



**Alberta Centre for  
Sustainable Rural  
Communities  
Annual Report  
May 2016 – May 2017**



# ALBERTA CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES

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Annual Report 2016/2017

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## ABOUT

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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: [www.acsrc.ca](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 FOIPOP 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 (KSTE)**

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**

The ACSRC strives to have internally sustainable operations through stable funding sources. To support the ACSRC please contact the Office of Advancement at the University of Alberta.

### **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.



## PROJECTS

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### New Grants

*The ECHO Network (Environment, Community, Health Observatory): Strengthening Intersectoral Capacity to Understand and Respond to Health Impacts of Resource Development*

Funding Source: CIHR

Funding Amount: \$2,083,753

ACSRC Budget: \$260,000

Project lead: M. Parkes

Role of ACSRC: The ACSRC is the rural and Alberta hub for the ECHO activities (hub in each member province). L. Hallstrom is one of four project administrators.

Project Dates: 2016-2021

Description:

Health is influenced by resource development through interrelated socioeconomic, ecological, cultural, and political pathways, which demand upstream, intersectoral responses. These relationships are especially important in Canada, where the economy remains tightly coupled with the development of natural resources and where the rate and scale of social and environmental change occurring in resource-rich regions is fueling debate regarding health impacts, especially for rural, remote and Indigenous communities. Our project, titled "The ECHO Network (Environment, Community, Health Observatory): Strengthening intersectoral capacity to understand and respond to health impacts of resource development", aims to: (1) make evidence-based recommendations on the form and function of a cross-jurisdictional ECHO that will foster understanding of the complex dynamics of resource development and health, and; (2) trial and evaluate intersectoral strategies to address the cumulative determinants of health that interact over time and space, targeting actions and responses that cannot be achieved by the health sector alone. The ECHO Network team has several key features: (1) our research team is informed by experienced health, environmental and social science researchers; (2) the research program is also anchored in four regional cases (New Brunswick, Alberta, British Columbia and Northern BC). In each regional case, knowledge-users have identified decision-support needs or issues that demand a better integration of environment, community and health impacts. The ECHO will provide a platform of integrative tools and processes that connect people to a network of information, practices and people in order to develop a shared perspective and more effective responses to the cumulative impacts of resource development. The research will involve four components, each linked to specific



objectives, mentorship and capacity building processes over five years.

### *Building Mental Health Resiliency for a Sustainable Campus Community*

Funding Source: University of Alberta Sustainability Enhancement Fund

Funding Amount: \$26,963

Role of ACSRC: Project Lead

Project Dates: 2017-2019

Description:

“Building Mental Health Resiliency for a Sustainable Campus Community” is a pilot project that is the first step to systematically understanding and supporting the mental health and wellness of students attending the University of Alberta, Augustana Campus. The long-term goal of this project is find innovative ways to decrease the prevalence of stress, anxiety and depression in undergraduate students. As a first step to achieving this long term goal, the project will use an adapted health promotion model PRECEDE/PROCEDE (‘PRECEDE’ Predisposing, Reinforcing, and Enabling Constructs in Educational/Environmental Diagnosis and Evaluation and ‘PROCEED’ Policy, Regulatory, and Organizational Constructs in Educational and Environmental Development) to identify predisposing, enabling and reinforcing factors that may determine and influence mental health resiliency in the student population. Expected outcomes include: 1) a systematic methodology for the identification of and increased knowledge of mental health resiliency; 2) programming resources for, and evaluation of, proximal and distal drivers of mental health and wellness at the University of Alberta; and 3) evaluated resources for strategies to improve mental health and resilience at the undergraduate level that respond and build upon 1 & 2. This two-year project is scheduled to begin in the late spring of the 2017.

