



**ALUS CANADA
2017 Report**

to

Ontario Wildlife Foundation

September 2017

Executive Summary:

Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) is a groundbreaking environmental program dedicated to producing cleaner air, cleaner water and more biodiversity in rural communities. Through ALUS Canada, farmers and ranchers are empowered to take parcels of marginal or environmentally sensitive land out of agricultural production and turn them into projects that produce ecosystem services for the benefit of all Canadians.

The innovative approach of ALUS is changing the dynamic between farmers and conservation in many positive ways. ALUS incentivizes conservation activities on agricultural land by providing financial and programmatic support to participating farmers for their management of ALUS projects which produce ecosystem services. Through the leadership of community-based Partnership Advisory Committees (PACs), ALUS engages community stakeholders, builds a sense of local ownership over conservation activities and provides an opportunity to target specific environmental concerns. Last but not least, ALUS achieves measurable, verified conservation outcomes including cleaner water, cleaner air, flood and drought mitigation, and biodiverse habitats for wildlife.

ALUS Canada works collaboratively with ALUS communities in Ontario to ensure best practices and program integrity, and to ensure that opportunities and challenges unique to Ontario communities are addressed strategically. This results in the delivery of the best possible conservation outcomes and ensures wide-reaching impact throughout the province. ALUS communities throughout Ontario have established projects such as wetland enhancements, native prairie and expanded riparian buffers which effectively integrate municipal, provincial and national conservation objectives and priorities. These projects also contribute to the environmental and economic health of each local community and the province overall.

So far this year, a total of 382 acres of ALUS projects were established in ALUS communities throughout Ontario. This includes wetland enhancement, newly seeded native tallgrass, installation of nesting structures, and pollinator habitats.

ALUS is now operating in seven Ontario communities, including ALUS Middlesex which joined this fall. The groundwork for additional growth within the province is also underway with ALUS Niagara expected to be up and running by 2018.

Thanks to funding from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation (OWF), four ALUS communities in Ontario are delivering enhanced extension services to their communities and participants. The net impact of this funding goes beyond the four communities funded through this grant – it benefits all ALUS communities in Ontario. It raises awareness about ALUS, its impact on conservation and supports communities to implement best practices that directly benefit wildlife and their habitats.

2017 REPORT AND HIGHLIGHTS

The four ALUS communities in Ontario that are funded through this grant from the OWF are:

1. ALUS Elgin (Municipality of Elgin County)
2. ALUS Grey Bruce (Grey and Bruce Counties)
3. ALUS Norfolk (Norfolk County)
4. ALUS Ontario East (watersheds of Raisin Region and South Nation's Conservation Authorities)

ALUS Communities utilize a variety of methods to facilitate their extension services including:

- Farmer liaisons, site visits & participant calls
- Presentations, workshops and information sessions
- Tours and events
- Signage (such as demonstration farm signs)
- Media and advertisements (newspapers, newsletters, posters, community boards,)

Highlights of the extension services and initiatives supported by 2017 funding from OWF are provided below:

ALUS Elgin (Funding received: \$1000)

As the ALUS program in Elgin County matures, the type of extension services it offers to its participants and community has also expanded. This year, ALUS Elgin's extension services included an annual stewardship tour, workshops and volunteer opportunities for East Elgin Secondary School students, as well as a pollinator workshop hosted by an ALUS participant.

2017 OWF funding will support ALUS Elgin Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC) Farmer Liaison training. The first training session was held in spring 2017. During the training session, attendees toured a project site consisting of reforestation, tallgrass prairie, wetlands and some erosion control. Attendees also reviewed the project establishment and maintenance that occurred so far. During the tour, the ALUS program participant and a project delivery partner from Catfish Creek Conservation Authority were on hand to speak about concerns they had with the project's establishment and progress. ALUS Elgin's Program Coordinator was present to demonstrate how to address such concerns. Attendees also received hands on training on how to complete project monitoring report cards. Information packages about tallgrass prairie maintenance, woodlot management and invasive species identification and control were also created and distributed to attendees as a resource tool for future project monitoring activities.



As a result of this training, ALUS Elgin is formalizing its Farmer Liaison program and now has its first official Farmer Liaison. He will be out conducting project monitoring later this year. An additional training session will be held in the fall.

ALUS Grey Bruce (Funding received: \$1000)

ALUS Grey Bruce has used its OWF funding in the following ways:

- Funded a display table for ALUS Grey Bruce at Grey Bruce Farmers' Week (GBFW), a successful trade show geared towards farmers. More than 795 producers attended this year's event which featured 126 exhibitors and 53 speakers/panelists including ALUS Grey Bruce Program Coordinator, Keith Reid.
- Sponsored an event at Marginal Land Day
- Assisted with the production of brochures to promote ALUS Grey Bruce/ALUS Canada at the 2017 International Plowing Match
- ALUS Grey Bruce will use the balance of their 2017 OWF funding to invest in additional signage and an information day for farmers in the fall. The information day will allow ALUS Grey Bruce to raise awareness of the ALUS program within the community and will also focus on recognizing local species at risk (SAR) such as Bobolink & Eastern Meadow Lark



Crops Day crowd shot.

Attendees at the 2017 GBFW listen to a presenter during Crops Day. ALUS Grey Bruce's banner and display table is featured in the backdrop.

