

# COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Topic: 2016 Alternative Land Use Services Program & Green Acreages Program Updates

### Introduction:

The Purpose of this report is to provide the Committee of the Whole with an update of the activities undertaken and the progress made in implementing the ALUS and Green Acreage Programs in 2016.

### Facts (Background Information):

#### ALUS 2016

The Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program is an Environment Services & Community Sustainability-delivered initiative in its 5<sup>th</sup> year of existence. Since its initial pilot began in 2012 the program has expanded by accessing over \$1.0M in external grant funding and by hiring an ALUS Coordinator in July 2015 to administer the program.

The ALUS program is amidst a year of expansion fueled by increasing producer awareness and ALUS staff presence. As a result of these improvements a demonstrated increase in project uptake was achieved with a strong outlook for future producer involvement. Half way through 2016, 230 acres have been enrolled with a further 190 acres of projects in the process of review. This compares to 151 acres enrolled in 2015 and less than 50 acres in each of the previous 3 years.

ALUS began a formal collaborative partnership with Lac Ste. Anne County in 2015 that has facilitated efficient use of resources in providing effective producer workshops and project planning. This Lake Isle Sturgeon Headwaters Project collaboration involves \$551,700.00 of available project establishment funding provided from 2015-2017 by the Alberta Government's Agricultural Watershed Enhancement Program for producers within the sub-watershed. The 2015 Fall launch event and subsequent producer workshops has induced much interest from producers in the eligible funding area resulting in the 2016 enrollment of 4 Parkland County producers.

In February and March ALUS held two workshops in collaboration with the West Central Forage Association and Lac. Ste. Anne County's ALUS program to engage producers in issues related to ALUS. Both of these events provided producers with a valuable opportunity to connect with both neighboring producers and the ALUS program to come up with solutions that help their operation provide increased ecosystem services. At the end of July an event is scheduled that pairs ALUS Canada's Alberta media launch with Parkland County's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual ALUS farm tour. An invitation will be distributed to all Council Members.

#### Green Acreages 2016

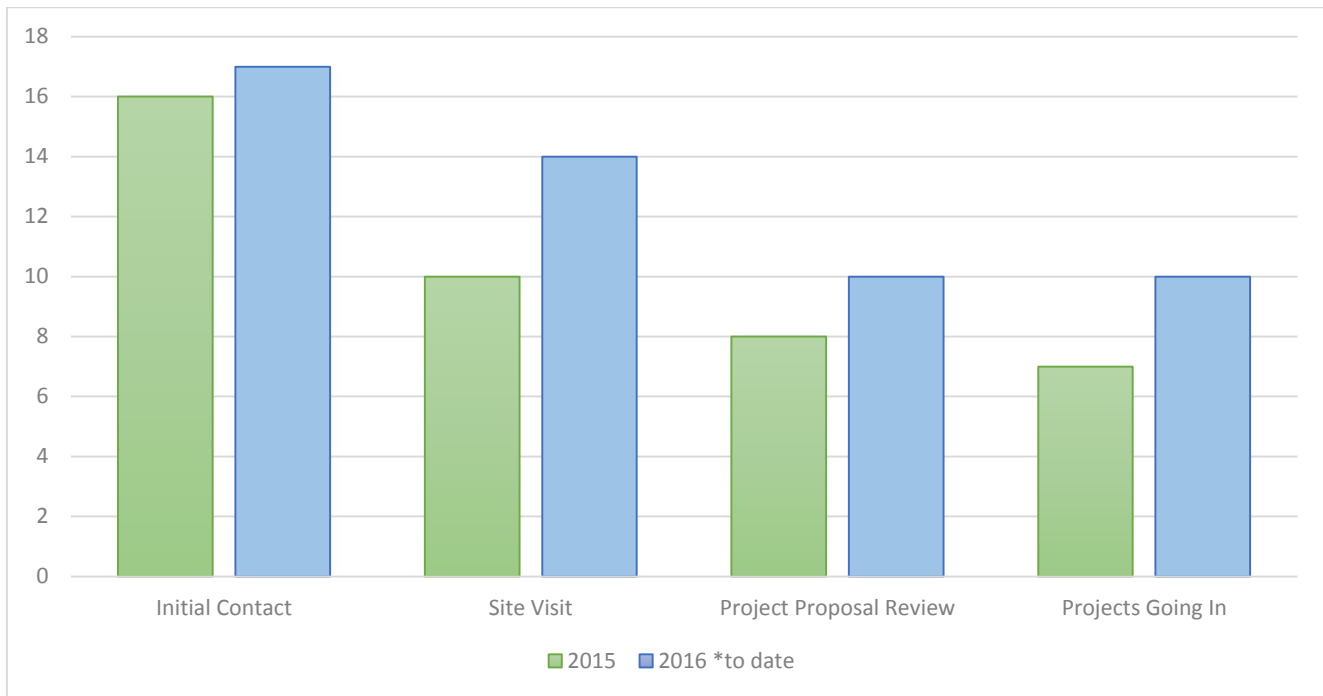
In 2015 Environment & Community Sustainability Services undertook a pilot of the Green Acreages Program to fill the demand for stewardship assistance on acreage properties ineligible for ALUS. The ALUS Coordinator that began employment in July 2015 is also responsible for implementing the Green Acreages Program. The pilot year had strong resident interest and engagement, however few projects were implemented due in part to the many complexities of the project planning process. To manage the complexity, the Green Acreages Program started 2016 by removing the eligibility requirement of completion of the Green Acreages Guide. The program then looked to use the building awareness to continue to engage more residents and implement projects across the County.

