

**GROWING OUTCOMES IN WATERSHEDS
(GROW) PROGRAM**

Ecological goods and services (EG&S) are the positive environmental benefits derived from healthy ecosystems including clean water and air, wildlife habitat, the ability of a natural system to withstand flooding or drought (called ecosystem resilience), and carbon storage (or carbon sequestration). Natural areas that provide EG&S include wetlands, grasslands, riparian areas, and water storage areas. Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) is a program that pays farmers annually for providing ecological goods and services from their land.

The Manitoba government committed to develop a homegrown approach to ecological goods and services programming based on the ALUS model. Growing Outcomes in Watersheds (GROW) will be a community-driven, watershed-based program that incorporates key elements of ALUS to provide sustainable, targeted results on the landscape to reduce impacts of flooding, improve water quality, and build resiliency to climate change. GROW will be a working lands program that focuses on 'farming the best, conserving the rest' delivered through local organizations including watershed districts.

The GROW Program and Fund is distinct from the Manitoba government's \$102-million Conservation Trust Fund, which supported 41 projects through funding totalling over \$2.2 million in its first project intake, as announced on April 15.