



# **Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities Annual Report**

**May 17, 2014 – May 17, 2015**

# Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities

Annual Report 14/15

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## About

Established in 2008, the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities (ACSRC) is a partnership between the Augustana Faculty and the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences of the University of Alberta. The ACSRC fills the gap for research and policy in rural areas by fostering constructive dialogue, promoting interdisciplinary and collaborative research, and developing partnerships between the University of Alberta and rural communities in Alberta and beyond.

For more information, please visit the ACSRC's website: <http://www.acsrc.ca/>

## Vision

The vision of the ACSRC is of resilient rural communities across Canada linked closely to the discovery, dissemination, and application of new knowledge at the University of Alberta through teaching and learning, research and creative activity, community involvement, and partnerships. Such resilient rural communities will hinge on informed citizens actively participating in community governance and development in order to support and sustain the people, livelihoods, regional and local capital, economic development and long-term social viability of rural communities as a key element of the Canadian economy, the natural environment and as home to many Canadians.

## Mission

The mission of the ACSRC is to link the research, outreach and educational capacity of the University of Alberta with students, researchers, rural communities, rural community organizations and policy makers at multiple levels across the province, nationally, and internationally in order to support the improved sustainability of rural communities and populations.

## Values

- **Collaboration:** The ACSRC recognizes the contributions and capacity of individual citizens, private, public, community and other non-governmental organizations, faculty, staff and students of post-secondary institutions in Alberta, in collectively advancing the development and sustainability of rural communities.
- **Methodological and theoretical rigour and pluralism:** The ACSRC encourages both theoretical and methodological pluralism, and the critical reflection upon the suitability and implications of the theories and methods used;
- **Capacity building:** The ACSRC is committed to supporting the ability of rural communities via research, outreach and knowledge transfer; to not only govern themselves, but to participate in a meaningful and efficacious manner at and with all levels of government and administration.
- **Transparency:** The ACSRC seeks to adopt best practices in all of its activities in order to ensure fair and open operations, and to comply with the appropriate FOI/PA legislation, etc.
- **Local Knowledge:** The ACSRC recognizes that the sustainability of rural communities in Canada varies from region to region, from community to community, and that factors such as culture, geography, natural environment, socio-economic context and political history can all lead to varying outcomes. The ACSRC, therefore, recognizes that the knowledge, experience and expertise present within communities has equal value and standing to that generated within an institution (university or college) setting

- **Evidence-informed decision-making:** While keeping to all other values listed here, the ACSRC supports the application of systematically gained knowledge to guide the decisions, policies and programs of (1) the Centre; (2) rural communities; (3) regional, provincial and national policy-makers.

## Goals

The ACSRC has established 5 goals which, through their accomplishment, will move the Centre toward achieving its mission in a fashion consistent with its vision and values. Each goal is supported by key objectives (bulleted) which, in turn, will guide the day-to-day operations of the Centre:

### 1) Research

Stimulate, support and conduct research on the multiple elements of rural community sustainability.

### 2) Education

Stimulate and support innovative education in rural community development, sustainability and policy.

### 3) Outreach

Generate greater interaction and collaboration with rural community stakeholders.

### 4) Knowledge synthesis, translation and exchange

Stimulate, support and conduct KSTE to support evidence-informed decision-making and governance at multiple levels, from the local to the international.

### 5) Sustainable Operations

## Challenges:

The ACSRC has four challenges:

- 1) to provide research leadership, profile and coordination to the University's commitment to rural engagement;
- 2) to foster research of relevance to rural communities, including interdisciplinary and inter-Faculty collaborative research, that may be regional, national, or international in scope;
- 3) to think respectfully and reciprocally with, not just for, rural communities, and to facilitate knowledge transfer;
- 4) to develop collaborative relationships with other university-based rural centres in Canada and elsewhere in the world.

## Message from the Director

I conclude my 6<sup>th</sup> year as Director of the ACSRC with renewed hope, vigour and optimism about rural communities and their future in Alberta. Despite the deep effects of dropping oil prices and budgetary uncertainty, the last 12 months have seen continued success on a variety of fronts, and an on-going shift as the Centre moves from being a “new” player in the rural policy and research domain, to an increasingly established and national-profile entity with connections to communities, researchers and similar centres and institutes across Canada.

I am particularly pleased to note that the ACSRC continues to be not only an asset for rural policy and decision-making in multiple domains (environmental, health, social and governance), but that we are increasingly being approached by rurally-based service providers, municipal governments and development officers to provide resources, expertise and capacity to different projects. In my mind, this is the mark of a centre that does, in fact, serve its rural constituents, both in Alberta and further abroad. After 5 years and over 25 projects, the past year marked a transition in terms of workload, content and funding – we have emerged from that transitional year with a number of exciting new initiatives just starting (as of April 2015), new staff in place, and the exciting of a pending move to new offices later in the year. This year serves as a foundation for the work of the ACSRC in years to come, and marks the continued development of the Centre as a key figure in rural policy, governance and development.

Lars K. Hallström

Director, Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities

## Projects

### *Ongoing*

#### **Alberta Parks Social Science Working Group (Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation – Parks Division \$34,500) (2013-15)**

This is a community of Parks staff and University of Alberta faculty representing the applied and social sciences of which the Director is a member. Established in 2013, the Working Group is well-positioned to help contribute to the fulfillment of the Science Strategy of the Parks division. The Strategy seeks to (1) increase the amount, quality, and availability of scientific information; (2) increase capacity to make informed decisions about Alberta's parks; and (3) and develop a culture of respect for the value of science in park management.

