

Topic: 2016 Alternative Land Use Services Program & Green Acreages Program Annual Report

Introduction:

The Purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview 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 & Community Sustainability-delivered initiative in its 5th 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 underwent a year of expansion both with enrolled acres and producer interest. In accordance with the Partnership Advisory Committee's approved Strategic Plan for 2016 the program continued to increase its outreach and participant engagement components, which resulted in a continued increase in projects. The growth of the program has included a variety of new project types which encourages producer's stewardship creativity.

ALUS continued to work in close partnership with Lac Ste. Anne County on the 3-year Lake Isle/Sturgeon Headwaters Collaboration Project that accessed \$571,000 through the Alberta government's Agricultural Watershed Enhancement Program. Producers in both Counties have accessed 100% project cost coverage for suitable ALUS projects. This formal partnership facilitated extension collaboration that resulted in a Sustaining Agriculture workshop series that include 4 workshops providing resources to producers in both Counties.

In July, the 2nd Annual ALUS tour took place in conjunction with ALUS Canada's Alberta media launch. There were 65 participants who took part in the tour of 4 ALUS projects in addition to a conference discussing ALUS's accomplishments in Alberta. Participants included ALUS community representatives from across Alberta, local and provincial elected officials, representatives from related expert organizations, and residents.

Green Acreages 2016

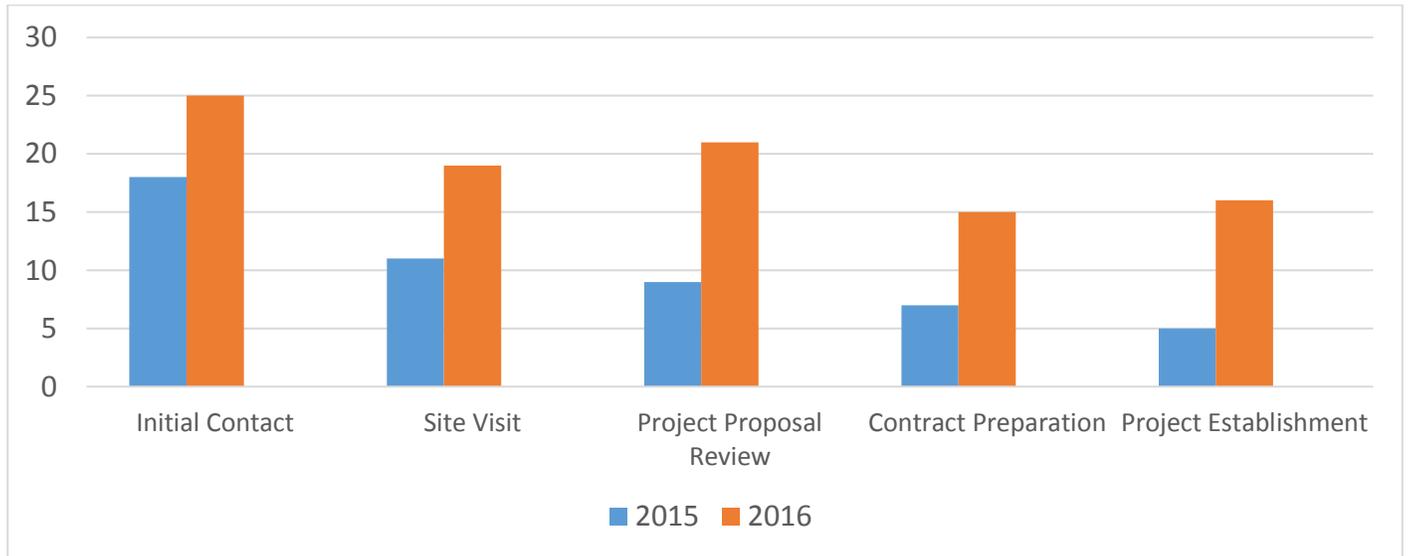
The Green Acreages Program was initiated in 2015 to fill the demand for stewardship assistance on acreage properties identified by ineligible ALUS proposals on non-agricultural land. Green Acreages provides education materials and project design expertise in addition to cost sharing projects. In its 2nd year, Green Acreages expanded its resident engagement by holding 2 workshops and partnering with Nature Alberta to provide funding for shoreline restoration projects along Lake Wabamun. Nature Alberta has committed to provide \$130,000 over 2017 & 2018 to fund Parkland County residents undergoing shoreline restoration through the Green Acreages program.