ALUS Norfolk (Funding received: \$2000)

2017 OWF funding will supports costs associated ALUS Norfolk's farmer liaison program. Farmer liaisons help to keep the lines of communication open with current and potential participants, especially in the early stages of project establishments when participants often require education, advice and guidance related to project maintenance. Farmer liaisons are able to provide this support and ultimately help to ensure projects are successful in the long-run.

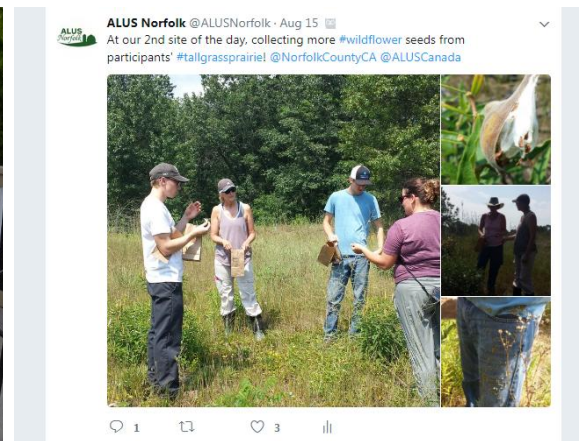
ALUS Norfolk currently has seven farmer liaisons that help to ensure that its 223 participants receive ongoing support both during and after project establishment. This year, Norfolk's farmer liaisons are providing assistance with the following tasks:

- Annual Project Monitoring - each farmer liaison is responsible for site monitoring at 8-12 participant properties most of which contain multiple projects. Each site is monitored separately using evaluation systems including use of monitoring report cards, which ensures projects are monitored using consistent tools. This helps with ongoing and long-term project assessment, record keeping and program metrics.

- Wildflower Seed Collecting - farmer liaisons attended a seed collecting workshop and gathered seeds to be used at future project sites.



A few of ALUS Norfolk farmer liaisons are seen enjoying a tutorial on wildflower identification before moving into the meadows to collect seeds.



Tweet from our Wildflower Seed Collecting Workshop (August 15, 2017). Farmer liaisons learned about seed collection from Leanne Gauthier-Helmer. The collected seeds will be used on future ALUS projects.

ALUS Ontario East (Funding received: \$1000)

ALUS Ontario East has used its OWF funding in the following ways:

- Partnered with five other community agencies to co-host 2017 Landowner Stewardship Lunch and Learn. Co-hosts included the St. Lawrence River Remedial Action Plan (RAP), Raisin-South Nation Source Water Protection, both the Raisin Region and South Nation Conservation Authorities, and the S.D. & G. chapter of the Ontario Woodlot Association (OWA). 75 people attended the event
- Participated in the Ontario Woodlot Association's (OWA) Wood & Forest event
- ALUS Ontario East will use the balance of their 2017 OWF funding to host a tour in late September. The tour will be held at an ALUS Ontario East project site featuring an erosion control/buffer project.



Brendan Jacobs (ALUS-Ontario East) updating the audience with regards to ALUS-Canada and the local ALUS program

Financials:

In addition to funding from OWF, each of the four ALUS communities funded through this grant also receives funding from ALUS Canada. Each community also leverages direct funding and in-kind support from a range of contributors such as conservation authorities, non-governmental groups and local groups.

A financial report reflecting income and expenses for the four ALUS communities receiving funding from OWF is provided.

Refer to Appendix 1: 2017 Financial Report for more details.

What's Next?

ALUS Canada is taking great care to carefully manage growth in Ontario to ensure sustainability and continued delivery of high quality, successful conservation projects. ALUS is now operating seven community programs in Ontario including ALUS Middlesex which is now in start up phase. Collectively, ALUS communities in Ontario have established over 50 partnerships with a range of provincial and municipal bodies, and other non-government organizations to deliver positive impacts on the landscape that benefit all Ontarians.

ALUS Canada has been granted status as registered charity and will continue to develop its community-led, farmer-developed programming to provide support to farmers, ranchers and rural communities to enhance and maintain ecosystem services such as habitat for fish, wildlife and pollinators, clean air and clean water.

Support from OWF has been invaluable at allowing funded communities to engage with current and potential participants as well as community groups to enhance and further the quality of conservation programming. ALUS remains grateful for the support received from OWF and looks forward to continue partnering on support of ALUS communities throughout Ontario.

Refer to Appendix 2: Ontario ALUS - At a Glance for additional details.



Appendix 2:

Ontario ALUS 2017 Data – At a Glance

(as of July 31, 2017)

Please note the figures below include data for communities receiving OWF funding only; Data from ALUS Lambton County, ALUS Peterborough and ALUS Middlesex – which are not receiving funding from OWF are not included.

Participants:

- 43 new farmers and ranchers

Projects:

Project Type	2017 # of NEW Projects	Total # Projects To Date
Grasslands	19	285
Trees and Shrubs	43	381
Waterbody (including wetlands)	12	140
Modified Agricultural Practices	3	8
Erosion Control Structure	0	3
Fencing	5	17
Water Control Structure	0	0
Alternative Watering System	0	4
Animal Structure	4	14
Control Structure	0	15
Habitat Nesting Structure	6	406
TOTAL Projects	92	1273

Acres Created, Enhanced or Restored:

Acre Type	2017# of NEW Acres	Total Acres To Date
Grasslands	55.73	879.66
Trees and Shrubs	161.12	1097.51
Waterbody (including wetlands)	16.38	283.58
Modified Agricultural Practices	59.00	104.70
TOTAL Acres	292.23	2,365.45