This project is intended to increase the capacity for social science research within the Parks Division of Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation. This project will:

- a. Establish a small internal working group to facilitate discussion between Alberta Parks and network of social science researchers in Alberta
- b. Conduct a working session of key staff and interested social science researchers from various research institutions
- c. Conduct an inventory of Alberta Parks user-researchers
- d. Conduct an inventory of Alberta Parks social and applied research
- e. Write a scoping review/"environmental scan" paper based on results of inventory of research and review of approaches (if any) used by other protected area agencies
- f. Conduct a small e-survey of Alberta Parks relevant researchers assessing needs, interests and social science research capacity
- g. Convene and host a workshop or consensus-type conference to prioritize research needs and mechanisms for moving research forward
- h. Development of a framework/process for building capacity based on the above
- i. Identify opportunities for collaboration on key priority research questions as identified through research priority setting workshops, and j. Provide material that can be used in the development of a business case for increased capacity for social science research in Alberta Parks.

## **Rural Policy Learning Commons Building Rural Policy through International Comparative Analysis (SSHRC Partnership Grant \$2,493,435) (co-applicant) (2014-20)**

Designing and implementing policy for rural and northern regions has long been a contentious issue, particularly since the challenges are variable and complex. The remote locations, lower populations, and place-based identities of these regions create unique challenges when compared with urban centres. The Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC) is designed to meet this challenge by networking international scholars with policy-makers and citizens -- in a manner that will expand and nurture future generations of policy analysts and practitioners. We will add to existing research knowledge, increase the opportunity for partners to exchange insights, build a cohort of highly qualified policy analysts, mobilize this knowledge to the wider population, and increase our collective capacity to develop appropriate policy for rural and northern conditions.

Our proposal rests on 25 years of collaboration among researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and citizens within the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF), the Rural Development Institute (RDI), and the International Comparative Rural Policy Studies program (ICRPS). For 25 years, CRRF has been holding annual conferences and workshops, initiating research, and engaging with policy-makers regarding the conditions in rural and northern Canada (<http://crrf.ca>). In concert with CRRF, RDI has been conducting community-focused research, meeting with regional leaders, and publishing rural-relevant materials (<http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/>). For the last nine years ICRPS has organized a two-week Institute where about 30 graduate students and practitioners meet with about 20 faculty members from 12 trans-Atlantic partner institutions to study the challenges of rural policy and explore options for its improvement (<http://icrps.org>).

The RPLC builds on these activities by adding research, exchanges, institutes, policy form, distance learning activities, and social media such as webinars and blogs to generate new policy insights and strengthen comparative research collaboration among faculty, students, practitioners, and policy-makers. Research and policy activities within the RPLC will be guided by critically examining and advancing comparative policy analyses as applied to pressing rural and northern policy challenges and opportunities such as climate change, food security, immigration and labour, natural resource development, and telecommunications.

Collaborator: William Reimer, Brandon University (PI)

Rural Policy Learning Commons Webinars to date:

Bill Ashton: Manitoba's Amalgamated Rural Region: A Step Forward? (December 16, 2014)

Lars Hallstrom and Naomi Finseth: Dirt Roads and Highways: Reforming Municipal Governance and Government in Alberta (February 9, 2015)

Bruno Jean and Bill Reimer: Quebec's Approach to Regional Development: An Historical Perspective (February 23, 2015)



## **The International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC) Conference (2015)**

The 2015 conference will focus on many kinds of common pool resources including fisheries, forests, and water resources as well as a host of emergent problems of social and environmental change. Participants in the conference will be invited to share ideas, evidence and practical solutions on questions of poverty, food security, social-ecological resilience, effective governance, human rights, indigenous knowledge, sustainable natural resource development and climate change. You can find more research and publications related to the Commons on the Library of the Commons at: <http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/>

For more information about the conference contact: Dr. Brenda Parlee, University of Alberta at [bparlee@ualberta.ca](mailto:bparlee@ualberta.ca)

## **Common Ground: Indigenous Peoples and Resource Development (SSHRC Connections Grant \$50,000)**

Many Indigenous peoples globally are dealing with increasingly pressures of resource development in their ancestral homelands and are similarly experiencing adverse effects on their capacity to achieve food security, realize economic opportunities and ensure the continued health of environmental landscapes and resources that underpin identity and well-being. The proposal is intended to bring together Indigenous communities from Canada, the United States and Latin America in association with the International Association for the Study of the Commons to explore common ground on the following:

- What are the dynamics and implications of increasing resource development and the privatization of indigenous commons?
- How can Indigenous communities collaborative in educating the public about Indigenous belief systems, practices, rights and responsibilities for respecting the commons?
- What are best practices for reclamation, reconciliation and stewardship of the commons?

Over a three day period (May 23-25), representatives from ten Indigenous organizations will travel to Edmonton, Alberta to participate in a forum that includes: Day 1 - Traditional talking circles/round tables, Day 2 - semi-structured focus group discussions (on the above) and Day 3 - training workshops intended to impart how-to skills and expertise on key issues (e.g., land use and occupancy mapping, community-based monitoring, and the use of social media).

PI: Brenda Parlee

## **Intersections of Sustainability. Collaborative Research Network on Water Governance, Climate Change and Traditional Communities with M. Steward-Harawira (KIAS Cluster Grant \$100,000)**

Aims and goals: This proposal is directed to the establishment of a collaborative transdisciplinary research network centered at the University of Alberta with a specific focus on the intersection of water governance, climate change, land development and the perspectives of rural and Indigenous communities.

We are motivated by the urgent necessity for more adequate understandings of rapid change that will inform and educate communities, government agencies, policy makers, and industry actors about appropriate measures for mitigating, mediating and/or adapting to rapidly escalating environmental, social and political change. We aim to support the mandate and goals of the University of Alberta in the ‘uplifting of the whole people,’ and ultimately, to contribute to the development of a new paradigm for sustainable development (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; UN Sec-Gen., 2012; WEF, 2012, 2013) incorporating new theories of change. We believe that an integrated systems approach is essential if we are to adequately engage the deep and urgent questions that must be developed in the pursuit of human and planetary adaptation.

