

Parkland ALUS Partnership Advisory Committee Minutes

Wednesday, January 9, 2019

<p>Call to Order (Jenn))</p>	<p>Jenn called the meeting to order at 9:12am with the following members in attendance:</p> <p><u>Committee members</u> Phyllis Kobasiuk- Councillor, Parkland County Jennifer Caudron – ALUS Coordinator Candice Vanin – Agriculture and Agri-food Canada Helen Lomas – Community Sustainability Committee Kerri O’Shaughnessy- Cows and Fish Eldon Greanya- Parkland County ALUS Producer Krista Quesnel – Manager, Community Sustainability Shelley Spangler – Agriculture Service Board Julie Burger – Parkland County ALUS Producer Laura Duncan- Parkland County Rural Extension Coordinator Devon Lloyd – Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta Darren Haarsma – Farmer Liaison Mike Hittinger- CAP Extension Specialist, Alberta Christine Campbell – ALUS Canada via telephone Brendan Ganton- Alberta Conservation Association</p> <p><u>Administration</u> Tracy Hustler – Administrative Assistant</p> <p><u>Absent</u> Gerry Taillieu- Parkland County ALUS Producer</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of new Chair & Vice-Chair 	<p>Floor is open for nominations of Chair- Helen nominates Eldon-. Second nominate – Darren by Candice. Third nominate - None. Nominations are closed. Laura to tally the votes. New Chair is Darren – accepted. Candice thanks Eldon on behalf of the PAC for being chair for many years. Nominations for vice chair –Helen nominates Eldon for vice chair. Eldon accepted. Third call – none. Unanimous decision – Eldon is vice chair by acclamation. Eldon accepts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additions/ Changes to Agenda (CHAIR-Darren) 	<p>Additions to Agenda: none Changes to Agenda: None</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of Agenda (CHAIR- Darren) 	<p>Moved by Candice, Seconded by Shelley THAT the agenda be adopted as discussed. In favour ALL. Carried</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of Minutes (CHAIR- Darren) 	<p>-Julie submitted a few comments. 1) It was mentioned for one of the projects that solar was the only power option, but there was actually 2 options in the background. 2) Adding 'tree' beside mortality to make it a bit more clear, 3) ALSU needs to be corrected to ALUS -Shelley's name needs to be corrected. Also, a reminder to Jenn to send a copy of when ALUS was mentioned in the Senate. Moved by Eldon, Seconded by Devin That he minutes be adopted as discussed. In favour ALL. Carried</p>
<p>BUSINESS/UPDATES ARISING FROM DECEMBER MINUTES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance Update • 2019 Projects • Winter Site Visits • ALUS Canada Update (Christine) 	<p>Finance Update (Krista/Jenn) Nothing much has changed since the last meeting. We should know more regarding Finance in February. Still finalizing our year end process. Once that is done, it will be easier to show the budget and what was spent in 2018. We haven't heard back from any of the grants we have applied to. We will likely have more information regarding funders, budget lines, 2019 vs. 2018 comparisons in February. It was asked if Krista could break down the budget and ball park amounts for what we might be getting in 2019. Everything should be similar to last year. We did put in a grant application to Wildlife Canada - \$300000. Hopefully we will hear back in February. We are also still waiting to hear from ALUS Canada; WRRP for the Modeste-Unsure of the amount we will receive from them. Christine – With ALUS Canada- our process is to do all of our allocations in January. We are hoping by about end of January/first week of February to have our amount allocations. I suspect it will be similar to last year. Jenn – ALUS Canada through Weston we had about \$54,400.00. Through WRRP we had \$60,000.00. We can assume about roughly the same this year. Most likely a little less from WRRP. For 2019, there is still CAP funding available. It's to no advantage of the PAC or ALUS – it's the advantage to the producer. We would apply for the CAP, and then split the difference with CAP. ALUS would pay maybe 25% less for the project. Candice – Any watershed projects on the horizon? They haven't secured funding for anything (NSWA). Potentially, the Sturgeon group could look at funding for implementation dollars. NSWA is now working with EPCOR, so they leverage dollars from Edmonton.</p> <hr/> <p>ALUS CANADA UPDATE PRESENTATION – CHRISTINE 2019 – If things come up in your PAC meetings, please flag them to bring to Christine. Seasonal reminders – outreach strategies, media ads, produce videos- start planning! Review a lot of your program pieces - strategic plans,</p>

communications, budgets, annual payments, terms of reference, PAC membership etc. Reflect on 2018 - **what worked, what didn't work**, what could we improve and then plan accordingly for 2019.

