



County of
VERMILIONRiver



Regional Collaboration Funding Approved for Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Delivery

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
KITSCOTY, AB (May 26, 2014)

Alberta's precious lands do not answer to municipal or private ownership boundaries and the health of the environment impacts all areas in the Province. A unique regional collaboration between the County of Vermilion River, Parkland County and Red Deer County has begun to ensure consistent and efficient service delivery as Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) expands within Alberta. ALUS is a community-developed, farmer-delivered program that provides support to farmers and ranchers to enhance and maintain nature's benefits. *ALUS is a unique concept that pays producers a fair price for the environmental services that they produce on their agricultural lands.* Since 2010, the County of Vermilion River has initiated 22 diverse projects covering 2,000 acres and both Parkland and Red Deer Counties have recently launched ALUS demonstration projects. Each of these three Counties has an interest in fostering healthy land and environment for the future success of their farmers, ranchers, residents and business communities. Together, they will be working towards a regional governance framework and collaborative approach to funding and gaining support for ALUS.

County of Vermilion River Reeve, Daryl Watt commented, *"Our partnership efforts to strengthen ALUS will reach far into the future with healthy lands for all our agricultural producers and residents across these three diverse counties. Our municipalities will all benefit from the elimination of duplicated services, as well as the positive results that come from producing a consistent program. As ALUS is community led and producer delivered it is a politically sustainable approach to conservation."*

With the approved funding from the Government of Alberta, this Regional Collaboration project will allow the consortium to hire a Regional Coordinator to seek out further support for providing payments for services from nature, to consolidate the process among the three municipalities to operate sustainable ALUS programs, to develop the framework for regional service delivery, and a business plan to support implementation and long-term sustainability. The short term project benefit of this regional collaboration is having the ALUS programs becoming unified and self-sustaining in order to enable the municipalities to better respond to agriculture, energy and development pressures. For the long term, the positive outcome is a sustainable ALUS program that will enable each municipality to lead the environmental agenda important to their communities. This effort will also help form a template for all other counties to embrace ALUS to address local agri-environmental opportunities



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BACKGROUNDER

The Regional Collaboration Program through Alberta Municipal Affairs aims to improve the viability and long-term sustainability of municipalities through strategic activities related to regional collaboration and capacity building.

ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services) is a unique concept that pays producers a fair price for the environmental services that they produce on their agricultural lands

ALUS has a simple, yet revolutionary goal...create a healthy landscape that sustains agriculture, wildlife and natural spaces for all Canadians. ALUS is a community-developed, farmer-delivered program that provides support to farmers and ranchers to enhance and maintain nature's benefits.

- ALUS puts local communities at the centre of conservation policy.
- ALUS engages farmers and ranchers as environmental partners on the working landscape.
- ALUS creates benefits from nature for everyone, such as: clean water, clean air, erosion and flood control, as well as habitat for pollinators, fish and wildlife.

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