

LAND-USE FRAMEWORK CONSERVATION TOOLS UPDATE



**Government
of Alberta** ■

Agriculture Fragmentation

Provincial Statistics

Alberta has experienced a net loss of 213,000 acres (1,330 quarter sections) of agricultural land from 1996-2009.

This is an average net loss of 15,200 acres (95 quarter sections) per year.

213,000 acres represents about 0.4% of the total agricultural land base.

Rate of loss increased during the last economic boom (2003-2008) – average of 23,600 acres (148 quarter sections) lost per year during this time.



Soil Statistics

Land Suitability Rating System (LSRS) Class 2 and 3 land is the best land suited for cropping in Alberta.

202,000 acres (1,260 quarter sections) of this land has been lost from 1996-2009.

This represents a loss of 0.8% of the LSRS 2/3 total land base.

Rate of loss of this agricultural land is twice that of agricultural land in general.



Corridor Statistics

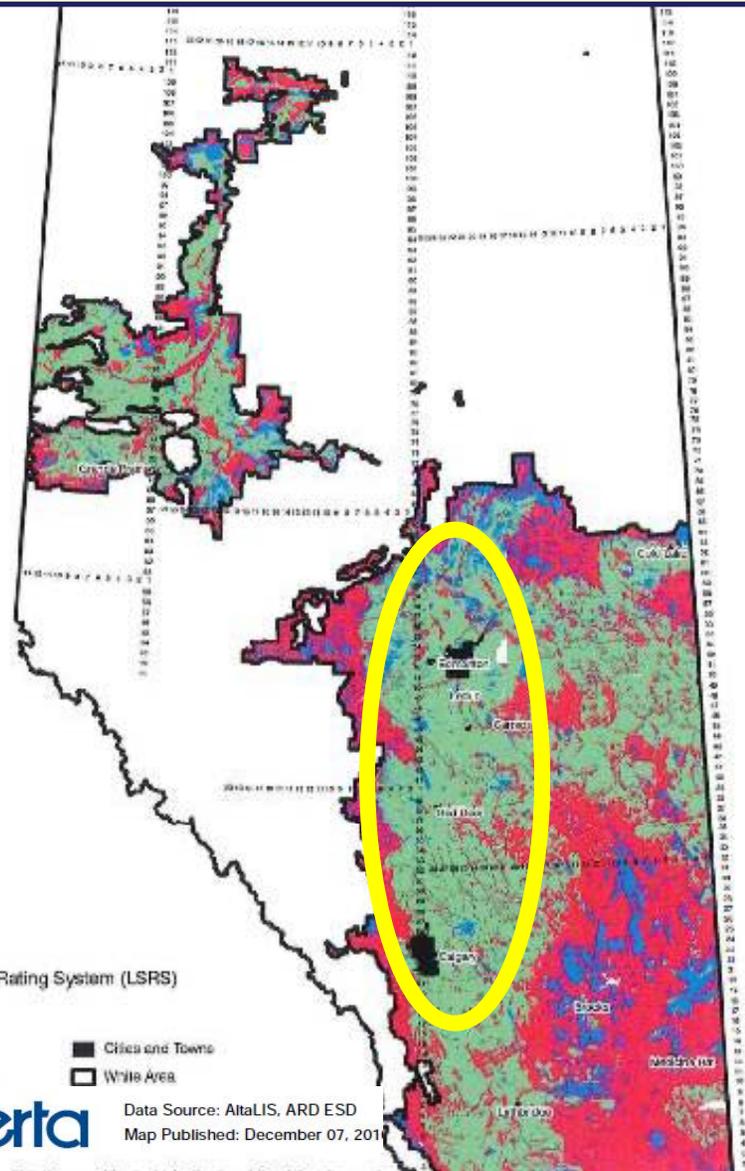
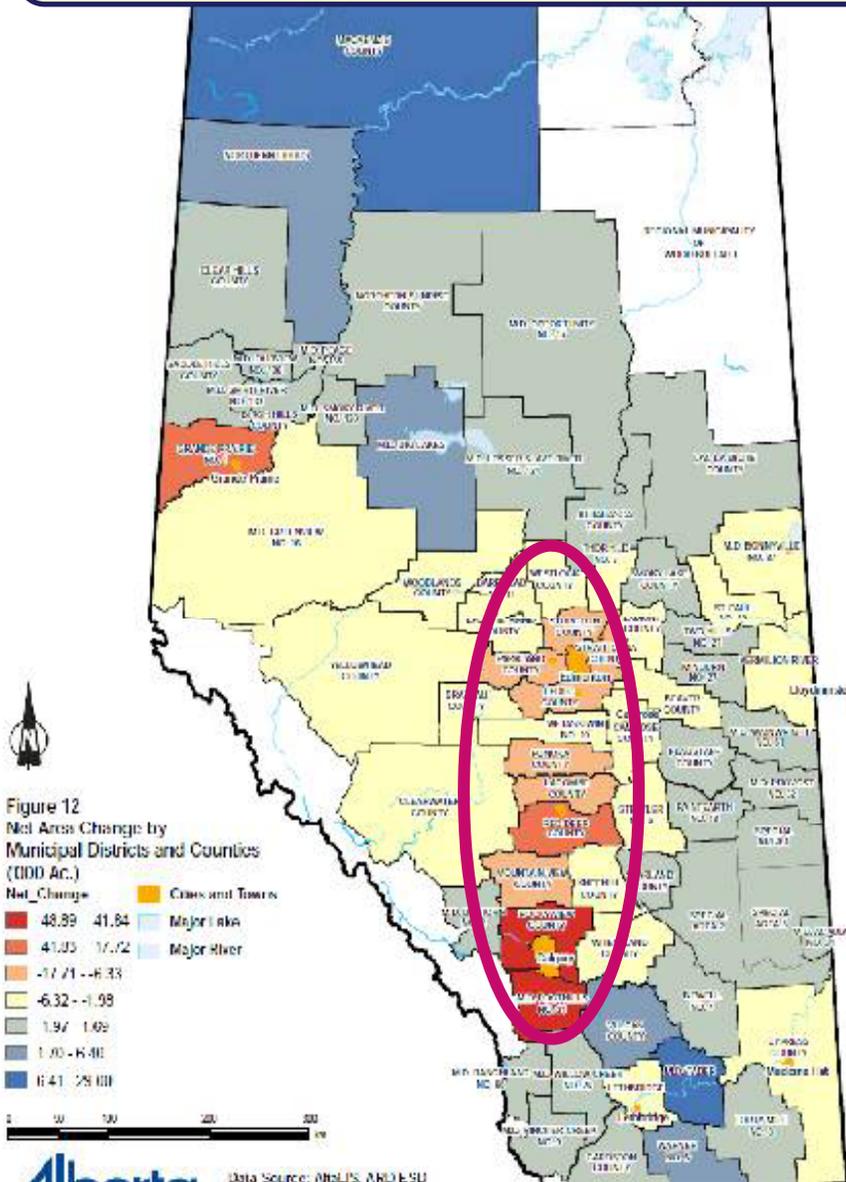
The Corridor Region lost 183,000 acres (1,145 quarter sections) of agricultural land from 1996-2009 – this represent 86% of the total provincial loss of 213,000 acres.