### *Beyond Infrastructure: Strategies to Support Adoption and Realize Benefits of Broadband in Rural Canada*

Funding Source: SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis Grants

Funding Amount: \$25,000

Role of ACSRC: Lead organization

Project Dates: 2017-2018

Description:

This research project aims to answer the question: "What programs and initiatives exist that effectively support broadband adoption in rural communities?" We aim to address the lack of comprehensive reviews of rural broadband adoption strategies by conducting a knowledge synthesis of the existing literature using a scoping review method. We will then organize the broadband programs and interventions included in our review based on their measured contribution to each of the seven community capitals (financial, political, social, human,



cultural, natural, and built capital) to produce an investment guidebook for rural community decision makers. Our systematic and holistic approach to broadband research will provide sustainable recommendations for our academic and non-academic (i.e., rural residents, civil service employees) target audiences. We plan to facilitate opportunities for discussion amongst a diverse group of broadband stakeholders from across Canada during our project, including economic and community development coordinators, with the expectation that they will translate our work into meaningful action for their respective communities.

*Extension of the Rural Alberta Regional Collaboration Workshops: Priorities and Scenarios for Long-Term Sustainability*

Funding Source: Government of Alberta, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Funding Amount: \$9,310.00

Role of ACSRC: Principle Applicant

Project Dates: November 2016 to April 2017

Description:

This project will build upon the regional focus of the 2015-16 project, and will focus upon the regional and intersectoral effects of rural broadband. Specifically, this project will undertake a scoping review and consultations in order to inventory, assess and validate the following questions:

1. What are the different sectors in Alberta that can benefit most (or generate the most benefits) from investment in rural broadband and related programming?
2. What are the extant and most effective models for engaging and developing rural broadband programming at the/a regional level?
3. What evaluation frameworks exist for rural regions to assess and determine both the priorities for investment/support, and the effects of such investments (preferably across sectors)?

*The Role of Parks and Natural Places in Rural Palliative Care: Experiences and Processes for Parks Engagement*

Funding Source: ACSRC is funder as lead organization within the Social Science Framework

Project Lead: Sonya Jakubec, Mount Royal University

Funding Amount: \$4,590.00

Project Dates: October 31, 2016 to October 31, 2017

Description: Alberta Parks and Alberta Health Services (AHS) are interested in understanding how to better provide access for all those wishing to experience nature. With little data or collective understanding about the practical issues of rural palliative patient experiences of





engaging with nature, a pilot exploration of the topic is required and an exploratory action approach is being taken in this study. This study aims to develop an understanding of what constitutes practical and meaningful engagement with parks for those receiving palliative care in rural communities, people who often have a deep affinity with the natural environment though may experience limited access to adapted transportation to get to parks. Alongside developing a menu of experiences and processes for parks engagement for those receiving palliative care and their caregivers, this study will provide a pragmatic and participatory exploration of the barriers, and benefits perceived by the palliative patient, their caregivers as well as palliative care and parks management networks and volunteers.

#### *Boom/Bust in Canada: Tempering Canadian Experiences of Resource Dependency*

Funding Source: Cluster Grant

Project Lead: Leith Deacon

Role of the ACSRC: Co-Applicant

Funding Amount: \$81,322.00

Project Dates: April 2017 to April 2019

Description: The central research goal is to examine the concept of resiliency within the context of RBCs to address the problematic relationship(s) between resource reliance, community well-being, and adaptive capacity. This will be addressed by using the Municipality of St. John's, NL, The Municipality of Yellowknife, NT and Yellowknives Dene First Nation, NT as 'regional hubs' to begin to develop case studies to examine resource dependency in Eastern and Northern Canada. Using a series of qualitative semi-structured interviews, there are three objectives.

1. Theoretical: to investigate how an RBC that has been experiencing rapid growth (or decline) is able to adapt, prepare for, and become resilient to change (e.g. decreasing oil prices).
2. Practical: to work with the communities of St. John's, Yellowknife, and Yellowknives Dene First Nation to identify additional case study communities to conduct qualitative interviews to understand areas of resident concern to inform municipal policy to help ensure long-term resiliency of the community.
3. Empirical: to gain experience and understanding of RBCs in order to develop an 'online toolbox' of advice, experiences, and stories as a resource that is publicly and freely accessible to enable RBCs to improve their own resiliency, and in turn, the overall resiliency of the Canadian economy.

