



Alternate Land Use Services

"Growing a Healthier Environment"

The Key Principles of ALUS

Alternate Land Use Services (ALUS) is an ecological goods and services program proposal that is unique because it's designed by farmers, for farmers. It recognizes the value of conserving and restoring Canada's natural capital while respecting and rewarding the important role that farmers play in environmental management.

ALUS is also unique because it's incentive-based. Farmers have always acted as land stewards and have provided environmental services to Canadians, though this generally comes as an expense to the farming operation. While ALUS won't compensate farmers for the impact of environmental regulations, it will provide them with the tools and capacity to build on their already sound environmental practices.

Experience in Canada and abroad has shown that environmental regulations alone cannot effectively preserve and enhance our environment. They are more costly and less effective over the long term, which makes ALUS a positive alternative to create a healthy and sustainable landscape.

ALUS would complement the current agricultural and environmental programs that are undertaken by a wide range of organizations in government and the private sector. ALUS will not absorb the identity or integrity of these programs, but extend the benefits delivered by environmental initiatives on farmland.

By its nature as a farmer-led initiative, ALUS encourages the active participation of farmers and ranchers in conserving natural capital and environmental benefits. ALUS would mobilize producers as conservationists. It would also provide a national opportunity to communicate the environmental benefits of agriculture and the ecological services that farmers provide to all Canadians.

At its core, ALUS follows these key principles:

1. A mix of public and private ownership of resources exists on private land, so the stewardship of natural capital and environmental resources must be a shared responsibility of governments and landowners. Due to this shared nature, environmental services should be cost-shared with producers. Farmers should receive annual payments or other forms of compensation to deliver and maintain environmental services.

2. Stewardship and conservation are services, therefore they must be assigned a fair market value.
3. ALUS will consider payments for the maintenance of existing natural assets, particularly where a viable alternative exists for converting natural assets into other (agricultural) uses. ALUS will also provide incentives for landscape improvement.
5. ALUS will produce measurable environmental goods and services, and associated socio-economic benefits for all Canadians.
6. Investment in the capacity of citizens and rural communities is integral to conservation. ALUS will build on this capacity, to allow flexible decision-making at the community level that respects local agricultural and environmental priorities.
7. Farmers and ranchers are in the best position to deliver environmental goods and services on their land. ALUS allows farmers to lead the environmental agenda and develop workable solutions in co-operation with their communities, farm organizations, governments, non-government agencies, and the Canadian public.
8. ALUS will be independently monitored and audited by trusted farm organizations and existing institutions that have the capabilities required to perform this role.
9. ALUS development and delivery will be transparent and accountable, from the conceptual stages to service delivery. Community leadership in ALUS planning, delivery, and reporting will ensure accountability and value.
10. ALUS will meet Canada's international trade obligations, and shall remain consistent with ecological goods and services delivery programs undertaken by our trading partners.
11. ALUS will complement the policies of the Agricultural Policy Framework, the emerging Environmental Policy Framework, and with provincial policies influencing natural capital and environmental resource conservation.
12. ALUS is an environmental goods and services delivery program that uses a "fee-for service" concept to provide environmental benefits to all Canadians. ALUS is designed to provide these benefits at a fair market value, and will not provide environmental subsidies that artificially increase farm incomes.