



# Buying land in the SLRD?

*A guide to understanding  
what it means to own land in  
the ALR*

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Before purchasing, you should confirm whether the parcel is in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

Not sure where to start? Contact your local planners, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), or check the title certificate of the property.

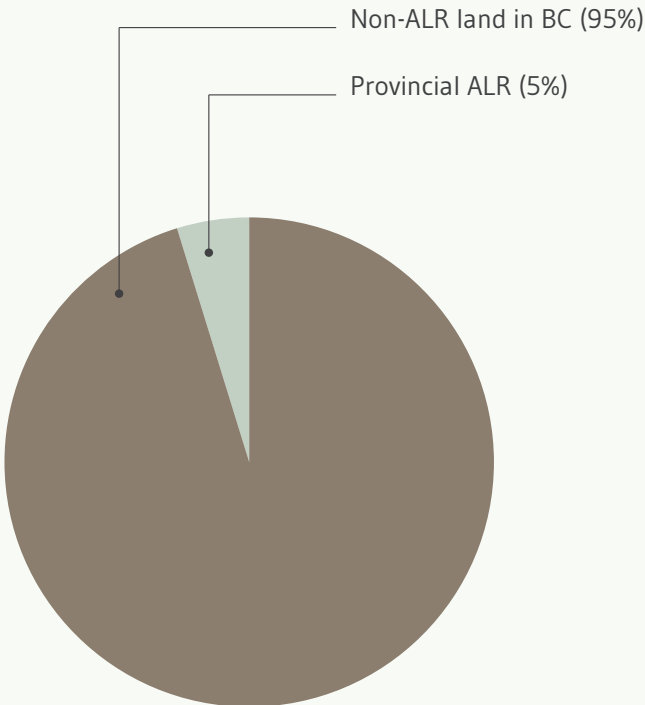
April 2020



# What is the ALR?

British Columbia has an **Agricultural Land Reserve** that preserves the limited area of agricultural land in the province and encourages farming of that land. Only 5% of the provincial land base is protected by the ALR.

**In the SLRD, the ALR makes up 1.5% of the land base. It is an irreplaceable resource.**



# The Role of the ALC

**Within the ALR, farming is considered to be the priority land use.** Non-agricultural uses in the ALR are restricted and may only be conducted with the approval of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) via an application. It is recommended that you review the information on the ALC website or contact the ALC prior to carrying out non-farm related land use activity, development, or construction.

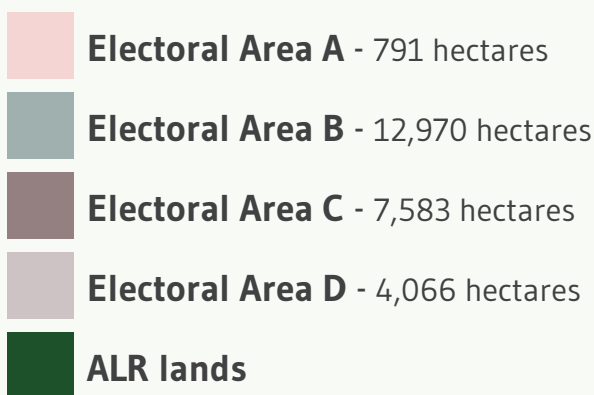
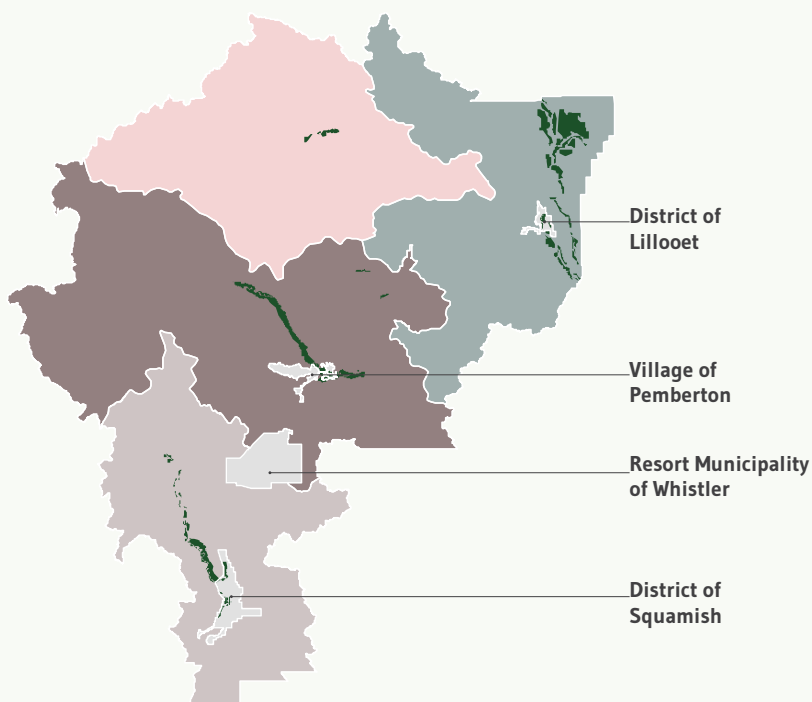
**It is important to remember that the ALR was established to provide a home for farming and to provide food security for your future. While it can be a beautiful landscape it is, first and foremost, a working landscape.**