While our research will be locally and regionally driven, the development of wider Indigenous, regional, national and global collaborations will be important in the pursuit of best possible research questions and outcomes. Specific objectives for the next three years are:

1. To identify new research questions that directly address societal challenges and opportunities
2. To identify key applied/social/natural scientists to support the core social science research of the team
3. To gain better understandings of the complex barriers, contradictions and tensions that confront communities in five overlapping areas: energy, land development, water quality and management, climate change, development models, and futures modeling
4. To engage with community service learning agencies and the Faculty of Extension in developing programs for the training and mentoring of citizen scientists, and to train and mentor graduate students and new and emerging researchers
5. To contribute to the development of new theories of change

The parameters of our research during this period will be the Athabasca watershed, from the glacier to river, to the delta and to the Arctic. This approach allows for interjurisdictional possibilities and takes into account overlapping geographical and civic boundaries in examining the processes and effects of change.

### **Beaver County Youth Retention and Collaboration (Regional Collaborative Program – Beaver County \$250,000) (2015-2017)**

The ACSRC, Viking/Beaver Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), Tofield FCSS and a number of Beaver County municipalities have partnered to propose regional programming that explores youth engagement, youth infrastructure and youth economic development in Beaver County. The overall goal of our Youth Engagement Initiatives is to retain and attract youth to pursue a future in Beaver County after they have completed their post-secondary education. Aside from the economic benefits of this, we wish to build youth capacity in leadership, voluntarism and governance to make a social investment in our future. To achieve this, we will hold a series of engagement, planning and asset mapping events throughout the course of the project to identify youth oriented resources, venues and opportunities. We will also develop a collaborative youth engagement strategy that will guide future planning for youth across Beaver County.

### **Networks Leadership Symposium and Summit 2015 (\$40,000)**

The 2015 symposium will explore if and/or how inter-organizational networks can help address critical policy issues and practice challenges. Specifically, can networks be used successfully as deliberate tools or interventions to create better public policy, services and practice; or are they simply so ubiquitous that they have become the universal remedy, effective or not, for any wicked problem? Networks and similar collaborative structures have been used by governments as interventions to deal with many of the most complex problems, often in uncertain environments, such as health services reform, climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster response, and terrorism. Networks are used for many purposes, including supporting learning, leveraging organizational growth, building community capacity, encouraging cross sector planning or service delivery, sustaining connections during times of change, and supporting quality improvement. Symposium participants will delve deeper into the dilemmas faced, and the quandaries and benefits arising, when networks are created as public sector policy tools (e.g. used by governments to support practice innovations or to solve difficult problems)

Director: Organizing Committee Chair

### **Natural Resource Development and Governance: A Governance Approach to Tempering Boom/Bust Cycles in Resource Dependent Communities (Killam Cornerstone Grant \$45,164) (2015)**

This project aims to contribute to the understanding of cycles of boom, bust and decay in Canadian small towns and to the formulation of policy recommendations for tempering those cycles. We look at two provinces, Alberta and British Columbia, and compare the pathways, development trajectories of sets of small towns, and are especially interested in the impact of policies and practices regarding the extraction and management of natural resources on the evolution of these communities. We speak of governance paths, and will endeavor to map these paths as well as their context. Each path is unique, and will respond differently to intervention attempts; therefore, we look at previous attempts to deal with boom and bust in the context of these community evolutions. The project is a group effort, with 5 UA colleagues, and a graduate student. The significance in academia can be located in several disciplines: environmental studies, planning, public administration, policy studies, economics. The resulting theory can establish new linkages between these disciplines, useful in answering a set of common policy questions.

PI: Kristof Van Assche

### **Boom and Bust in Alberta and British Columbia with K. Van Assche (KIAS Team Grant \$7,500)**

The development of a team to study boom, decaying and ghost towns in Alberta and British Columbia employing an evolutionary governance lens. Understanding boom & bust cycles through a mapping and comparative analysis of governance paths and linkages with physical and policy landscapes in order to discern ways to temper boom & bust cycles and to foster sustainable development. The grant will support the building of a research team of academics from different disciplines with both local and international experience and expertise in development issues to study and analyze change in boom, decaying and ghost towns in Alberta and British Columbia. The research will have implications for sustainable development of such communities. The team will use the grant to work together to develop a research plan and an appropriate methodological/ theoretical frame for the work.

## **Reforming and Evaluating the Augustana Instructional Environment: A Multi-faceted Learning Intervention (Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund \$74,066) (2015-2018)**

The Augustana Faculty seeks to better align the prioritization, integration and implementation of key high-impact pedagogical reforms. Specifically, the Learning Experiences Research Committee (LERC) was charged with investigating the Augustana learning environment, and has identified two structural changes that should yield significant pedagogical benefits to both students and faculty: (1) the adoption of a compressed Fall (S)eptember and Winter (J)anuary term (with the possibility of a (M)ay term as well) in order to facilitate more specialized teaching venues, international and experiential learning opportunities and cohort-based learning structures; and (2) the establishment of a common first-year experience in order to further establish social, community and pedagogical linkages to the structures already in place at Augustana. These interventions are new to both Augustana and the University of Alberta. More importantly, they reflect a shift in the curricular and pedagogical models at Augustana, because they seek to explicitly identify and develop how learning environments are structured and interact with curriculum, skills development, assessment and pedagogy (Carr et al. 2000). Such interactions are significant from an institutional standpoint, but have also been demonstrated to positively affect students' educational and social outcomes. These interventions are ultimately intended to support Augustana's continued performance under 3 unique indicators: (1) rural engagement; (2) Community-Service Learning; and (3) internationalization.

### **Rural Alberta Innovation and Learning (RAIL) Commons (\$140,000) (2015)**

ACSRC and BRAED will be hosting the 1st annual Rural (RAIL Commons) to be October 2-4 2015 in Camrose, Alberta. The RAIL Commons will be the first of its kind to be hosted in Alberta, developed upon recognizing a large gap in the educational training opportunities focused on rural economic development. Concentrating on subject matter such as rural policy and governance, social policy and services, tapping into natural resources, investment attraction, business succession strategies, infrastructure, transportation and logistics, youth retention and recruitment, and more, this educational commons conference will offer a variety of opportunities to increase the knowledge capacity of councilors, mayors, CAOs, EDOs, economic and community development professionals and students from across the province.