Capital region lost 42,000 acres (260 quarter sections); 20% of total provincial loss and 23% of total corridor loss.

Calgary region lost 95,000 acres (595 quarter sections); 44% of total provincial loss and 52% of total corridor loss .

Net Area Change by Municipal Districts and Counties

Land Suitability Rating System for Alberta's Soils



Conservation and Stewardship Tools

Enabled in the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*

- Conservation Easements
- Conservation Offsets
- Conservation Directives
- Transferable Development Credits

Conservation Easements

- Voluntary legal agreements between a landowner and a qualified organization, such as a land trust or government agency (eg. Municipality).
- Expanded through ALSA to include any agricultural land.
- Requires GoA notification (trans & infra)

Conservation Offsets

- Tool to counterbalance unavoidable loss; provide a complimentary mechanism to reduce loss of ecological values.
- ALSA defines activities that could qualify as offsets, including:
 - conservation and protection;
 - restoration or reclamation; and
 - creation or enhancement.

Conservation Offsets - Research

- Phase 1 identify economic costs and environmental benefits of offset
 - Offset rules
 - Activities requiring offsets
 - Activities generating offsets (conservation, accelerated reclamation, reclamation of legacy footprint)
- Phase 2 – Evaluate the potential of an offset market to achieve the maximum potential net benefits.
 - Evaluate the types of market rules which could be applied to the offset rules explored in phase 1.