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To learn more, visit:

**[alc.gov.bc.ca](http://alc.gov.bc.ca)**

# ALR Lands in the SLRD



# How is ALR Land Regulated?

The ALR takes precedence over, but does not replace, other legislation and bylaws that apply to the land. Activities designated as 'farm uses' in the ALC regulations cannot be regulated by local government, whereas 'non-farm uses' can.

The Regional Growth Strategy, zoning bylaws, official community plan bylaws, and agricultural plans together form the basis of agricultural planning in the SLRD.

**Before you make a significant financial investment, ensure you are familiar with the applicable zoning bylaw and other regulations.**



To learn more, visit:  
**[slrd.bc.ca/  
agricultureplanning](http://slrd.bc.ca/agricultureplanning)**

# Key Issues

There are several issues with respect to land use in the ALR that need to be considered when planning to purchase or develop ALR land. These include:



**Dwellings**



**Cannabis**



**Soil & Fill**



**Events**



**Wildlife & Pets**



**Noise & Odours**



**Weeds & Invasive Species**



**Dumping**

# Dwellings

What are some of the key considerations for residential dwellings in the ALR?

- In general, **only one residence is permitted per parcel**
- An **additional dwelling may only be permitted by the ALC if it is necessary for farm use**
- The **maximum size of dwellings** is set by the applicable zoning bylaws
- **Manufactured homes for family members may be permitted** subject to certain conditions
- **Additional requirements** are set out in the applicable bylaws for each electoral area or member municipality



To learn more, visit:

**[alc.gov.bc.ca](http://alc.gov.bc.ca)**

**[slrd.bc.ca](http://slrd.bc.ca)**  
**[lillooetbc.ca](http://lillooetbc.ca)**  
**[pemberton.ca](http://pemberton.ca)**  
**[whistler.ca](http://whistler.ca)**  
**[squamish.ca](http://squamish.ca)**

# Cannabis

**All forms of cannabis production are considered a farm use by the ALC.** No application to the ALC for cannabis production is required, however local government bylaws may be more restrictive including setting parcel size limits.

**The following types of cannabis production are permitted on parcels of any size within the ALR and are not restricted by local government:**

- **In-soil cultivation (outdoors, in a field, in a structure that has a base consisting entirely of soil)**
- **Existing structure such as a greenhouse that has been retrofitted for cannabis production (if it existed prior to July 13, 2018 and the base has not been altered)**

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**For all cannabis production, you must have a Federal license from Health Canada in place.**

**To learn more, contact the SLRD or municipal planning department with jurisdiction over the parcel in question.**



# Soil & Fill

Soil and fill uses in the ALR are regulated by the ALC as well as by applicable local government bylaws.



Soil and fill uses in the ALR can be categorized as:

- **Exempted:** Fill placement or soil removal that does not require an ALC application such as fill for roads;
- **ALC Authorization Required:** Any activities that are not exempted; and
- **Prohibited:** Soil and fill activities such as the use of wood or construction waste as a fill material.

