



Columbia River Treaty  
Learn about our past.  
Think about our future.

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY  
2011 EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT  
SUMMARY REPORT  
MARCH 2012

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*This report, compiled by Columbia Basin Trust (CBT), provides background information and summarizes the format and discussion that took place at the 2011 Columbia River Treaty (CRT) information sessions. The purpose of the information sessions was to raise Basin residents' understanding and awareness around the CRT. Consultation on the CRT is a provincial responsibility. CBT is not consulting or gathering views and values on the CRT; therefore, this document is not a consultation summary, nor a summary of views and values. The discussion themes summarized in this document originated with Basin residents attending the information sessions and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of CBT staff and management and, where applicable, have not been reviewed for accuracy.*

## INTRODUCTION

In 2011, Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) set out to engage and educate the public about the Columbia River Treaty (CRT).

The goal was to help Basin residents understand the basic framework of the CRT and the implications of the years 2014 and 2024, and be prepared to effectively engage in any consultation process related to the CRT.

In partnership with local governments and the CRT Local Governments' Committee, CBT held face-to-face information sessions, small-group presentations, online information sessions and a school-based open house in order to address this goal. Other tools developed and disseminated included comprehensive CRT web pages, videos, maps and pre- and post-dam images.

This report provides an overview of the 2011 CRT education and engagement process and results of these efforts, plus recommended next steps.

## THE PROCESS

From June to November 2011, CBT engaged with 1,435 people across the Basin through 11 face-to-face information sessions (an open house and dinner followed by a presentation and discussion), one school-based open house, 12 small-group presentations and three online information sessions.

The information sessions were held in Castlegar, Cranbrook, Creston, Golden, Jaffray, Meadow Creek, Nakusp, Nelson, Revelstoke, Trail and Valemount. The school-based open house took place in Kaslo. For details on each, view the information session summaries at [www.cbt.org/crt/resources/reports](http://www.cbt.org/crt/resources/reports).

For each information session, a Local Organizing Committee—comprising local government representatives and residents—helped tailor the session to that particular community and assisted with publicity. Representatives from the provincial CRT Review Team attended each information session to listen and answer questions.

The information sessions provided a common base of information on the CRT for all Basin residents, as well as opportunities for questions and dialogue. There were also extensive display materials for review, including:

- animated videos that explained aspects of the CRT in simple terms;
- transboundary and reservoir-specific maps, which allowed residents to see the scale of the Columbia River Basin in Canada and the U.S.;
- pre- and post-dam landscape images and Google Earth flyovers, which illustrated changes in the landscape before and after dams were constructed; and
- historical images of each community in which events were held, which engaged people in the past and fostered appreciation for local history.

These items were also posted online at [www.cbt.org/crt](http://www.cbt.org/crt). Launched in April 2011, these web pages continue to be another way of engaging and educating the public about the CRT, and are updated regularly.

## RESIDENTS SHARE IDEAS

Each information session had written and oral opportunities for residents to share opinions and ideas and ask questions.

Basin residents were encouraged to record their ideas about the CRT through Speakers’ Corner, a video project to capture and share ideas from across the Basin. Four videos have been produced from these tapings—one per CRT reservoir.

Participants also jotted down thoughts on sticky notes, which were then brought from session to session so each community could read what others were thinking. Participants were also able to bring forward ideas and questions during plenary and small-group discussions, and through written comment forms.

In all, CBT was able to collect over 1,000 pieces of input. These are summarized in the separate document “CRT Information Sessions Summary Appendix: Residents Share Ideas”, located online at [www.cbt.org/2011CRTSummaryReportAppendix](http://www.cbt.org/2011CRTSummaryReportAppendix).

## EMERGING THEMES

In general, Basin residents said they want more information on several topics, including: the benefits and negative impacts of the current CRT; issues related to compensation; the feasibility of bringing salmon back to the upper Columbia River; climate change and how it may influence the CRT in

