

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](https://al.us.ca) | [Resources](#) | [Other Relevant Reports](#).

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ALUS Canada's *Trailblazers* series was created with support from the Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change Group Program of the Canadian Agricultural Partnership in Alberta, a partnership between Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Alberta's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Trailblazers

ALUS Mountain View County participants Sean and Holly LaBrie

Alberta trailblazers Sean and Holly LaBrie participate in the ALUS Mountain View County program, a partnership between Mountain View County and ALUS Canada, A Weston Family Initiative.

ALUS Mountain View County participants Sean and Holly LaBrie have been running Difficulty Ranch, near Didsbury, Alberta, since 2005. They have enrolled 86 acres into the ALUS program, where they manage 14 ALUS projects and counting (as of May 2020).



ALUS Mountain View County participant and PAC member Sean LaBrie (Difficulty Ranch)
Photo: Noel West

ALUS helps the LaBries produce cleaner air, cleaner water and greater biodiversity by enhancing wetlands and riparian areas along the Dogpound Creek, which flows to the Little Red Deer River in the Red Deer River Watershed.

“We want to protect the riparian zone by reducing animal

impact during sensitive times,” said Sean, who is also an ALUS Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC) member. “We also want to improve water quality—both for our cattle and for downstream communities.”

The LaBries have a longstanding commitment to making environmental improvements on their land.

First, they fenced approximately 4.5 km along both sides of the Creek, to create a significant buffer zone, complete with solar-powered offsite watering systems for their cattle, through Mountain View County’s Riparian and Ecological

“We are glad to partner with ALUS as part of our dedication to social responsibility, environmental stewardship and animal care.”

Enhancement Program, which is funded by the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA).

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Then, ALUS helped the LaBries add approximately 1.6 km of fencing on both sides of tributaries to the Creek, including an oxbow and a small wetland. They are now intensively managing all these protected riparian areas through ALUS.



“Our ALUS projects along Dogpound Creek are already encouraging vegetation to develop in the riparian areas, which means more habitat for wildlife and pollinators, and more biodiversity overall,” said Sean LaBrie, of Difficulty Ranch in Alberta. (Photo: Sean LaBrie)

“Our ALUS projects have encouraged vegetation to develop in the riparian areas, which means more habitat for wildlife and pollinators, and more biodiversity overall,” said Sean.

For their next project, the LaBries are working with the ACA to install cattle-exclusion fencing along a further 4.3 km of the Creek, and are enhancing the resulting riparian zone, along with its adjoining wetlands, though ALUS.

ALUS is not the only group to have noticed this commitment to sustainability and land stewardship: Difficulty Ranch has received a Red Deer Watershed Alliance Ambassador designation, an Alberta Beef Producers Environmental Stewardship Award nomination and a Verified Beef Program Plus designation, and is part of the McDonald’s Verified Sustainable Beef Pilot Project.

“ALUS has worked well for us, in part because of its flexibility: The few mandatory guidelines complement our current ranching practices and our long-term goals,” said Holly.

ALUS Canada is proud to count Sean and Holly LaBrie among its Trailblazers 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.

