCS has assisted with management of over 70,000 acres of privately-owned forest land throughout the region, including planning and treatment of second-growth stands to improve forest condition and wildlife habitat. Other projects include fish habitat improvement, technical assistance on composting, invasive weed control or eradication, irrigation systems, grazing management, and organizational support and development of community watershed councils.