#### Continuing Grants



### *Beaver County Youth Retention and Collaboration*

Funding Source: Regional Collaboration Program, Government of Alberta

Funding Amount: \$250,000

Project partner: Tofield FCSS, Beaver County, Town of Tofield

Role of ACSRC: Lead organization

Project Dates: 2015-2017

Description:

The ACSRC, Viking/Beaver Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), Tofield FCSS and a number of Beaver County municipalities are 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 Initiative is to retain and attract youth to pursue a future in Beaver County after they have completed their post-secondary education. Aside from its economic benefits, the project aims to build youth capacity in leadership, volunteerism and governance to make a social investment in the future. To achieve this, a series of engagement, planning and asset mapping events were conducted throughout the course of the project to identify youth oriented resources, venues and opportunities. This project produced a collaborative youth engagement strategy and portal that will guide future planning and resources for youth across Beaver County.

### **Projects Completed in 2016**

*The ECHO Network (Environment, Community, Health Observatory): Strengthening Intersectoral Capacity to Understand and Respond to Health Impacts of Resource Development*

Funding Source: CIHR LOI

Funding Amount: \$49,826

Project lead: M. Parkes

Role of ACSRC: The ACSRC is the rural and Alberta hub for the ECHO activities

Project Dates: 2016

Description: This LOI was used to set up the larger project for the ECHO Network as described in New Grants.

*Alberta Parks Social Science Working Group, Social Science Framework (Parks Division)*

Funding Source: Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Alberta Government



Funding Amount: \$34,500

Project lead/partner: Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation

Role of ACSRC: Lead organization and management of fund

Project Dates: 2014-2016

Description:

Environment and Parks – This project has led to the creation of a Social Science Framework within which lies a strategy to (1) increase the amount, quality, and availability of scientific information; (2) increase capacity to make informed decisions about Alberta’s parks; and (3) develop a culture of respect for the value of science in park management. The Social Science Framework provides a method for incorporating social science research and evidence-informed decision making into Parks management.

*Rural Alberta Regional Collaboration Workshops: Priorities and Scenarios for Long-Term Sustainability*

Funding Source: Government of Alberta, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Funding Amount: \$39, 275

Role of the ACSRC: Principal Investigator

Project Dates: 2015-16

Description:

The ACSRC is conducting a series of regional collaboration workshops in 7 communities dispersed across Alberta between April 2015 and March 2016, with a project close of July 1, 2016. These workshops 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. The core goals of which are increased rural capacity to engage with, and support, the action items outlined in the 2014 Action Plan. The participants in these workshops ideally create a balance of inter-sectoral representation with geographic, political and social considerations.

*Rural Capacity Survey: Evaluating Alberta’s Resilience to Change and to Self-Sustain*

Funding Source: ACSRC

Role of ACSRC: Principle Investigator

Project Dates: 2015-2016

Description:



Rural communities represent an important social, economic and cultural component of Alberta. Communities' resilience to change or ability to sustain themselves with their own policy making, their capacity to make improvements to infrastructure, education, environmental sustainability, citizen's health, and to generally improve quality of life and health of citizens are of particular importance to policy makers. This study assessed how communities in Alberta are able to self-motivate and create capacity to implement change to meet their goals. This study culminated in the following deliverables: presented at IRSA in Toronto in August 2016, statistical analysis and reporting in process.



## ACSRC Affiliated Grants Completed in 2016

### *Natural Resource Development and Governance: A Governance Approach to Tempering Boom/Bust Cycles in Resource Dependent Communities*

Funding Source: Killam Cornerstone Grant

Funding Amount: \$45,164

Project lead/partner: K. Van Assche

Role of ACSRC: Co-applicant, co-author on grant and book

Project Dates: January 2015 to December 2015

Description:

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 and development trajectories of sets of small towns. The project especially focuses on the impact of policies and practices regarding 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 University of Alberta colleagues, and a graduate student. The significance in academia can be located in several disciplines: environmental studies, planning, public administration, policy studies and economics. The resulting theory may establish new linkages between these disciplines, useful in answering a set of common policy questions.