Wheatland County and Rockyview County have officially joined ALUS program. Vulcan County expects to join shortly.

Cost sharing innovation – The Modifier Approach from ALUS Red Deer County. Coordinator will run each watering system through a series of “**modifiers**” to determine a final proposed cost-share. They are making it a bit more complicated, But it is a really interesting tool. Start with **(1) ALUS priority area**. High priority cost share – 85%, to a max of \$6000. Medium – 75%, to a max of \$5000. Low, 50% to a max of \$3000. Next thing to look at is the **(2) number of acres**. More acres – more ecosystem services. <1 acre, max amount decreases by 20%, 1-10.9 acres, no change to a max cheque amount, 11+ acres, max cheque amount increases by 1%/acre above 10 acres. Next, **(3) type of acres**. Fish habitat being impacted, max cheque amount increases by 20%. The water body impacted by the project is not a common water body. Max cheque amount decreases by 20%. **(4) Fencing** – if the water body will be fenced, max cheque amount increases by 30%. **(5) Multiple Sites**- if watering location can be moved during the year, or at least every year, max amount increases by 20%. **(6) Number of animal units** impacting the acres: <20, max cheque amount decreases by 50%; 20-49, max cheque amount decreases by 25%; 50-149, no change; 150 and up, max cheque amount increases by \$100 per 10 head. **Environmental Significance** – most of the acres impacted by the watering project are in a Nationally Significant ESA; maximum cheque amount increases by 20%; most of the acres impacted by the watering project are in Provincially Significant ESA, maximum cheque amount increases by 10%.

Questions/Discussion

- When you lead into it, you described it as more complicated and this connotes a negative aspect. Maybe refer to it as more detailed – this sets it up and frames it in a positive light.
- Definitions are going to be very important – each step contained a definition, and each group would need clear definitions.
- Animal units; there is a significant difference on each tract of land. We would like to have that animal unit bit clarified. This is great information.
- Knowing the farmers around here, those that have 100 head or more, they do not have them on a corner section, they have them across. The property could be on a quarter, but their animals are everywhere else. Each PAC would have to take number 7, and ask if it works for them (ESA).
- Animal units are not animal unit months. If she is presenting this, **you don't typically refer to pasture as range**.
- With the modifier process, the cost share was coming out of the priority matrix. It was just modifying the maximum.

- Their definitions – they do have a lot of things quite well defined though other PAC materials. Priorities for the Red Deer PAC might be different than the priorities for Parkland County PAC. This was presented as an example.
- **Krista** – can we have an update on this project in about 6 months? Christine will definitely update the Parkland County PAC in the months to come.

Christine continues with her presentation:

ALUS Vermillion River's PAC have discussed hosting "kitchen parties". Hand select producers who may be interested in ALUS. It is not as formal as a traditional ALUS tour, and it gives you opportunity for a one on one conversation.

Project Renewals: ALUS Vermillion has noticed an increase in land rental rates. Should renewals be priced differently? PACs need to play **devil's** advocate. Yes the land prices may have inflated; do you increase annual payment? Or what happens when **it's** vice versa- do you decrease? These things may come up for you in the future, so **it's** nice to start thinking about them now.

Events Calendar – West hub Conference Winter 2019, date TBD. There has been a lot of feedback from coordinators – a national conference would be appreciated. Zero information on when or where. Possibly look at doing it in Saskatchewan. Any feedback is welcome.

Candice – are any PACS considering with the renewals, the **fundamental concept of the effective life of BMPs? And if they haven't,** USDAs natural conservation service has many resources.

Krista –The land prices have increased in Vermillion River. Have their based payments scheme also increased? **They haven't done a payment** system review for a long time; do you renew the contract at the original price, or current price? In Vermillion Rivers case, it's only for one group of people. Land prices in Parkland County are very different than Vermillion River. Within your county, you are going to have areas that are potentially more valuable than others, and how do you address that? There are no easy answers. We have talked about renewal at the existing payment scheme. First 2 projects that were completed here were at a lower scheme. We have made the decision in the past to renew at a new scheme as long as the producer did another 5 year contract. If anyone from the PAC is interested in attending the conference, then that is something we can apply for from the learning and development funding, so talk to Jenn if you are interested.

March will possibly be when the West Hub Conference will be.