The SLRD Soil Deposit and Removal Bylaw prohibits the deposit of other material (for example, wood waste) on any land within the Regional District without a valid permit or exemption under the Environmental Management Act. Other Bylaws may apply within municipal boundaries.



To learn more, see:

**[slrd.bc.ca/soil-deposit-and-removal-bylaw](http://slrd.bc.ca/soil-deposit-and-removal-bylaw)**

# Events

The use of agricultural land for events such as weddings, music festivals, and retreats, is regulated.

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## Key considerations:

- Gathering for an event on land in the ALR is **only permitted if the property has farm class** as assigned by BC Assessment.
  - **No permanent facilities** can be constructed or erected in connection with the event.
  - **Parking must be provided**, but must not be permanent or interfere with agricultural productivity.
  - The event must **not be more than 24 hours in duration**.
  - **Maximum of 150 guests**.
  - **No more than 10 gatherings** for an event of any type may occur on the farm within a single calendar year.
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To learn more, see:  
**ALC Policy L-22**

# Noise & Odours

**Keep in mind that dust, noise, and odours are a part of country life.**

Normal farm practices are protected by British Columbia's Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act.



# Wildlife & Pets

**Be aware that farmers may use a variety of deterrent methods to deal with wildlife damaging crops or injuring livestock.** This may include: lights, noisemakers, and fencing.

Loose dogs can be very destructive to farm animals and some crops.

**Farmers have the right to take action against dogs which are harming or harassing their livestock.** Keep your dog on your property, and on a leash when you're out for a walk.

# Dumping & Invasive Species

**Protecting valuable agricultural land includes the proper disposal of yard waste.**

Lawn and garden waste can contain invasive plants and noxious weeds. In addition, toxic plants or fermenting yard waste can make livestock seriously ill.

**Weeds on your property must be kept under control.** Choose non-invasive species for your garden. Weeds and invasive species spreading onto adjacent farmland can be very damaging.



**Dispose of your lawn and garden waste at the following locations:**

## **District of Squamish**

Add to your organics bin; invasive species must go to landfill

## **Lillooet**

Bring to Lillooet Landfill for composting

## **Pemberton**

Bring to Sea to Sky Soils for composting

# Land Leasing

**Want to support farming, but aren't interested in actively farming your ALR parcel, or have more land than you can farm? Consider land leasing.**

Young Agrarians runs a **land matching program**, connecting farmers with property owners in British Columbia. This is a great way to support new and young farmers who may face challenges and barriers to purchasing their own ALR land. It also ensures that valuable agricultural land isn't sitting fallow.



For more information on land leasing and land matching programs, contact:

**Young Agrarians**  
**[youngagrarians.org](http://youngagrarians.org)**



# Other Ways to Support Farming

- Attend local Farmers' markets
- Purchase Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes



## Farmers' Markets in the SLRD

### **Lillooet Farmers' Market**

May-October

[lillooetbc.ca](http://lillooetbc.ca)

### **Pemberton Farmers' Market**

June-October

[pembertonfarmersmarket.com](http://pembertonfarmersmarket.com)

### **Whistler Farmers' Market**

May-October

[whistlerfarmersmarket.org](http://whistlerfarmersmarket.org)

### **Squamish Farmers' Market**

Summer: April-October

Winter: November & December

[squamishfarmersmarket.com](http://squamishfarmersmarket.com)

# Additional Resources

Looking for more detail? The following agencies, organizations, and publications contain a wealth of valuable information.

## Province-Wide

- Agricultural Land Commission
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Strengthening Farming Publications
- BC Invasive Species Council
- Young Agrarians

## Regional

- Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council
- Lillooet Regional Invasive Species Society

# Additional Resources

## SLRD Electoral Area B & Lillooet



- Area B, Lillooet & St'at'imc Agricultural Plan
- Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI) & Water Demand Model (WDM)
- Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society

## SLRD Electoral Area C & Pemberton



- Pemberton Valley Agricultural Plan
- Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI)
- Pemberton Agricultural Parks Master Plan

## SLRD Electoral Area D & Squamish



- Squamish Valley Agricultural Plan
- Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI) & Water Demand Model (WDM)
- Squamish Food Policy Council