### *Boom and Bust in Alberta and British Columbia*

Funding Source: KIAS Team Grant

Funding Amount: \$7,500

Project lead: K. Van Assche

Role of ACSRC: Co-author

Project Dates: 2015-2016

Description:

This project involved the development of a team to study boom, decaying and ghost towns in Alberta and British Columbia employing an evolutionary governance lens. The study sought to understand boom & bust cycles through a mapping and comparative analysis of governance paths and linkages with physical and policy landscapes. By understanding these cycles, the team discerns ways to temper boom & bust cycles and foster sustainable development. The grant supported 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 both provinces. The research will have implications for sustainable development of such communities. The team has published *Boom and Bust: A Guide*. It is available online on ISSUU and in hard copy via the Faculty of Extension. The book is also available in a European edition *Boom and Bust, Local Strategy for Big Events* through In Planning, located in The Netherlands.

### ACSRC Affiliated Grants Ongoing

#### *Continuing Care Needs Reference Group*

Funding Source: ICCER

Funding Amount: None

Project lead: Sandra Woodhead Lyons

Role of ACSRC: Partners, collaborate on projects as needed.

Project Dates: 2012-current

Description:

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 and 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 Knowledge Translation (KT) and the most appropriate methods for each of the target audiences (e.g. front line workers, management, clinicians, etc.), oversee KT from the Research Reference Group to the providers of the province, and act as an advocate and champion for providers in the Network.

#### *Strategies for a Culture of Belonging*

Funding Source: Government of Alberta

Funding Amount: \$10,000

Project partner: Village of Delburne

Role of ACSRC: Project and Policy advisor

Project Dates: 2015 and ongoing



Description:

The ACSRC is providing the academic contribution to a collaboration with the community of Delburne, Alberta. The project aims to link their Main Street economic development initiative with a "First Impressions" program. In addition the project aims to integrate a community engagement dimension based on the "spiraling up" community capitals framework.

*Intersections of Sustainability. Collaborative Research Network on Water Governance, Climate Change and Traditional Communities*

Funding Source: KIAS Cluster Grant

Funding Amount: \$100,000

Project lead: M. Stewart-Harawira

Role of ACSRC: Lars has stepped back due to scheduling conflicts.

Project Dates: May 2015 - November 2017

Description:

This project establishes 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.

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 this project during this period will be the Athabasca watershed, from the glacier to river, to the delta and to the Arctic. These parameters allow for interjurisdictional possibilities and takes into account overlapping geographical and civic boundaries in examining the processes and effects of change.

*Identifying and Prioritizing Opportunities to Enhance Integrated Public Policy Pertaining to Protected Areas and Human Health and Well-being*

Funding Source: Alberta Parks Research Enhancement Fund



Funding Amount: \$27,000

Project lead: C. Lemieux

Role of ACSRC: Parks has not yet released funds

Project Dates: On hold

Description:

This project stems from a recent report examining the human health and well-being benefits of Alberta's protected areas by Lemieux et al. (2015). The report revealed that the perceived human health and well-being benefits 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-vision 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.

#### *Tracking Change: The Role of Local and Traditional Knowledge in Watershed Governance*

Funding Source: SSHRC PG

Funding Amount: \$2,480,098

Project lead: B. Parlee

Role of ACSRC: Co-applicant though due to travel restrictions L. Hallstrom acts in an advisory/reference role to B. Parlee.

Project Dates: 2015-2022

Description:

Freshwater river systems are the basis of many families' livelihoods and well-being around the world, but also present some of the greatest governance challenges. Questions about how





social and ecological changes are interconnected at local to global scales are among these challenges. Multi-generational subsistence fishers (including Indigenous communities) in the Mackenzie-Amazon-Mekong River Basins, with generations of local and traditional knowledge (LTK), can tell us more about these interconnections and how they can be managed to ensure sustainability for current and future generations. How can knowledge generated at local scales be networked to provide insight at larger scales? Given that LTK is often based on oral traditions, relatively little has been documented. In Canada, Brazil and Thailand/Laos, sources of documented LTK come from very different kinds of research initiatives. Although more coordinated LTK work has been done in the Mekong, present understanding of all three Basins is patchy and uneven. This research seeks to address such gaps in understanding through a network of LTK research activities with a number of partners (Aboriginal organizations, co-management boards, governments, academics).