	<p>Moved by Brandan; Seconded by Kerri To make the motion to accept the presentation as information. In favour ALL. Carried.</p> <p>ACTION ITEM: Presentation to be included in the minute's package.</p> <hr/> <p>2019 Projects A few projects that were approved in 2018 that will be implemented in 2019. Interests in ecobuffers, watering systems, calls from the Modeste mail out. There were a few site visits set up for January and February.</p> <hr/> <p>Winter Site Visits Relationship building process – we can use imagery to look at property. What am I going to see if I do a site visit in the winter? There will be no vegetation. We can see better on aerial imagery. What does everyone think? Are winter site visits worth it?</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's a good relationship building opportunity. You can see aerial imagery, but the producer might not be able to, so to bring that out to them on your site visits; is very valuable. It often takes multiple visits. Go back in the spring, early summer, and you may have a better project to present from the outcome of that. Landowner visits to discuss potential projects is very valuable. • Based on past experience in livestock operations, late winter visits give you a better perspective on where traffic is etc. A lot of people have not seen aerial imagery, so that in itself is a perceived benefiter service provided by the county.
<p>NEW BUSINESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference Review and PAC roles & responsibilities • Council Strategic Plan Review • Decision making flowchart/guidelines • Strategic Plan/Communication Plan • Annual Payment Review 	<p>Terms of Reference and PAC Roles & Responsibilities</p> <p>In the PAC Terms of Reference, they are approved by council every year. There is the commitment to the committee to review them annually. Jenn was at the ASB (Agricultural Services Board) meeting, and she presented ALUS.</p> <p>How does our program meet the goals of council and council strategic plan? Jenn talked about the ecobuffer projects, the deferred grazing projects – the response was pretty good.</p> <p>How to quantify the delivery of our program – Say we enroll 1000 acres, what does that mean? One area of land has 500 acres enrolled; We aren't taking land out of agricultural production – I feel like it wasn't clarified.</p> <p>Is there incentive to stay with the program after we have paid them? There is a misunderstanding in terms of how the program is intended to benefit the landowner, not ALUS. If the landowner has opted out of the program- they have still benefited. In the contract – if you were to</p>

come out of the contract earlier, there would be a proration of the establishment costs.

Shelley – We are making headway, but there is work to do in the perception of what the program is; what are the measures/key performance indicators; ASB is also planning on more landowner/producer meetings.

Jenn – **I didn't get a sense that** the ASB is giving off a strong vibe of support of ALUS within the County likely due to some misconceptions regarding how the program works. Hopefully we can change that.

Shelley – it was a past perception- the ASB needs to understand that this is a benefit that they can leverage.

ELDON – To clarify, we are not taking agricultural land out; we support the exclusion fencing, so how does that apply to not taking away from agriculture. Our motive is still to enhance.

Jenn – there is always the option to graze in the fenced area.

Shelley – It might be good for people on the ASB to see the Terms of Reference. There really is a void of understanding, but we need to be a collective voice, and we need to keep at it.

Jenn – We can invite someone from the ASB to one of our PAC meetings; they are welcome to come.

Shelley – The type of meeting they should be invited to is one where we have 2 or 3 projects. They should see how the decisions are made and the process that is followed.

Candice – Jenn, will you be attending the ASB meetings regularly? There would be value in that.

Krista – **That's why we have committee members in attendance here. Other council committees share their minutes, so I think it's a good idea for PAC to do that as well.**

Shelley – With the ASB, they will be looking at a new Terms of Reference, which will add more direction to that committee. The criticism we are going to get is how much admin time is the County paying for these meetings? To invite more employees to the ASB meetings, my opinion is no, **I don't think we should do that. Until we get a new director and Terms of Reference in place, we have to be a little bit cautious. We need to look for opportunity to insert when we can.**

Jenn – John McNabb, who used to be on the PAC, is now on the ASB, so **that's a good thing.**

ACTION ITEM: Share the meeting minutes, and make sure an invitation is put out to another ASB member. Also share the Terms of Reference with the ASB.

Brendan – This is exciting. You never feel like you are doing something worthwhile until someone questions it. We are creating relationships within the County. **We aren't doing anything here behind closed doors, so sharing that is where we need to be.**

Council Long Term Strategic Plan – Krista

It outlines their strategic areas of focus. The timeline they have given is 2040 and beyond. Outlines Parkland County vision. That vision is seen through a number of values and pillars which are similar to the Community Sustainability plan.

Under each pillar there are a couple of guiding principles, and then a number of objectives. Page 8 – there is a flow chart, is our strategic planning for parkland county. In the past we have reported on program specifics. When we are putting forward our budgets and initiatives – we have to justify those using the objectives in this Long Term Strategic Plan document.

A few things to note within this document: Page 12 under Strategic Economic Diversification: Guiding Principle 2.1, you can see the connections to ALUS, speaking of the importance of agriculture for its economic, environmental, and community contributions.