Conservation Offsets - Research

- Phase 3 –Experimental testing of an offset market building on results of phase 1 and 2.

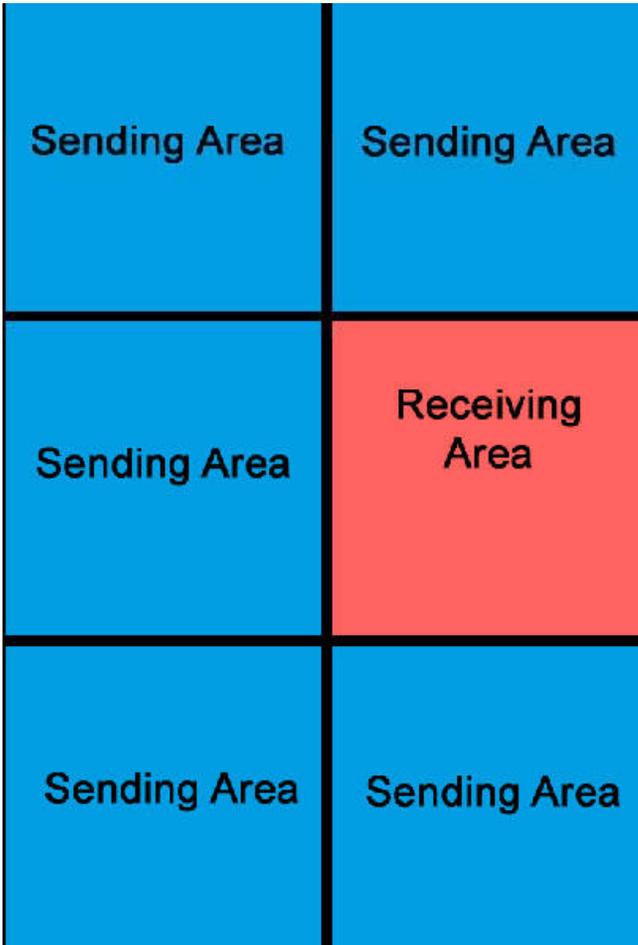
- Timelines
 - Phase 1 - Mar 2010 - Oct 2010
 - Phase 2 - Oct - Dec 2010
 - Phase 3 - Jan - Mar 2011

Conservation Directives

- Broad purpose to protect environmental, aesthetic and agricultural values.
- Non-voluntary conservation tool.
- Areas need to be identified through Regional Plans as needing conservation and protection.
- Landowner still own the land.
- Landowner right to seek compensation for loss in market value
- Can be determined through Land Compensation Board or the Courts.

Transfer of Development Credits

- Several municipalities looking at enabling and/or implementing TDC programs
- Currently developing TDC Policy/Draft Regulation and guidance document



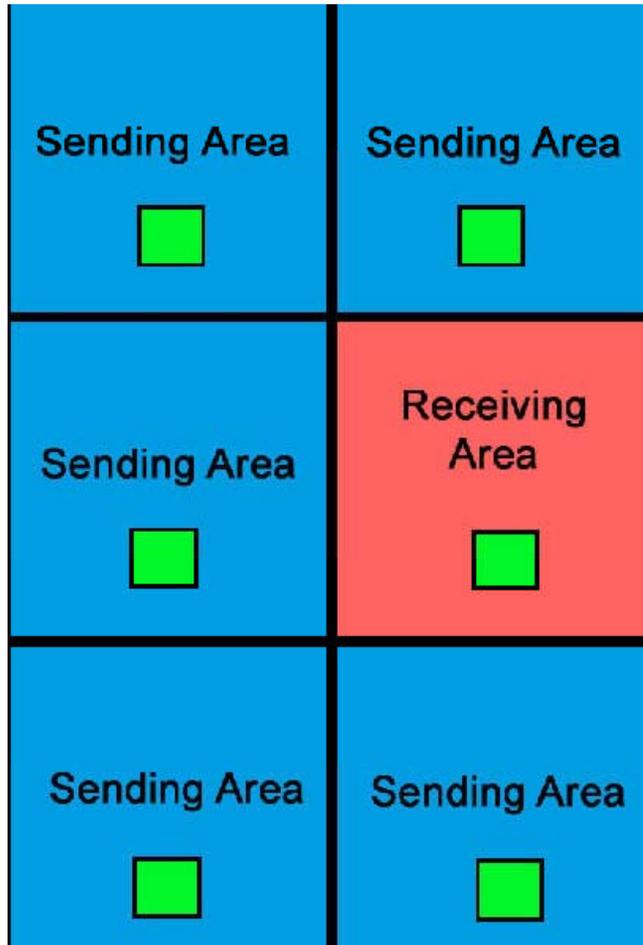
Municipality determines the area to which the TDC program will apply