The Mackenzie River Basin Board Traditional Knowledge Steering Committee will lead the project with Parlee, (PI), and 15 partner organizations, and an interdisciplinary team of senior/junior scholars organized around sub-basin nodes and theoretical/advisory groups. A range of methods and tools will be used to learn more about patterns of change in fishing/fishing livelihoods as well as how-to perspectives on local processes of tracking change. Individual communities, Indigenous organizations and governments have primary ownership, control, access and possession of research activities/outcomes.

*Navigation Partnerships: Connecting, Accessing, Resourcing and Engaging (N-CARE) Older Persons, Families and Communities*

Funding Source: Covenant Health Network for Excellence in Seniors Health and Wellness

Funding Amount: \$170,997

Project lead: W. Duggleby and B. Pesut

Role of ACSRC: Co-Applicant regarding methods and rural context; Camrose is a pilot site.

Project Dates: December 2015 to November 2017

Description:

An innovative patient-centered approach to improve the quality of life of older rural persons with advanced chronic illness has been developed to provide navigation services where specially trained volunteer navigators (in partnership with health care providers) advocate, facilitate community connections, coordinate access to services and resources, and promote active engagement of older adults with their community. This approach, developed by the research team led by Duggleby and Pesut is called Navigation Partnerships: Connecting, Accessing, Resourcing, and Engaging (N-CARE).



This project aims to work in partnership with Covenant Health Rural Care leaders and seniors to implement and evaluate N-CARE in Camrose and Killam, Alberta. The project research questions are: 1) what is the feasibility and acceptability of N-CARE with participants including community leaders? 2) what are contextual factors that hinder or facilitate the implementation of N-CARE? 3) what is the impact of N-CARE on increasing access to resources for older adults and their family caregivers; older adult and family satisfaction with N-CARE and quality of life, and volunteer and health care provider navigation self-efficacy and satisfaction?, 4) what is the cost of N-CARE? and 5) what is the best way to sustain and disseminate N-CARE within the Alberta health care system?

*Rural Policy Learning Commons Building Rural Policy through International Comparative Analysis*

Funding Source: SSHRC Partnership Grant

Funding Amount: \$2,493,435

Project lead: William Reimer, Brandon University

Role of ACSRC: Co-applicant, Member of the evaluation committee; Previous member of the steering committee

Project Dates: 2014-2020

Description:

Designing and implementing policy for rural and northern regions has long been a contentious issue, particularly since the challenges are variable and complex. Remote locations, lower populations, and place-based identities that characterize these regions create unique challenges compared with urban centres. The Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC) is designed to meet these challenges 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 knowledge to the wider population, and increase our collective capacity to develop appropriate policy for rural and northern conditions.

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.



### *Regional Workforce Development in Rural British Columbia*

Funding Source: SSHRC Community and College Social Innovation Fund

Funding Amount: \$232,800

Project lead: T. MacDonald, RDI Selkirk

Role of ACSRC: Project just began

Project Dates: 2016-2019

#### Description:

This 3-year project will utilize British Columbia's Columbia Basin-Boundary region as a rural case study region to explore how community colleges can work alongside a network of learning and economic development partners to stimulate innovation and support collaborative learning.

The research will contribute to a better understanding of the practical application of New Regionalism, which calls for further investigation of the processes of learning and innovation in a regional setting. In an effort to advance regional development in BC and contribute to the academic debate, overarching research objectives include:

- Support evidence-based workforce development, decision-making, and planning and provide opportunities for innovation and collaborative learning;
- Explore the emerging role of educational institutions in promoting and supporting the life cycle of knowledge, including co-creation and mobilization across sectors using a learning regions approach;
- Explore the role of students, educators, companies and community partners as change agents in workforce innovation in rural regional socio-economic development through applied research projects;
- Contribute to the New Regionalism academic debate and its calls to better understand processes of learning and innovation in a rural regional setting.



## CENTRE OPERATIONS

### Staff

*Director:* Lars K. Hallström, PhD.