Collaborator: BRAED

### **BRAED/ACSRC Webinars for Thought (Alberta Works Grant \$3,000) (2014-2015)**

The Webinars for Thought Series was a project outcome derived from the results of a day-long Labour Force Forum hosted by BRAED in Camrose, Alberta in early 2014. The Labour Forum brought together business representatives, municipal reps, and government officials to work with facilitator, Kristen Cumming, on identifying issues and opportunities related to the labour force realities East-Central Alberta is confronted with. Working in roundtables, the group was able to identify a number of tangible project possibilities for BRAED and partners to undertake to assist with the gaps seen in labour force attraction and retention services. One such project that was adopted into BRAED's 2014/15 Operations Plan was the development of a business best practice webinar series. BRAED identified a number of topic areas that would increase the capacity to address labour force attraction and retention, and worked with their partner the ACSRC to develop the series.

Collaborator: BRAED

BRAED/ACSRC Webinars to date:

Kristen Cumming: Labour Attraction and Retention in a Turbulent Demographic Landscape (November 24, 2014)

Shauna Feth: Planning for the Future: Business Succession Strategies (January 12, 2015)

Randal Nickel: Thinking of Non-profits in a New Way: Labour, Funding, and Leadership (February 24, 2015)

Jean Vidal: Ministry of Jobs, Skills, Training, and Labour: An Overview of Services (March 9, 2015)

Eric Strikwerda: Labouring Lives in Rural Alberta, 1896 – 1965: A History of Labour (March 17, 2015)

Derek Bruno: Strengthening First Nation Communities through Entrepreneurialism and Leadership: A Story of Success (April 13, 2015)

### **Rural Alberta Regional Collaboration Workshops: Priorities and Scenarios for Long-Term Sustainability (Government of Alberta, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development \$39, 275) (2015)**

In keeping with this, the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities (ACSRC) at the University of Alberta is proposing to conduct a series of regional collaboration workshops in 7 different communities dispersed across Alberta between April 2015 and March 2016, with a project close (in order to account for reporting) of July 1, 2016. These workshops will bring together representatives from rural municipalities, regional economic development alliances, rural associations (AUMA, AAMDC), Aboriginal communities, government departments (such as Agriculture and Rural Development, Innovation and Advanced Education, Municipal Affairs and not-for-profit and private sector associations) to engage in a 3-part collaboration and capacity-building exercise, with the core goals being increased rural capacity to engage with, and support, the action items outlined in the 2014 Action Plan. Locations will be determined in conjunction with both Land Use and REDA inputs, and participants will be selected and invited through a collaborative process that engages the REDAs across the province (BRAED, for example, has committed to an in-kind contribution of \$1000 for a regional workshop). The participants in these workshops ideally create a balance of inter-sectoral representation with geographic, political and social considerations.

### **Continuing care needs reference group with ICCER (2012-2014)**

The primary role of the Community Needs Driven Research Network for Continuing Care Needs Reference Group is the identification of issues, challenges, practices with insufficient formal evidence, and areas that need information to inform practice in continuing care.

The primary activities of the Needs Reference Group are to: establish working relationships with continuing care providers throughout Alberta, consult with provider organizations regarding needs at the front-line worker, clinician and management levels, provide a forum to identify issues facing continuing care, aggregate, characterize and prioritize input from consultations, recommend a prioritized set of issues judged to be appropriate for further investigation to the CNDRN Research Reference Group, evaluate and monitor outcomes and results, evaluate best practices in KT and the most appropriate methods for each of the target audiences (e.g. front line workers, management, clinicians, etc.), oversee Knowledge Translation from the Research Reference Group to the providers of the province, and act as an advocate and champion for providers in the Network.

Collaborator: Sandra Woodhead Lyons, ICCER (PI)

## Identifying and Prioritizing Opportunities to Enhance Integrated Public Policy Pertaining to Protected Areas and Human Health and Well-being with C. Lemieux (PI) (Alberta Parks Research Enhancement Fund \$27,000)

A recent report examining the human health and well-being benefits of Alberta's protected areas by Lemieux et al. (2015) revealed that the perceived human health and well-being benefits that visitors received from their protected areas experiences were substantial. The most frequently reported improvements were related to psychological and emotional (90.5%), social (85%), and physical well-being (77.6%).

These research findings, in addition to a burgeoning body of research on the health benefits of nature contact and ecosystem services more broadly, substantiate the need for park agencies to begin developing policies and visitor experience programs in support of health and well-being related pursuits. Specifically, the report by Lemieux et al. (2015) recommended that Alberta Parks 1) develop a strategic mandate pertaining to conservation and human health and well-being and 2) work towards building partnerships in support of human health and well-being initiatives in support of its mandate. These recommendations were echoed in a recent report that identified Alberta's top 20 research needs, where some regions identified the need to establish partnerships with health providers/First Nations communities to improve services to visitors (Patriquin and Hallstrom, 2014). It has been argued that there is a critical need to re-envision land-use planning in order to more effectively situate human well-being in the biodiversity conservation agenda (Sandifer et al., 2015). In order to achieve this, a new coalition of ecologists, health and social scientists and planners will be required to conduct research and develop policies that promote human interaction with nature and biodiversity.

We propose to use an interactive Policy Delphi methodology will be used to identify and prioritize integrative propositions pertaining to human health, well-being and protected areas policy and management. In its broadest sense, a Policy Delphi is an iterative group-oriented Idea Generating Strategy (IGS) that seeks to generate the strongest possible opposing views on the potential resolutions of a major policy issue. The approach permits a diverse group of people, selected for their expertise, to interact anonymously on a defined policy issue and provides a constructive forum and a structured method for correlating views and information pertaining to a specific policy issue. By design, participants are afforded the freedom to present and challenge alternative viewpoints, and to think reflectively and independently between iterations. It also allows the respondents representing such views and information the opportunity to assess differing opinions. A Policy Delphi aims to uncover and explore both consensus and disagreement surrounding policy issues through quantitative ratings and the solicitation of qualitative information (i.e., rationale, justification).