Similar to the pilot year, Green Acreages experienced strong interest from residents to learn strategies for stewardship on their properties. Engagement through the workshops, one-on-one resident consultations and the response to advertisements revealed a strong desire for projects ranging from tree planting to sewage holding tank installations. The program successfully delivered stewardship education to these resident, however following initial engagement and expert recommendations, a number of participants did not immediately follow through and complete their projects. Explanations for this response may include a resident's shortage of time or resources in the short term, unclear project eligibility, desire for project flexibility, or loss of interest. This assessment points to the need for more explicit project eligibility in order to

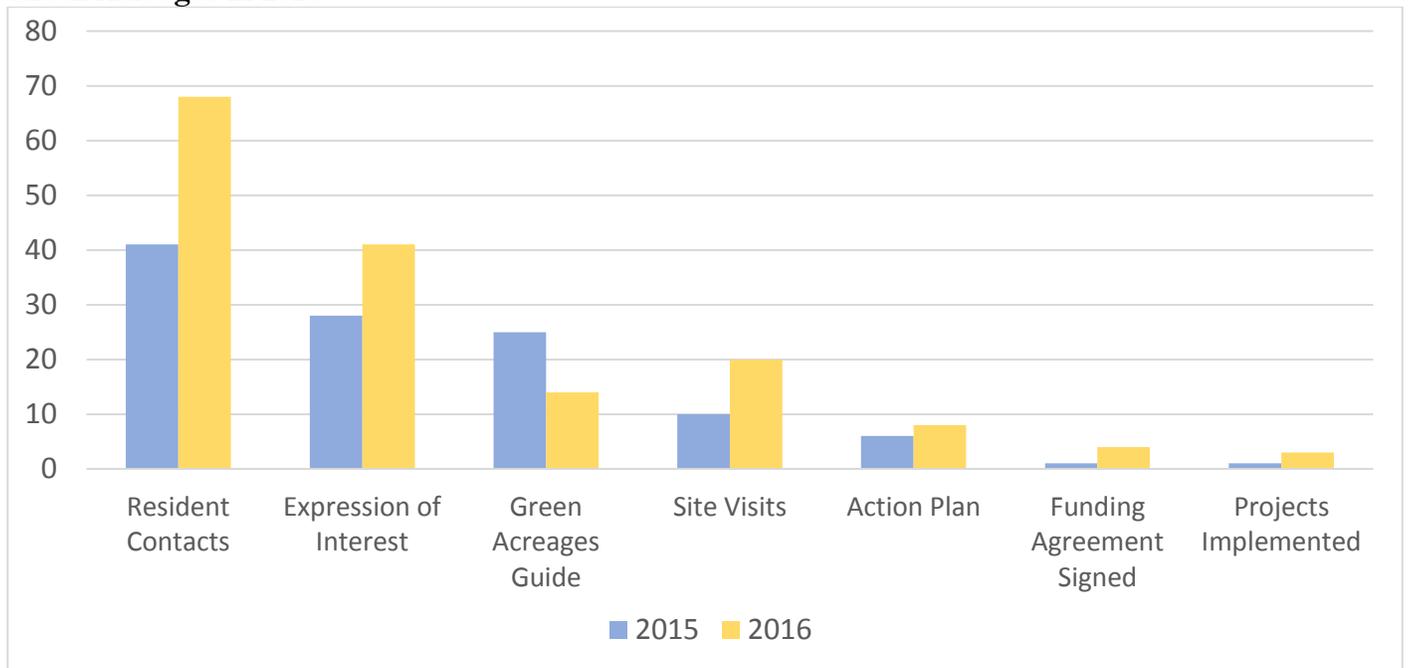
communicate, as effectively as possible, the necessary commitment for completing a project. This will be addressed in the 2017 Green Acreages Strategic Plan.

Analysis:

ALUS in 2016



Green Acreages in 2016



Conclusion/Summary:

Figures and results from 2015 and 2016 indicate that the dedicated administrative capacity of the ALUS coordinator position provides significantly improved producer interest and project establishment within the ALUS program. Continued expansion of funding sources and opportunities from ALUS Canada will enable the program to maintain its expansion rate.

Regarding the Green Acreages program, rate payers in Parkland County have continued to express a high degree of enthusiasm for the program. Significant participation in the workshops and plan development revealed increasing resident interest in obtaining information on how to take stewardship actions that benefit their whole community. Although some challenges were identified in supporting the completion of projects, the program will continue to evolve to address them.

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