*Administration and Research staff and seasonal FTE*

FTE based on a 35 hour work week	Summer 2016 FTE	# of staff (summer) 2016	Fall 2016 FTE	# of staff (fall) 2016	Winter 2017 FTE	# of staff (winter) 2017	Summer 2017 FTE	# of staff (summer) 2017
Research Assistants	4.22	7	2.42	4	2.97	5	3.34	4
Researchers/Project managers	.34	1	.62	1	1	1	.28	1
Executive Assistant	.71	1	.71	1	.71	1	.71	1
CSL Students	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5.27	9	3.75	6	4.68	7	4.33	6

#### **Summer 2016**

Carole Preston – Executive Assistant  
 Aubrie Duncan- Administrative Assistant  
 Wilissa Reist - Undergraduate Research Assistant  
 Izzy Contrearras- Undergraduate Research Assistant  
 Carly Heck- Research Assistant  
 Nathanael Skagen- Research Assistant  
 Erika Heiberg- Graduate Research Assistant  
 Stacey Haugen- Graduate Research Assistant  
 Mahsa Pakravan- Graduate Researcher  
 Patricia Macklin – Researcher

#### **Fall 2016/Winter 2017**

Carole Preston- Executive Assistant  
 Patricia Macklin- Researcher



Stacey Haugen-Research Assistant  
Carly Heck- Research Assistant  
Nathanael Skagen- Research Assistant  
Grace Humphry- Undergraduate Research Assistant  
Madison Pearson- Undergraduate Research Assistant  
Sophia Graham- Undergraduate Research Assistant

### **May 2017**

Carole Preston- Executive Assistant  
Patricia Macklin- Researcher  
Nathanael Skagen- Research Assistant  
Kachuri Rook- Research Assistant  
Madison Pearson- Undergraduate Research Assistant  
Landon Redelback- Undergraduate Research Assistant

The ACSRC supported and/or employed the following student positions via external and internal funding from May 2016 to May 2017:

- 3 Graduate-level students
- 7 Undergraduate students
- 3 recent graduates

### **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
- Government of Alberta – Ministry of Environment and Parks
- Government of Alberta- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis Grant
- CIHR Team Grant
- Sustainability Enhancement Fund – University of Alberta

### **Communications/Marketing**

**Website:**



The ACSRC website was restructured in September 2017. In this past year the website had 3890 unique visitors to the site.

### **Newsletter:**

Since October 2015, the ACSRC has replaced its bi-annual paper newsletter with a monthly online newsletter. The newsletter currently has 812 subscribers.

Subscribers: 812

Open rate: 35%-42%

### **Marketing:**

The ACSRC supports a select number of events and organizations that have a related mission and vision through monetary and/or in-kind sponsorship for marketing purposes.

In 2017, the ACSRC provided support to:

Rose City Roots, Camrose, Alberta (Value \$500)

Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (In-Kind \$2000)

## ACSRC OUTPUTS

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### **Presentations**

1. Youth Engagement Strategy Final Presentation Panel and Career Fair
  - a. Viking AB (March 28 2017)
  - b. Tofield AB (March 29 2017)
  - c. Ryley AB (March 30 2017)
2. Hallstrom, L. "Rural Homelessness" presentation in Leduc, Alberta. February 8, 2017.
3. "Youth Engagement Project Workshops", facilitated by P. Macklin and delivered at:
  - a. Tofield High School (October 28 2016)
  - b. Ryley School (November 2 2016)
  - c. Holden Community Hall (November 15 2016)
  - d. Tofield Community Hall (November 16 2016)