## Completed

### **Municipal Governance Reform and Land Use Planning in Alberta (Alberta Land Institute \$30,000) (11/01/2013 - 11/30/2014)**

The Alberta Land-Use Framework regional plans were intended to be complete between 2010 and 2012. However, as of 2013 five of the seven regional plans have not even begun. The delay has compounded pre-existing issues including regional land-use planning, municipal planning and municipal governance for rural communities. These regional plans were designed to ensure that provincial direction and priorities were being acted on at a regional level. As a result, rural municipalities are left with little direction or support from the province with regards to land-use planning.

The objectives of this project were to:

- (1) to assess and describe the current governance framework for land-use planning in Alberta;
- (2) identify potential issues and gaps within Alberta's current land-use governance structure that could impact achieving the priorities outlined in the LUF and implementing the seven regional plans;
- (3) identify models that have been used in other jurisdictions to define the relationship between provincial and municipal interests and authority in land use planning;
- (4) identify what made these models effective or ineffective and how is this relevant to Alberta;
- (5) identify what type of legislation or regulatory changes are needed to clearly define roles and responsibilities of all stakeholder involved in the ongoing implementation of the LUF and identify if revisions to the MGA are required; and
- (6) identify what tools and processes are needed to support and effective governance framework for the LUF.

ALI Municipal Governance and Land-Use Scenario Planning Workshop

(Director was convenor and facilitator at the following workshops.)

- Camrose, October 8, 2014
- Camrose, November 14, 2014

**Integrated Community Sustainability Plans in Canada: An Analysis of Sustainability Emphases and Contributing Factors (University of Alberta Killiam Research Fund – Cornerstones Grant Program \$41,620) (collaborator) (07/01/2013 - 12/31/2014)**

Rural communities are facing significant challenges in the areas of investment, urbanization, health, education, environmental stressors, and governance, all of which relate to sustainability. Sustainability in rural communities has received increased attention recently with the introduction of Canada's Federal Gas Tax Fund making sustainability planning a key part of infrastructure and socio-economic development. Slated to ultimately invest approximately \$13 billion in sustainable municipal infrastructure, the GTF also provided support to municipalities for the development of Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (ICSPs). Many communities across Canada have now completed ICSPs or a provincial variant and these represent a wide range of approaches, toolkits, strategies, and content. These ICSPs represent the desired trajectory of rural communities toward sustainability, and there is considerable variation in emphases among the targeted dimensions of sustainability. This variation will have an effect on operationalizing, implementing, and assessing ICSPs. The goals of this project are to develop the largest database of ICSPs in Canada and to develop a model from community and plan variables that can predict influence sustainability emphases. The database of ICSPs will serve as a valuable resource to rural communities regarding examples of best practice for rural sustainability and will foster collaboration among the many, diverse rural communities. The predictive model will assist researchers, policy analysts, and municipal planners to analyze, understand, and support community attempts to operationalize and implement their sustainability plans. This project is unique in its examination of the spatial, community, and plan variables that influence the variability of sustainability emphases of ICSPs.

Collaborator: Glen Hvenegaard, University of Alberta (PI)

## **In-Development and Under Review**

### **Communities Slipping Away: Charting the Impact of School Closures on Rural Ontario and Alberta with W. Irwin and M. Seasons (SSHRC IDG \$80,000)**

This project's goal is to examine the role of public participation in the context of school board accommodation review decision-making processes. Public participation is considered a weak element in accommodation review processes. The manner in which school boards interact with community stakeholders seems problematic and a major contributor to dissatisfaction with accommodation reviews, particularly school closure decisions.

The research program will extend over a two-year period and generate three products: (1) the creation of a framework that will be used to evaluate school board practices; (2) a summary and categorization of school board public participation processes; and (3) an evaluation of the extent to which school board public participation practice compare with, or differ, from public participation theory and best practices.

The findings generated by this Insight Development Grant will lead to the development of new research questions regarding the role and impact of community participation in terms of public institutions. This in turn will greatly enhance the ability of this project to expand its reach beyond the initial Ontario research space. It is the intention of the project team to work with the broader research community sharing research outcomes. The knowledge mobilization plan identifies national and North American conferences that will be used as venues to introduce the work and its findings, to act as catalyst towards building an expanded community of interest for the work.

### **Choice Support and Continuing Care Transitions in Rural Alberta: Building Advocacy and Evidence within a Patient-Centered Model (CIHR Grants \$400,000) (Fall 2014)**

This project will draw from existing models of choice and decision support (such as the Choice Matrix at the Rural Development Institution in Brandon, Manitoba (Kelly & McNeely; 2012) in order to both engage and build capacity of continuing care coordinators in rural settings to both provide, and advocate for, evidence-informed planning and decision-making as part of continuing care. With an explicit focus upon transitions between different forms of continuing care, as well as between acute and continuing care settings, it will engage a core team of researchers, continuing care clinicians and managers from across the province in a design process based upon practitioner participatory design that will: (1) engage care coordinators and others working in and across continuing care transitions in Alberta in order to create the choice resource (termed here Continuing Care Choices Resource or CCCR, Choice Resource for short); (2) engage care coordinators and others working in and across continuing and acute care transitions to participate in a curricular design process based upon the Choice Resource; and (3) pilot and evaluate the combination of the Care Coordinator Curriculum with the Choice Resource to support all five developmental phases of informed decision-making (organizing, planning, analyzing, implementing and evaluating) as part of improved continuing care transitions. Testing the feasibility of this approach and intervention across three provinces, in 6 different comparator communities, will provide critical information for the expansion and diffusion of this partnership to other rural communities in Canada.