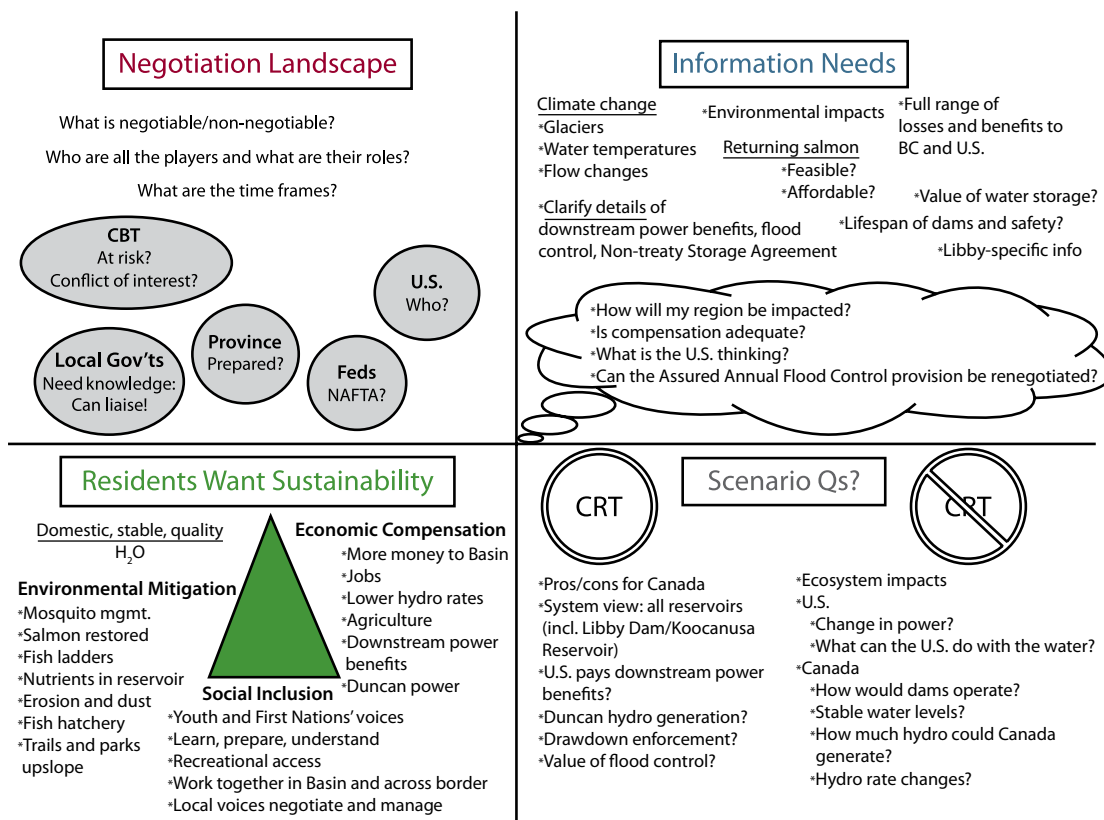


the future and scenarios for the future of the CRT. They also want to learn more about how the current CRT operates, including flood control and downstream power benefits, as well as roles and responsibilities of key players, including the federal and provincial governments. CBT organized the key themes of the feedback into four general categories: Negotiation Landscape, Information Needs, Residents Want Sustainability and Scenario Questions. These are described below, along with the steps CBT, in partnership with the CRT Local Governments' Committee, will consider in order to address each theme.

### Negotiation Landscape

There is a need to understand how the negotiation will proceed and who is involved, from Basin residents to provincial ministers, federal players, the U.S. (and its many stakeholders) and First Nations. Other questions that came up often included: What is negotiable versus non-negotiable? Where are the levers of power and who has the final say? What are the time frames? Do the outcomes impact CBT in any way?

**Next steps for CBT to consider:** Create a road map outlining the players at all levels and key questions and concerns. Clarify the terms of the CRT and the likely areas for negotiation, and pose questions that open the door to new ways of thinking about the CRT in order to encourage innovative approaches.





## Information Needs

A range of additional information has been requested. Examples of easily-answered questions include: What portion of the downstream benefits come back to the Basin? Can Assured Annual Flood Control be renegotiated? What is the Non-Treaty Storage Agreement? Examples of requests that will require additional research include: What are the historical losses to Canada and benefits to the U.S. from the CRT? How will changes to the CRT impact local areas and their particular reservoir levels? What role will climate change play? What are the lifespans and safety implications of the dams? What is the value of storage, and is compensation adequate?

**Next steps for CBT to consider:** Answer basic questions and disseminate online. Prioritize and clearly articulate key research questions, identify appropriate agencies to answer or conduct research on the questions and report back to Basin residents.