The Green Acreages Program in 2016 started off quickly with the early melting snow. To help start the season, a workshop was held April 13<sup>th</sup> at Carvel Hall that saw 53 residents come to receive project advice from various experts. Many of the participants are in the process of using these suggestions to determine the details of their projects including replacing

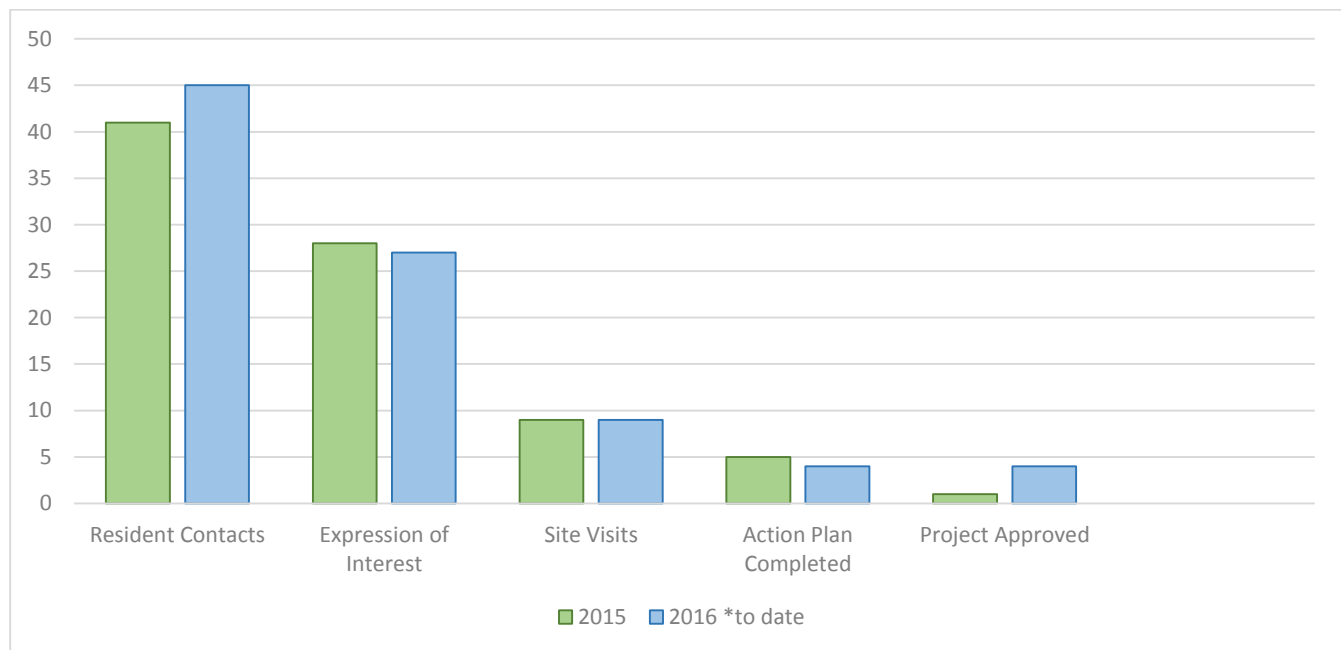
outhouses on Jackfish Lake with Septic holding tanks, planting shelterbelts that provide wildlife habitat, and rainwater catchment systems. The program looks to implement 15-20 projects by the fall of 2016.

### Analysis:

#### ALUS from 2015 to 2016



#### Green Acreages from 2015 to 2016



## **Conclusion/Summary:**

The ALUS program has experienced significant expansion of producer awareness and project implementation. Total enrolled acres has doubled in 2016 with more producers expressing interest routinely. The diversity of projects has increased although engaging crop producers remains a challenge. High degrees of partnership with other ALUS municipalities in Alberta has provided ideas and resources that continue to assist Parkland County in effectively working with producers to implement new project types, and to better implement existing types.

Regarding the Green Acreages program, rate payers in Parkland County have continued to express a high degree of enthusiasm for the program. Some challenges remain in terms of completing initiated projects due to the complexity required to properly design, plan, and implement projects, as well as limited staffing capacity. To accommodate this, the program's resources and process have adjusted to more effectively educate and assist residents with their specific needs.

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