**Learning to “Go Local”: Assessing Long-Term Impacts of Place-Based Learning with Karsten Mundel and Glen Hvenegaard (SSHRC IDG \$72,924.00)**

Place-based learning brings together environmental educators’ concerns with ecological sustainability with critical pedagogy adherents’ interests in social justice. Place-based learning encourages students to learn to first identify the social injustice and environmental destruction in a given place and, second, to learn to live in ways appropriate to the unique context of the locale, that are in greater ecological harmony and attentive to its social realities. In the context of this pilot study, the place-based learning activity under examination occurs in international, outdoor and community contexts. This study seeks to answer three key questions: 1) To what extent do place-based learning activities foster place attachment? 2) How does assessing place attachment complement our understanding of place-based learning outcomes? 3) How does place-based learning foster a concern for the local? These questions will be explored using a mixed-methods approach involving photo-elicitation with semi-structured interviews and surveys to establish the extent and depth of place attachment for students.

Answering these questions is relevant well beyond the practitioners of place-based learning. The findings of this study can shed light on the ways in which the university can make meaningful contributions to communities’ abilities to address the seemingly insurmountable problems they face by preparing graduates who are able to “go local” If we want our university graduates to take action, to be global citizens, then we need to give them the skills, knowledge and attitudes conducive to exploring their locale whether they settle in the community where they studied, return to a rural community, or take up residence in an urban setting.

## **Centre Operations**

### **Staff**

#### *Director*

Lars K. Hallström, PhD.

#### *Administration and Research*

#### Spring/Summer 2014

Devin Key – Executive Assistant

Naomi Finseth – Graduate Research Assistant

Nusrat Dipa – MSc. Assistantship

Jennifer Stonechild- Undergraduate Research Assistant

Aubrie Duncan – Undergraduate Research Assistant

Sara Deris – University of Alberta Research Experience Canada (UARE-Canada) Summer Intern

#### Fall 2014/Winter 2015

Devin Key – Executive Assistant

Naomi Finseth – Graduate Research Assistant/ Executive Assistant

Anna Nездoly – Undergraduate Note Taker

Angela Bentley – Undergraduate Note Taker

Elizabeth Agboola – Undergraduate Note Taker

Amy Avdeef - Undergraduate Research Assistant

Jennifer Stonechild- Undergraduate Research Assistant

Mari Contreras - Undergraduate Research Assistant

Leslie Lindballe – Graduate Research Assistant

#### Summer 2015

Naomi Finseth – Executive Assistant

Jennifer Stonechild - Undergraduate Research Assistant

Wilissa Reist - Undergraduate Research Assistant

Emily Merklinger - Undergraduate Research Assistant

Corbin Emslie - Undergraduate Research Assistant

Arun Sama - Undergraduate Research Assistant

Patricia Macklin – Regional Collaboration Workshops Coordinator

### **Training**

The ACSRC supported and/or employed the following student positions via external and internal funding and in-kind support:

- 3 Graduate level students
- 12 Undergraduate students
- 8 Community Service Learning Students

## **Funding**

The ACSRC is currently receiving funding from:

- The University of Alberta – Augustana Faculty
- The University of Alberta – Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
- The Province of Alberta – Tourism, Parks and Recreation
- Killiam Research Fund – Cornerstones Grant Program
- SSHRC Connections Grant
- KIAS Cluster Grant
- KIAS Team Grant
- Beaver County (Regional Collaboration Program)
- University of Alberta, Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund
- Government of Alberta – Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

## ACSRC Related Publications and Presentations

### *Presentations*

1. “Rural Homelessness: Assessing needs, designing tools and implementing interventions” w/ S.Richter and P. Dashore presented at Creating Rural Connections 2015 “Rural Homelessness is Real: what can we do about it?” Leduc, AB: May 26, 2015.
2. “Alberta Parks' Priority Management, Policy and Research Questions” presented at the 2015 Summit “Science for Parks, Parks for Science”, Berkeley, CA. March 25-27, 2015
3. “Priorities, Policies, Practices and Research: The Alberta Parks Social Science Working Group” presented at the 2015 Alberta Recreation and Parks Association Annual Meeting, Canmore, AB. March 12, 2015
4. “Canadian Perspectives on the Intended and Unintended Consequences of Rural Development: Youth, Community, Education and Policy” Keynote panelist at the 2015 Rural Futures Annual Rural Education Symposium. Canmore, AB March 1-3, 2015
5. “Dirt Roads and Highways: Reforming Municipal Governance and Government in Alberta” W/N. Finseth. Webinar Presentation for the Rural Policy Learning Commons Webinar Series. February 9, 2015.
6. “Changing Paradigms for Rural Manitoba” Presentation at the 25th Anniversary RDI Think Tank. Brandon, MB. Nov. 6 2014
7. “Influencing Decision-makers: Participatory Video Research in Fort McMurray” w/P. Dashora, S. Richter. Poster presented at the Housing and Homelessness Research Strategy for Alberta Launch and Learning Event. October 27, 2014. Edmonton, AB.
8. “A need assessment of homelessness in Drayton Valley and the Brazeau County area” w/S. Richter et al. Poster presented at the Housing and Homelessness Research Strategy for Alberta Launch and Learning Event. October 27, 2014. Edmonton, AB.
9. Office of Sustainability Faculty Workshop, “Sustainability, Environment and Social Justice in the Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Alberta” October 17, 2014
10. “Sustainability Plans in Rural Canada: Moving from Process to Content to Action” w/ J. Stonechild, A. Duncan and G. Hvenegaard. Presented at the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference. Prince George, BC. Sept. 25-28, 2014
11. Rural Municipalities and Alberta’s Land-Use Framework w/ N. Finseth. Presented at the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference. Prince George, BC. Sept.25-28, 2014
12. “Moving past knowledge deficits: Engaging research in rural community development” presented at the 2014 Canadian Knowledge Mobilization Forum. Saskatoon, SK. June 8-9, 2014
13. “Alberta Land Use Framework: Hindering or Enhancing Rural Communities’ Collaborative Ability” w/ N. Finseth. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the ISSRM. Hannover, Germany. June 2014
14. “Rural Municipalities and Sustainability Planning” presented at the ARDN Creating Rural Connections “Municipal Sustainability” Workshop. Edmonton, AB. May 26, 2014