## Residents Want Sustainability

Residents want the future of water management in the Basin to address a wider range of interests, including social, environmental and economic values. Social wants focus on the desire to learn, understand and have a voice in the CRT review process, including hearing from First Nations, youth and recreationalists. There is a call to work together as a Basin, as well as to have cross-border collaboration and learn lessons from other processes. Environmental wants focus on mitigating environmental impacts due to the building of dams and reservoirs, plus securing domestic water,



water levels and water quality. Economic wants focus on increased local compensation for the loss of resource opportunities due to flooded forestry, transport and agricultural lands.

**Next steps for CBT to consider:** Establish a structured process for identifying, prioritizing and addressing social, environmental and economic values.

### Scenario Questions

Research, analysis and reporting is needed on what a CRT-continue or -terminate scenario could mean for Basin residents, other Canadians and Americans. Questions focus on flooding and hydro power, as well as a range of other issues, including planning for the unforeseen.

**Next steps for CBT to consider:** Articulate potential scenarios, investigate key questions for each scenario and present to Basin residents for discussion.

## EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT: MEASURING PROGRESS

The 2011 goal for CRT education and engagement was that residents understand the basic framework (content and structure) of the CRT and the implications of the years 2014 and 2024, and are prepared to effectively engage in any dialogue or consultation process related to the CRT.

Comment forms completed by participants at the information sessions provide insight into how effective these efforts were. With regard to raising awareness and understanding of the CRT, 70 per cent said they learned a lot by attending; an additional 30 per cent indicated they learned new things about the CRT. With regard to increasing the capacity of residents to engage in discussions related to a review of the CRT, 32 per cent indicated they are comfortable talking about the CRT with others, while an additional 10 per cent said they feel *very* comfortable talking about the CRT with others.

CBT used the feedback gained from participants at the information sessions, along with an internal review, to gauge whether it had reached its own objectives with regard to CRT engagement and education.

**Objective 1:** Raise awareness and understanding of the CRT's past, present and future among Basin residents through educational tools and products on the CRT.

CBT addressed this objective by:

- developing materials—such as fact sheets, a brochure, displays, videos, maps and pre- and post-landscape images—and using them in presentations, during events and online;
- developing CRT web pages and keeping them current; and
- disseminating information to interested residents, groups, key CBT contacts and the media via email, advertising, direct mail, publications and events.

CBT's next steps are to:

- develop new and additional educational tools and products;
- drive more people to [www.cbt.org/crt](http://www.cbt.org/crt);
- shift the communications focus from motivating attendance at CRT information sessions to providing content; and
- provide diverse and appropriate educational opportunities to meet the varying levels of CRT knowledge in Basin audiences.

**Objective 2:** Develop the capacity of residents to engage in discussions related to any potential review of the CRT.

CBT addressed this objective by:

- engaging communities in information sessions and other presentations;
- coordinating and providing education support to local governments through the CRT Local Governments' Committee.

CBT's next steps are to:

- create additional educational opportunities;
- continue to support the CRT Local Governments' Committee; and
- increase the use of online engagement tools, which may include discussion forums, social media and educational games.

**Objective 3:** Provide advice on meaningful consultation to the federal and provincial governments, as well as communicate provincial information on the CRT back to residents.

CBT addressed this objective by:

- providing advice on meaningful consultation to the Province, being informed of the provincial engagement strategy and consultation plans and communicating this back to the Basin;
- keeping the Province informed of CBT engagement and education activities and inviting representatives to participate; and
- listening to, documenting and synthesizing residents' issues related to the CRT, by reservoir, in written and video formats.



## NEXT STEPS

To better understand what participants did with the information they gained at the information sessions, and if their needs had changed since the sessions, an online survey was conducted in December 2011. It captured additional thoughts and demonstrated that Basin residents both increased their understanding of the CRT and want to know more.

Looking forward to 2012, CBT's next steps are to:

- continue to encourage collaborative consultation and share information provided by the Province to Basin residents; and
- work with a variety of stakeholders, including the federal and provincial governments, to identify appropriate approaches and roles that will help CBT meet its goal of educating residents and preparing them for dialogue on the CRT.

By the end of March 2012, CBT had responded to requests and held two public, face-to-face information sessions in New Denver and the Columbia Valley; three information sessions for First Nations; and one CRT conference for Basin youth. CBT will also continue to support the CRT Local Governments' Committee in fulfilling its role to raise awareness of the CRT among Basin residents and local governments.



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