- e. Ryley Community Hall (November 22 2016)
- f. Viking Alliance Church (November 25 2016)
4. Hallstrom, L. "The ACSRC: Community Engagement and Health" presentation to the Alberta Medical Officers of Health, Calgary AB. Oct. 25, 2016.
5. Heck, C. "Pathways to Success for Rural Youth Employment: A Provider's Perspective." Delivered at the CRRF-RPLC Building Vibrant Rural Futures Conference, Guelph, ON. October 13, 2016.
6. Hallstrom, L. "Rural Health Care" panel presentation at the Rural Talks to Rural (R2R) conference, Blyth, Ontario. Sept. 28 – 30, 2016.
7. Heck, C. "Pathways to Success for Rural Youth Employment: A Provider's Perspective." Delivered at Augustana Campus, Camrose, AB. September 22, 2016.
8. Hallstrom, L. "The Rural-Urban Nexus" Plenary Panelist, presentation for the World Congress of the IRSA. Toronto, ON. August 10-14, 2016.
9. Macklin, P. "Regional Collaboration Project Synthesis", presented at the AUMA Small Communities Committee. Edmonton, AB. August 5, 2016.
10. Hallstrom, L. "Continuing Care in Rural Alberta: For Today and Tomorrow" Workshop Series Edson. June 23, 2016 (Co-host and facilitator w/ICCER).
11. Hallstrom, L. "AnDina (Applying transdisciplinary and systems approaches for sustainable weed management)" Alberta, June 6-10, 2016. Participant and Social Science Team Co-Lead.
12. "The ACSRC: Community Engagement and Health" presentation to the Alberta Medical Officers of Health, Calgary AB. Oct. 25, 2016.
13. "Rural Health Care" panel presentation at the Rural Talks to Rural (R2R) conference, Blyth, Ontario. Sept. 28 – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
14. "The Rural-Urban Nexus" Plenary Panelist, presentation for the World Congress of the IRSA. Toronto, ON. August 10-14, 2016.
15. "Complex problems, complex policies, complex partnerships: Re-evaluating the collaborative imperative for sustainability" paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the CPSA. Calgary, AB. May 28-31, 2016.
16. "Municipal planning within the Land Use Framework" panel presentation for the Alberta Land Institute Conference "Land Use". Edmonton, AB. May 4-5, 2016 .
17. "Continuing Care in Rural Alberta: For Today and Tomorrow" Workshop Series 2016 (Co-host and facilitator w/ICCER).
  - a. Lac la Biche (April 27, 2016)
  - b. Westlock (May 18, 2016)



c. Edson (June 23, 2016)

## Book Launches

1. “Boom and Bust: A Guide. Managing the ups and downs in communities” (December 2, 2016).
2. Faculty of Extension Book Launch, Strengthening Communities: Governance, Adaptation and Sustainability (November 2, 2016).  
Books included:
  - a. “Boom and Bust: A Guide. Managing the ups and downs in communities”
  - b. “Scaling Up: The Convergence of Social Economy and Sustainability”
  - c. “Taking the Next Steps: Sustainability Planning and Collaboration in Rural Canada”

## Publications

1. Heck, C. “Rural Broadband: Policy Recommendations for improving Broadband access & adoption in rural Alberta” Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities Policy Brief, December 1 2016.
2. Hallstrom, Lars and Heck, Carly. “Employer Perspectives in Youth Employability in Rural Areas” *Observatoire Jeunes et Societe*. Qubec, Vol 14, No 1 Hiver 2017.
3. Bunch, Martin., Lars Hallstrom and Karen Morrison “Public Health at the Watershed Scale” *Water Policy*. 2016.
4. Van Assche, Kristoff., Leith Deacon., Monica Gruezmacher., Robert J. Summers., Stephane Lavoie., Kevin E. Jones., Michael Granzow., Lars Hallstrom and John Parkins. *Boom Bust – A Citizen’s Guide Managing ups and downs in communities*. Edmonton: University of Alberta – Faculty of Extension, 2016
5. Duggleby, Wendy., Et al. “Developing Navigation Competencies to Care for Older Rural Adults with Advanced Illness” *Canadian Journal on Aging* (April 19, 2016). Doi:10.1017/S0714980816000131.
6. Hallstrom, Lars. “Policy Design in Rural Manitoba: Alternatives and Opportunities in the Midst of Change.” *Manitoba Law Journal (Policy Edition): Underneath the Golden Boy*. 2016.
7. Hallstrom, Lars. “Public Policy and the Welfare State” In *The Social Determinants of Health: Canadian Perspectives*, ed. D. Raphael. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2016.
8. Beckie, Mary., Lars Hallstrom., Glen Hvenegaard and Karsten Mundel. *Taking the Next Steps: Sustainability Planning and Collaboration in Rural Canada*. Edmonton: University





of Alberta Press, 2016. 408pp.

### Extended Education

1. Lars Hallstrom, Grant Writing, Augustana Campus , May 25 2017.
2. Lars Hallstrom Governance for Sustainability, Sustainability 101, Augustana Campus, January 18 2017.
3. Lars Hallstrom, Grant Writing, Augustana Campus, November 16 2016.