## Publications

1. “Which Way from Here? Navigation for the Care of Older Rural Adults with Terminal Illness” Canadian Journal of Aging (revise and resubmit) with W. Duggleby et al (co-author) January 2015.
2. “Rural Alberta’s Priority Policy Research Questions” with N. Finseth et al. in Journal of Rural and Community Development December 2014, Vol. 9 (4) (Lead co-author)
3. “Watershed Management and Public Health: An Exploration of the Intersection of Two Fields as Reported in the Literature from 2000 to 2010” with M. Bunch, H. Venema, K. Morrison, M. Parkes & C. Neudoerffer in Environmental Management. August 2014, Vol. 54, No. 2 pp. 240-254
4. “Hope of Rural Women Caregivers of Persons with Advanced Cancer: Guilt, Self-Efficacy and Mental Health” in Rural and Remote Health. w/ Duggleby, W., Williams, A., Holtslander, L, Thomas, R.,
5. “Public Policy and the Welfare State” In D. Raphael (ed.) The Social Determinants of Health: Canadian Perspectives (3rd ed.) forthcoming 2016.
6. “Partnerships and the Fourth Way: Integration, Collaboration and Capacity in Rural Canada” in J. Malone (Ed.) Rural Linkages: Intercolaborative Human Services in Alberta (under review – University of Calgary Press)

“Taking the Next Steps: Planning, Participation and Policy for Sustainable Rural Canadian Communities” w/ M. Beckie, G. Hvenegaard and K. Mundel. University of Alberta Press.

*The manuscript has been approved for publishing in 2015 by the University of Alberta Press. The purpose of this work is to both articulate and examine a wide range of community-university based rural partnerships that have emerged in recent years to address or mitigate issues challenging rural community sustainability (very broadly defined) in Canada. Drawing from a variety of case studies from a diverse range of regions (from Atlantic Canada to BC) as well as subjects (ranging from food security to First Nations to community-based planning to issues of conservation), the intention of this book is to situate rural sustainability within two broader contexts: (1) the shift and endorsement of sustainability-based planning as a key element of community development (particularly for rural communities) since 2005, and the subsequent linkage of sustainability planning to federal infrastructure funds; and (2) the increasing presence of community-university partnerships that often extend beyond conventional research and/or education into community development practices, participatory action research, community capacity-building and linking research to both decision-making and practice.*

“Participation, Planning and Sustainability: Case Studies from Hinton and Wood Buffalo, AB” N. Dipa Thesis (2014)

*The Government of Canada introduced Federal Gas Tax Fund (GTF) during 2005 as an imitative to attain sustainable development in rural communities. The municipalities have to formulate Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (ICSP), based on citizen participation, for getting access to this fund. Citizen participation has been emphasized by federal government and the main objective of this paper is to explore the level of citizen engagement in the sustainability plans by focusing on two case studies: Hinton and Wood Buffalo. This research is based on key informant interviews which show that Hinton’s level of citizen participation is “Placation” and Wood Buffalo’s level is “Consultation” in Arnstein’s “Ladder of Citizen Participation.” The final decision-making approach of both communities is technocratic where experts have the main power of making final policies.*



## Sponsored Guest Lectures

Simulating Social Sustainability: Agent-Based Modeling of Energy Infrastructure Projects

Dr. Hal Nelson, Research Associate Professor in the Division of Politics and Economics, Claremont Graduate University.

September 17, 2014 University of Alberta

Simulating Social Sustainability: Agent-Based Modeling of Energy Infrastructure Projects

Dr. Hal Nelson, Research Associate Professor in the Division of Politics and Economics, Claremont Graduate University.

September 18, 2014 University of Alberta, Augustana Campus

Community Vulnerability and Facility Siting: the Case of Marcellus Shale Gas Drilling, 2004-2012.

Dr. Joel Gehman, Assistant Professor, Strategic Management and Organization, Alberta School of Business, University of Alberta

October 2, 2014 University of Alberta, Augustana Campus

Rural Development: Knowledge and Expertise in Governance

Dr. Kristof Van Assche, Associate Professor, Planning, Governance and Development, Faculty of Extensions, University of Alberta

October 22, 2014 University of Alberta, Augustana Campus

## **Service**

Network Leadership Symposium & Summit (September 22-25, 2015)

*The Director is the organizing committee chair for the 2015 Network Leadership Summit and Symposium in Edmonton, Alberta.*

Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF) Board of Directors (2013 – present)

*The Director sits on this board.*

Community Needs Driven Research Network for Continuing Care in Alberta (2012 – present)

*The Director assists with the identification of issues, challenges, practices with insufficient formal evidence, and areas that need information to inform practice in continuing care.*

International Association for the Study of the Commons Global Conference (Edmonton, AB - 2015)

*The Director sat on the Organizing Committee.*

Rural Alberta Business Centre (Camrose) Advisory Committee (2012 – present)

*The Director sits on this Committee.*

## **Partnerships**

### **University of Alberta**

#### *Augustana Faculty*

Glen Hvenegaard, Professor, Environmental Science and Geography

Karsten Mündel, Director, Learning and Beyond & Assistant Professor, Global and Development Studies

Bill Foster, Associate Professor, Management

#### *Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences*

John Parkins, Associate Professor, Dept. of Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology (REES)

Brenda Parlee, Assistant Professor, REES & Assistant & Assistant Professor, Native Studies Faculty

William Shotyk, Professor & Bock Chair, Dept. of Renewable Resources

Pushpanjali Dashora, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Human Ecology

Janet Fast, Professor, Dept. of Human Ecology

Peter Boxall, Professor, REES

Debra Davidson, Professor, Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology

Mark Poesch, Assistant Professor, Renewable Resources

Tariq Siddique, Associate Professor, Renewable Resources

#### *Extension*

Mary Beckie, Assistant Professor, Government Studies

Kevin Jones, Research Associate (holds cross appointment with REES)

Kristof Van Assche, Associate Professor, Planning, Governance and Development

Monica Gruezmacher, Natural Resources and Development

#### *Medicine and Dentistry*

Jill Konkin, Associate Professor, Family Medicine & Associate Dean, Community Engagement

#### *Nursing*

Wendy Duggleby, Professor, Endowed Nursing Research Chair in Aging and Quality of Life

Solina Richter, Associate Professor

#### *Physical Education and Recreation*

Elizabeth Halpenny, Assistant Professor, Physical Education and Recreation

Howie Harshaw, Professor, Physical Education and Recreation

#### *Science*

Robert Summers, Assistant Professor, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences & Acting Director, Planning Program

Leith Deacon, Environmental Planner, Development of Remote Communities

Sandeep Agrawal, Professor and Inaugural Director Planning Program, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

*Institute for Continuing Care Education and Research (IC CER)*

Sandra Woodhead Lyons, Executive Director

*Arts*

Andie Palmer, Associate Professor, Anthropology

Sourayan Mookerjea, Associate Professor, Sociology

*Law*

Cameron Jefferies, Bowker Fellow, Law Faculty

D'Arcy Vermette, Assistant Professor, Law Faculty

David Percy, Professor, Law Faculty

Ubaka Ogbogu, Katz Research Fellow, Law Faculty

*Engineering*

Evan Davies, Assistant Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering

*Alberta School of Business*

Joel Gehman, Assistant Professor, Alberta School of Business

## Non-University of Alberta Individual Partners (Provincial/National)

Name	Organization
<i>Alberta</i>	
Joyce Gould	Alberta Parks
Ann Casebeer	University of Calgary
Arnold Hanson	Beaver County
Barbara McNicole	Mount Royal University
Bob Beck	Beaver County
Cory Habulin	Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
Dianne Draper	University of Calgary
Don Carruthers Den Hoed	Alberta Parks
Janice Popp	University of Calgary
Joanne Stuart	FCSS Viking
Mark Storie	Alberta Parks
Michael Quinn	Mount Royal University
Natasha Downes	Alberta Parks
Peter Swain	Alberta Parks
Reg Arbuckle	Alberta Parks
Ruth Gill	FCSS Tofield
Shay Barker	Battle River Alliance for Economic Development
Sonya Jakubec	Mount Royal University
Tracey Radley	FCSS Viking/Beaver
<i>National</i>	
Alison Blay-Palmer	Wilfrid Laurier University
Balfour Spence	Brandon University
Barbara Gfellner	Brandon University
Bev Holmes	Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research
Bill Ashton	Rural Development Institute (Brandon University)
Bill Irwin	Huron University College
Bruno Jean	Université du Québec à Rimouski
Christopher Lemieux	Wilfrid Laurier University

Daniel Olsen	Brandon University
David Douglas	University of Guelph
Doug Ramsey	Brandon University
Douglas West	Lakehead University
Elizabeth Lange	St. Francis Xavier University
Etsuko Yasui	Brandon University
Greg Halseth	University of Northern British Columbia
John Devlin	University of Guelph
Jonathan Corbett	University of British Columbia
Kathleen Kevany	Nova Scotia Agricultural College
Kelly Vodden	Memorial University of Newfoundland
Kenneth Bessant	Brandon University
Margot Parkes	University of Northern British Columbia
Mark Groulx	University of Waterloo
Mark Seasons	University of Waterloo
Martin Bunch	York University
Maureen Reed	University of Saskatchewan
Monica Mulrennan	Concordia University
Paul Eagles	Murdoch University
Peter Stoett	Concordia University
Richard M. Hutchings	Vancouver Island University
Rob Greenwood	Memorial University of Newfoundland
Robert Annis	Brandon University
Robert Patrick	University of Saskatchewan
Ron Lindstrom	Royal Roads University
Terri MacDonald	Selkirk College
Tony Tremblay	St. Thomas University
Wayne Caldwell	University of Guelph
William Reimer	Concordia University
<i>International</i>	
Brent Steel	Oregon State University

Brint Milward	University of Arizona
Cathal O'Donoghue	Teagasc, the Irish Food and Development Authority
James Breen	University College Dublin
Judith Stallmann	University of Missouri - Columbia
Karen Refsgaard	Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food
Matteo Vittuari	University of Bologna
Meyers William	University of Missouri - Columbia
Philomena deLima	University of Highlands and Islands - Inverness College
Sean Connelly	University of Otago
Thomas Johnson	University of Missouri - Columbia

## Organizational Partners (Provincial/National)

<b>Organizations</b>
<i>Alberta</i>
Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN)
Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)
Athabasca University
Battle River Alliance for Economic Development (BRAED)
Camrose County
Camrose Open Door Association
Institute for Continuing Care Education and Research (ICCER)
Learning and Beyond Office (LaB) (University of Alberta)
University of Alberta
University of Alberta – Augustana Campus
University of Alberta - Faculty of Agricultural, Life, and Environmental Sciences
University of Alberta Press
<i>National</i>
Canadian Rural Research Network
Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)
Fraser Basin Council
Guelph University
International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
Lakehead University
Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
Memorial University
Network for Ecosystem Sustainability and Health (NESH)
Rural & Coastal Communities Network
Rural & Small Town Programme (Mount Allison University)
Rural Development Institute (Brandon University)
Rural Ontario Institute



Selkirk College
South Central Ontario Region
St. Francis Xavier University
St. Thomas University
Town of Dalhousie
True North Community Cooperative
University of Northern British Columbia
Wilfrid Laurier University
<i>International</i>
Mizzou University of Missouri
Norwegian Agricultural Economics Research Institute
Oregon State University
Teagasc, Agriculture and Food Development Authority
UDC Dublin
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
University of the Highlands and Islands