



AGENDA ITEM
Alternative Land Use Services
Memorandum of Understanding
May 28, 2020

BACKGROUND

In 2016 Lacombe County entered into a three-year partnership with Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) to deliver an Agriculture Conservation and Enhancement Program in the County. Since that time the program has continued to evolve with the formation of a Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC), establishment of program priority areas and payments to County landowners for delivering verified ecosystems services.

The Lacombe County ALUS program began project establishment in 2017 and has grown to include:

- 8 participating landowners
- 11 projects
- 186 ALUS acres currently producing ecosystem services

Breakdown of acres per Partnership Advisory Committee priority areas:

- Riparian Zone Conservation and Enhancement 99 acres, 53% of ALUS acres
- Eco-buffer and Shelterbelt Creation and Enhancement 41 acres, 22% ALUS acres
- Lake Water Quality Improvements 0 acres
- Wetland Conservation and Enhancement 46 acres, 25% of ALUS acres

As the initial three-year term of the ALUS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has concluded action requested of Council is consideration of entering into a new three-year MOU.

ANALYSIS

ALUS Canada has changed the funding model from the original MOU. Funding will not be guaranteed annually over the upcoming three-year term of the MOU. The MOU Schedule "A" (see attached) shall be renewed on an annual basis and determined by the Final Year-end report completed by the municipality's ALUS Coordinator and the ALUS Canada Western HUB Manager. This is dependent on:

- potential and current project uptake
- past project attrition
- grant money availability

As per the MOU (see attached) funding for the upcoming three years of the program is as follows:

	2020	2021	2022
Lacombe County (in-kind includes manpower, administration, advertising, mileage, etc.)	\$59,500	\$59,500	\$59,500
ALUS (Cash Contribution) Admin Fee	\$ 5,000	TBD	TBD
• Renewal Acres for 2021	\$ 1,925		
• 2019 New Acre Payments	\$ 6,000		
• PAC Committee Expenses	\$ 6,400		
• Advertising and Additional Administration	\$ 1,700		
Total	\$80,525	\$ TBD	\$ TBD

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Enter into a new three-year MOU with ALUS.
2. Decline to enter into a new three-year MOU with ALUS.
3. Take other action(s) as determined by Council.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Lacombe County in-kind contributions will continue to be budgeted in the annual Agriculture Services Operating Budget.

ALUS ecosystem services acreage payments, Partnership Advisory Committee expenses, and annual ALUS Canada administration fees will be financed through the ALUS WESTON Grant, if there are additional grants secured by ALUS Canada, these funds will be incorporated into that year’s Schedule “A”.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the Agricultural Service Board Act: Section 2

The duties of an agricultural service board are:

- a) to act as an advisory body and to assist the council and the Minister, in matters of mutual concern,
- b) to advise on and to help organize and direct weed and pest control and soil and water conservation programs,
- c) to assist in the control of animal disease under the *Animal Health Act*,
- d) to promote, enhance and protect viable and sustainable agriculture with a view to improving the economic viability of the agricultural producer, and
- e) to promote and develop agricultural policies to meet the needs of the municipality.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Environment Strategic Priority:

- A. Protect the Environment.

Finance Strategic Priority:

- A. Manage the financial assets of the County to obtain maximum value.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Lacombe County sees the value in engaging and informing the public/stakeholders through a variety of mediums as outlined in the *Policy AD(40): Public Participation Policy*. The appropriate level of engagement for each public participation opportunity is selected on a project-to-project basis. For this item, the following engagement will take place:

- *Inform*: To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions

Highlights of all County Council meetings are published on the County Website and in the County News.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the following resolution:

That the County Manager be authorized to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Alternative Land Use Services Canada for the three-year period of 2020 – 2022.

PREPARED BY: Jalene Makus, Agriculture Coordinator
REVIEWED BY: Dion Burlock, Manager of Agriculture and Environmental Services
REVIEWED BY: Keith Boras, Manager of Community Services
REVIEWED BY: Tim Timmons, County Manager