## SERVICE

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Rural Alberta Innovation and Learning Commons (Oct 2015 to 2017)  
*The director is the organizing chair, Camrose, Alberta.*

Rural Policy Learning Commons Evaluation Committee April 2014-present  
*The Director sits on this committee.*

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.*

Rural Alberta Business Centre (Camrose) Advisory Committee (2012 – present)  
*The Director sits on this Committee.*

Community wide response to sexual assault (April 2017 – present)  
The ACSRC is taking an organizational lead to develop a community wide response to sexual assault in Camrose. The project is partnered with the University of Alberta, Augustana Campus and the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services. This project is in the beginning phases of planning.



## PARTNERSHIPS

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### University of Alberta Partnerships

#### *Augustana Faculty*

Glen Hvenegaard, Professor, Environmental Science and Geography

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

Bill Foster, Associate Professor, Management

Jane Yardley, Assistant Professor, Physical Education

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

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

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

William Shoty, Professor & Bocock Chair, Dept. of Renewable Resources

Pushpanjali Dashora, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Human Ecology

Debra Davidson, Professor, Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology

Brent Swallow, Professor, Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology

#### *Extension*

Mary Beckie, Associate Professor, Government Studies

Kevin Jones, Research Director City-Region Studies Centre

Kristof Van Assche, Professor, Planning, Governance and Development

Monica Gruezmacher, Adjunct Professor, Natural Resources and Development

Rob McMahon, Assistant Professor, 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, Associate Professor, Physical Education and Recreation

Howie Harshaw, Professor, Physical Education and Recreation

### *Science*

Robert Summers, Assistant Professor, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences

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 (ICCER)*

Sandra Woodhead Lyons, Executive Director

### *Arts*

Andie Palmer, Associate Professor, Anthropology

Sourayan Mookerjea, Associate Professor, Sociology

### *Law*

Cameron Jefferies, Bowker Fellow, Law Faculty

### *Engineering*

Evan Davies, Associate Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

### *Education*

Dr Makere Stewart-Harawira, Professor, Department of Educational Policy Studies

Michael McNally, Assistant Professor, School of Library and Information Studies

### *School of Public Health*

Nick Ashbolt, Professor, School of Public Health



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

Name	Organization
<i>Alberta</i>	
Ann Casebeer	University of Calgary
Arnold Hanson	Beaver County
Barbara McNicol	Mount Royal University
Bob Beck	Beaver County
Carol Breitreutz	Camrose and Area Youth Risk Awareness Network
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
Joyce Gould	Alberta Parks
Mark Storie	Alberta Parks
Michael Quinn	Mount Royal University
Nora Smith	Delburne FCSS
Peter Swain	Alberta Parks
Reg Arbuckle	Alberta Parks
Ruth Gill	FCSS Tofield
Shay Barker	Battle River Alliance for Economic Development
Tracey Radley	FCSS Viking/Beaver



Rae Boisvert	Alberta Parks
Brian Joubert	Alberta Parks

*National*

Bev Holmes	Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research
Bill Ashton	Rural Development Institute (Brandon University)
Christopher Lemieux	Wilfrid Laurier University
Greg Halseth	University of Northern British Columbia
John Devlin	University of Guelph
Kathleen Kevany	Nova Scotia Agricultural College
Kelly Vodden	Memorial University of Newfoundland
Margot Parkes	University of Northern British Columbia
Rob Greenwood	Memorial University of Newfoundland
Ron Lindstrom	Royal Roads University
Ryan Gibson	Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
Terri MacDonald	Selkirk College
William Reimer	Concordia University

*International*

Brint Milward	University of Arizona
Judith Stallmann	University of Missouri
Philip Loring	University of Alaska
Sean Connelly	University of Otago
Wayne Kelly	National University of Ireland



**Organizational Partners (Provincial/National)**

<b>Organizations</b>
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*Alberta*

Environment and Parks, Government of Alberta
Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)
Battle River Alliance for Economic Development (BRAED)
Battle River Watershed Alliance
Beaver County
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
Village of Delburne, Alberta

*National*

Canadian Rural Research Network
Rural Development Institute
Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation