

ALUS

Canada



A Weston Family Initiative

Trailblazers

ALUS Canada's *Trailblazers* series showcases farmers and ranchers who are doing an outstanding job producing cleaner air, cleaner water, increased biodiversity and other valuable ecosystem services for their communities through their ALUS projects.

The full series is available on [ALUS.ca | Resources | Other Relevant Reports](https://al.us.ca/resources).

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Trailblazers

ALUS Wetaskiwin-Leduc participant Roy Eckert

Alberta trailblazer Roy Eckert participates in the ALUS Wetaskiwin-Leduc program, a partnership between the County of Wetaskiwin, Leduc County and ALUS Canada, A Weston Family Initiative.

ALUS Wetaskiwin-Leduc participant Roy Eckert runs a cow/calf operation on three quarters (480 acres) of land near New Sarepta, Alberta.

The farm has been in the Eckert family since 1961; Roy has been working with the ALUS program to produce ecosystem services on the family farm since 2016.



ALUS Wetaskiwin-Leduc participant and PAC member Roy Eckert enhances nature on his farm near New Sarepta, Alberta. (Photo: Sarah Cassie)

“I’ve always thought that nature and agriculture can exist together,” said Roy. “I was doing ALUS-type work on my land before I’d ever heard of ALUS.” At one time, the cattle had unlimited access to the wetlands and coulee for drinking water. As a consequence, there was a good deal of bare, compacted and damaged soil around the wetlands.

Among Roy’s first actions was to fence off most of this area so the cattle could no longer have access to it.

Next, Roy worked with ALUS to finish fencing off the wetland. ALUS also helped establish a small dugout to supply an offsite cattle-watering system in the south pasture.

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Today, the 25-acre ALUS project is mature and the entire riparian area has regenerated. It is now enhancing biodiversity and producing cleaner

water and other ecosystem services of benefit to the community.

Roy receives annual payments from ALUS for keeping this project in good shape. The bulk of this work consists of maintaining the fence. Cattle are very hard on wetlands—and they are also hard on the fences intended to keep them out: Roy’s cattle have managed to breach the fence on occasion.



Roy Eckert’s ALUS project protects 25 acres around this wetland, producing cleaner water, cleaner air and enhanced biodiversity to benefit the community. (Photo: Sarah Cassie)

Roy was disappointed to see the damage they caused, but he used it as a teaching tool. During an ALUS field tour, it was easy for visitors to see the difference in the affected area, demonstrating the value of ALUS fencing projects.

As Vice-Chair of the ALUS Wetaskiwin-Leduc PAC, Roy sees clearly how the ALUS program allows society and agriculture to benefit each other:

“ALUS engages the general public to help support farmers who take care of nature. I’d like to see more of that. It’s important for our future,” Roy says.

Roy is now working with ALUS to enhance his wetland project by supporting raptors, Mountain Bluebirds and other native bird species on the site.

ALUS is proud to count Roy Eckert among its Trail Blazers in Alberta.

Become an ALUS Trailblazer!

ALUS recognizes the important role farmers and ranchers play as stewards of the land and helps them provide solutions to some of the most pressing conservation challenges of our time, including biodiversity loss, flooding, and water quality in lakes and rivers.

For more information on the ALUS program in Alberta, visit ALUS.ca and contact ALUS Canada’s Western Hub Manager.

