



Attn: Radio, print and agriculture editors – December 6, 2012

Interview Opportunity - ALUS is in Grey and Bruce Counties

Who: Keith Reid is a farmer from the Owen Sound area and coordinator of the Grey-Bruce Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program. He appeared in the recent ON Nature magazine article on the topic (<http://www.vdocshop.com/doc/on-nature-magazine/winter2012-13/2012112201/#18>) talking about a unique program that provides financial incentives for farmers who wish to undertake conservation work on their land.

Keith can answer questions on the topics below and more:

- Why is ALUS important?
- Some examples of ALUS projects and how those projects have made environmental improvements.
- What are some of the impacts of projects on local wildlife?
- How does a farmer learn more or enroll in the ALUS program?
- As a farmer, what are my responsibilities once I enroll?
- What management practices that benefit the environment are eligible for the ALUS program?
- How big a farm do I need if I want to enroll in ALUS?
- Can only farmers participate?
- Does the ALUS program work on marginal land or prime land?
- Can I enroll in ALUS and other complementary programs at the same time?
- What is the value of the average cheque an ALUS farmer gets in Grey and Bruce Counties?

Background

The Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program provides cheques to farmers who undertake land management that provides wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, pollinator habitat and other projects that improve water quality and reduce erosion.

In Ontario, the ALUS program was first established in Norfolk County in 2008. The program expanded to Grey and Bruce Counties in 2012 where numerous applications are pending and three initial projects will be rolled out in the spring.

For more information or to schedule an interview contact:

Keith Reid, Grey-Bruce ALUS Regional Coordinator

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Overview:

Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) is an incentive program that recognizes the role farmers and ranchers play in producing both food and a healthy environment. Supported by Ontario Nature and the local community, ALUS is a voluntary program that allows for community-led, farmer-delivered conservation initiatives.

Through ALUS, farmers receive payments to conserve and restore natural features such as wetlands, creeks, shorelines, native grasses and trees, and important ecosystems like tall grass prairie and oak savannah. In this way, parcels of farmland are converted into habitat for wildlife.

Through this program, we have an opportunity to respond to the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss by engaging those who own and manage most of the land in southern and eastern Ontario.

Lead sponsors are the W. Garfield Weston Foundation and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

For more information about ALUS and sponsors visit www.alus.ca.