Municipality designates

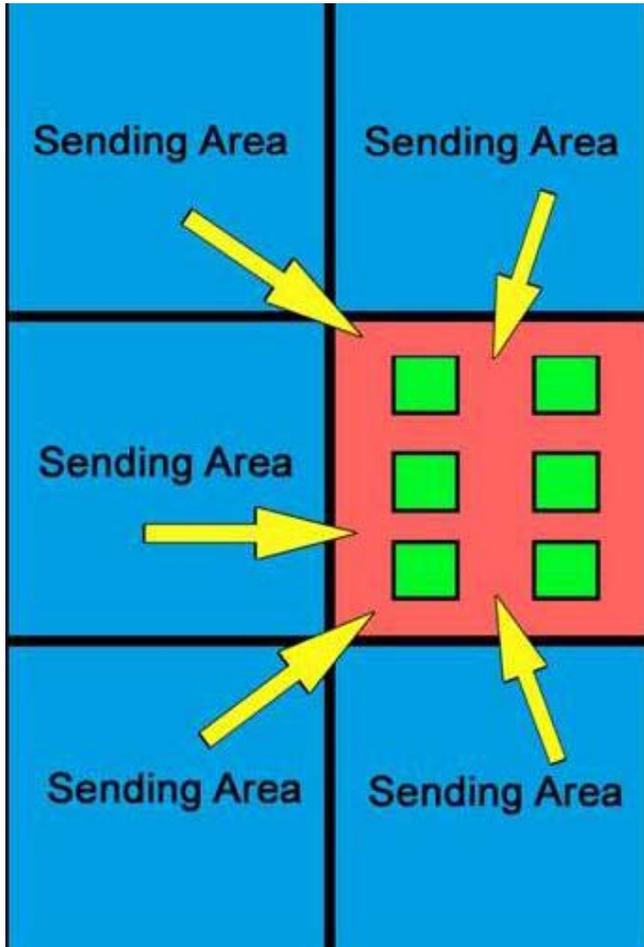
TDC conservation areas

and

TDC development areas



Municipality assigns
'development credit(s)' to each
parcel



Developers purchase 'credits' from other parcels

* Development potential is removed on 'sending' parcels using a title restriction

TDC Policy/Regulation Approach

- Enabling Municipal Decision
- Guidance document
 - To support municipalities
 - In making the decision to proceed or not
 - In implementation

Current Requirements Under ALSA

- Established:
 - by local authority
 - by 2 or more local authorities
- Provisions to require the adoption/amendment of MDP, ASP, LUB, IDP, or other bylaw
- Written agreement (when 2 or more local authorities)

Current Requirements Under ALSA

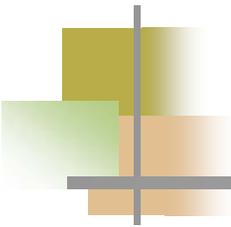
- Required components designate/describe:
 - TDC Conservation Area and purpose
 - Process for identifying conservation parcels
 - Attributes of TDC credits
 - Terms for realization/use of credit by conservation landowner
 - TDC Development Area; terms and conditions of designation

Proposed Features of Regulations

- Delegate responsibility for TDC administration to municipalities
- TDC credits can only apply in the program they are created
- Title restriction required for conservation
- TDC Bylaw required

Proposed Features of Regulation

- TDC Bylaw:
 - Purpose
 - Amendment of MDP, LUB, ASP
 - Conditions on realization, sale, assignment, disposition of credits
 - When title restriction will come into effect



- Questions

Website:

<http://www.landuse.alberta.ca>