Shelley – some people on the ASB have been stewards of their land, and they have made sure their business is viable. But this is where we have an **opportunity to say that's great! It's** not just about one producer, or one landowner. We are trying to make this across the board.

Krista – We need to show the connections, and how this program is meeting **council's** strategic objections.

Candice – the concept that I have when talking to producers – you will always have that vocal minority.

Krista – The building blocks are there; so now **it's** our job to make sure we are taking that and reflecting that in our annual planning documents.

Respected Environment on page 14 also shows support. Both objectives under this pillar are very related to the ALUS program.

Eldon – is this a push back or counter balance to the chemical companies? We are going on biodiversity etc. but nothing is said about the chemical industry in the agricultural production in our County. .

4th pillar – Parkland County is looking at priority based budgeting.

Those services and programs that have more support will be supported better though the budget. The more you can build and show support for the programs and services, the more secure it will be in the future.

Community benefit of the program is where we might have lost focus.

Phyllis: this is councils Long Term Strategic Plan; **it's** an evolving document. There has never been a definition of agriculture. The bigger issue here is, there is also the community input and creating some

second guessing. That's an opportunity. There a few committees where we have opportunity to bring awareness to ALUS. Bring motions to council and ask council to report back to you. If we feel this is important to our community, then bring it to council for feedback.

Shelley – this opportunity to put recommendation or to ask council for feedback, is a really good thing.

Is the plan up to 2040 and beyond? Present to 2040 and beyond.

Krista – We have had an opportunity for recommendation being brought back to council – we have had a presentation recently from the NSW work. Questions came about with our participation with NSW. There is opportunity to make a motion or recommendation on how much support is given to these programs. It would be a huge benefit of that recommendation coming forward. A good example – Community Sustainability Committee – looking at what a complete community means. That committee is going to council in February for recommendations, as well as other input on whether they believe public engagement is necessary. Just an example of another committee putting forward recommendations.

Candice – Some municipalities follow that 50% per capita, others modify that to what they can afford.

Brendan – can we record this in our minutes that we are generating a recommendation, or can it be an action item for next meeting? We need to clarify which water groups we work with.

Moved by Helen,

To make the motion to recommend that council express how Parkland County is going to action watershed stewardship

Motion retracted-

Moved by Brendan; Seconded by Shelley

To make the motion that we have our coordinator and administration draft for us, a recommendation to be reviewed by the PAC to go to council regarding support for watershed stewardship activities in parkland county by email prior to next meeting.

In favour, ALL. Carried.

ACTION ITEM:

Krista and Jenn will draft a recommendation based on what was heard today; will get emailed out to PAC for review and feedback. Will talk about it again at next PAC meeting to give an approved recommendation to council.

ALUS Terms of Reference Review-Krista

Do we need to acknowledge the change in department that you are now under Agricultural Services? The Terms of Reference are fairly **standard, so we don't need to reference that.**

Should we have the work program after Alternative Land Use Services? Recommendation to put Alternative Land Use Services Program?

Membership:

One to three parkland county committee members, instead of one to two.

Chairmanship

Number to members

Purpose
ALUS PROGRAM

Roles and Responsibilities

Additional role as a committee: provide advice and recommendation to council on a regular basis

Expand on number 5 –

Establishing, monitoring of demonstration parcels to ensure continued conformance with landowner agreements.

8. Acting as a liaison between Parkland County Administration, Council and the community Take out agriculture or producer and just keep it as community.

11. Change project to program

Membership

1. Project to Program

2. Break into 2 groups: 1) The PAC WILL include; 2) The PAC MAY include – and then include the other organizations.

PAC Chair

5. Perhaps a discussion between Chair, Co-ordinator and Recording secretary;

Discuss vice-chair responsibilities; Administration roles and duties

3. **Suggest to remove ‘ appointed Council member ’**

Moved by Candace; Seconded by Brandon

To make the motion with the discussed changes or revisions, we recommend that this 2019 version Terms of Reference ALUS Program Partnership Advisory Committee be recommended to council.

In favour ALL. Carried.

Parkland County ALUS Program – Guidelines

The next policy to implement will be the tree planting – how can we come up with guidelines where if you are involved in a tree planting project, you have to follow these guidelines. This can be created at the PAC level.

Krista – We do have another policy – the renewal. There was an agreeance among the PAC that that is how we would operate.

Background: We updated the payment scheme. We offered a renewal under the new payment scheme, as long as they signed a new contract.

The hope going forward, after we have implemented guidelines, is Jenn can work with that landowner, and present to PAC what the landowner wants to do, and the PAC can have confidence that this is a good ALUS project as presented. This helps to give good feedback to the landowner. The idea is to streamline so that we can eventually do more projects.

Kerri – As a PAC, we still have lots of expertise to help a landowner plan a project. It is still encouraged for Jenn to bring a project to any one of the members for input before bringing it to a meeting for approval.
Krista: Recommend making the change that the PAC both develops and ensures implementation of policy and decision making guidelines.

EOI can be expressed as both on a form, or in person conversation.

Is there a sign off form for projects once a project is complete? All the information is entered into a database. Files are created for projects that are both approved and not approved. Everything is being tracked.

We will follow up with Christine about a pre-mature ending of a contract.

Decision Making Flowchart

We don't have a definition for agriculture
Agricultural lands as defined by Parkland County ALUS PAC are those lands where the present or future intent to sell a commodity produced on those lands generates an annual income of at least \$10,000.00. A slightly lesser amount may be considered on a case by case basis.

Candice: There is a second part that is needed for the clarity on the landowner vs. renter. Who is managing the land?

Jenn – It wouldn't make any difference if it was the landowner or the renter; but if we move forward with the project, we would still need to have that agreeance. First step should be if it's an actual fit for the program.

Kerri – The slight difference is agricultural land, and agricultural producer. Would agriculture still have the same definition?

Shelley – Do we have agricultural land, and are we going to get a contract? First part of the decision should be 'Do we have land'.

Kerri – Do we want to know that the renter and the owner of the land are both on the same page? Before it comes to the meeting, we would like to know if it's the landowner or the renter.

Shelley – To make this flow better, take out the bubble "PAC" and move it under step 2.

The box in the first step is referring to that we don't take land out of agricultural production.

Step 2:

Might be better to have a list of all the consideration points. Should we be including some of the information from previous presentations?

It would also be better if we could go straight to step 2 during a meeting, rather than spending 80% of the time on step 1.

Action Item: Change the decision making document into more of a list of things we can discuss, and take out the arrows.

Krista: So step one is Jenn checking off everything that is required for the project.

Jenn: More information will be included in the presentation for the project. Everything that you see on the decision chart will be included. We can talk about value added, and then go into step 3.

Candice: By the time it comes to the PAC, unless its one with many options being explored, steps 1, 2, and 3 should all be brought to the PAC to discuss.

Jenn – Step one is dealt with by Jenn, Step 2, its brought to PAC, step 3 and 4 is in the presentation.

Jenn can indicate where a project would fit into the strategic plan.

Shelley – Every project should have additional details, showing how it fits with the strategic plan. Organize these projects to show how many projects were related to specific parts of the strategic plan etc. This would help council prioritize their support for ALUS. We need to show them the numbers. Ask council what is important to them, and fashion a report accordingly. Weston funding KPI wants the number of acres.

The feedback from council was that's what the funders want to know, that's not what we want to know.

Did someone say the administrative support is funded by the grants that come in? And if that is so, we need to communicate and demonstrate that. The perception is we are paying money and what are we getting for it.

Krista – The majority of admin. support is funded by Parkland taxes. We also use percentages from some of the grant money that is received.

It is prioritized to go towards projects, but if there isn't a need to use all of the grant money for projects, then some of it does go towards administration support.

Candice: On the metrics, you might want to talk to Mary Ellen or NSWA, as they have a wealth of information on watershed projects. Admin. staff – if you have to split your time according to the pillars and objectives, track those as well. If you are doing more with public engagement, then you want to have those metrics.

Are you able to determine the number of hits you get on the ALUS page on the county website? That would be useful information to know.

Annual Payment Plan

Jenn – We didn't get to the annual payment review. Information was included in the project package given out. Comparison rates will get emailed out to the PAC.

Darren – It's important to remember that we use these rental rates. We are paying for the ecosystems services.

	<p>Laura – We aren't taking land out of agricultural production, so why is it categorized as agricultural production. How can you say it's worth more than pastured land?</p> <p>Krista: We are paying the landowner to produce services.</p> <p>Brendan: There is an opportunity cost to the landowner, and it's not broken out on an agreement like that, which is acre type.</p> <p>Julie: Rentals is going to become more of an issue. The average age of a farmer is 70, so more of the younger guys are trying to rent out land. In the next 10 years you might see a challenge.</p> <p>Jenn – we can leave the payments as is for 2019, and maybe discuss at next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION ITEMS: Strategic and Communication plans have additions. The updated versions will be sent out to PAC members along with the date they were updated. Members can then review the documents, to view at next meeting.</p>
NEW BUSINESS	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned by Darren @ 2:30 p.m.

Recording Secretary Tracy Hustler

Chair Darren Haarsma