



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

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY  
INFORMATION SESSION SUMMARY  
COLUMBIA VALLEY

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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 a 2012 Columbia River Treaty (CRT) information session. The purpose of the information session 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 session and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of CBT staff and management and, where applicable, have not been reviewed for accuracy.*

## BACKGROUND

The 1964 Columbia River Treaty (CRT) is an international agreement between Canada and the U.S. to coordinate flood control and optimize hydroelectric energy production on both sides of the border.

The CRT has no official expiry date, but has a minimum length of 60 years, which is met in September 2024. Either Canada or the U.S. can terminate many of the provisions of the agreement effective any time after September 2024, provided written notice is filed at least 10 years in advance (2014).

While no decision has been made by either Canada or the U.S. on the future of the CRT, given the importance of the issues, and the approaching date of 2014, both countries are now conducting studies and exploring future options for the CRT.

In 1995, Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) was created to benefit the areas most adversely affected by the CRT. CBT's primary role in regard to the CRT is to act as an information resource for Basin residents and local governments. CBT is not a decision maker on the future of the CRT, and CBT's role is not to consult with Basin residents on the future of the CRT—consultation is a provincial responsibility.

In anticipation of a potential decision in 2014 regarding the future of the CRT, CBT is engaging Basin residents with the objective of increasing their understanding of the basic framework (content and structure) of the CRT and helping them prepare to effectively engage in any provincial CRT consultation processes. To reach this goal, CBT, in partnership with local governments and the CRT Local Governments' Committee, hosted a series of public information sessions and three online information sessions between June 2011 and February 2012 to:

- increase the level of understanding and awareness of Basin residents around what the CRT is and how it works;
- update Basin residents on potential changes to the CRT currently being considered by Canada and the U.S.; and
- provide an opportunity for residents to have a conversation and share their perspectives around the future of the CRT.

Local knowledge and community networks were essential to successful planning and delivery of the CRT information sessions. For each session, a Local Organizing Committee (LOC) was formed and included representatives from local governments, chambers of commerce, groups and organizations. The LOCs helped refine local publicity tactics and ensured the session was tailored to meet its community's needs. CBT thanks the LOC volunteers for helping to plan, organize and advertise the CRT information sessions.

## COLUMBIA VALLEY INFORMATION SESSION

The information session in the Columbia Valley took place on February 29, 2012.

Approximately 72 people attended the evening session, chaired by Greg Deck, CBT Board Member. Deck emphasized the purpose of the session was to educate and inform people about the CRT. He noted that this was not a consultation; that is a responsibility of the provincial government.

Afternoon	<p>Open house staffed by CBT.</p> <p>Displays: CRT overview, downstream power benefits, flood control, key CRT dates, future of the CRT, changes in water management, pre- and post-dam images, historical photos depicting lifestyles, landmarks and landscapes prior to the CRT.</p> <p>Documents: fact sheets and brochures.</p> <p>Multimedia: video on CRT basics, Google Earth flyover of local dam/reservoir, DVDs of CBT-produced CRT videos.</p> <p>Maps: local community map and 3-D map of entire Basin in Canada.</p>
Dinner	Free dinner and ongoing open house.
Evening	Presentation and discussion with residents, CBT and resource people.

Deck also noted that local governments from across the Canadian portion of the Basin have formed a committee to help Basin residents and elected officials build their understanding of the CRT and bring forward regional views, values and interests to provincial and federal agencies. This is called the CRT Local Governments' Committee.

Heather Mitchell, CBT Program Manager, Water Initiatives, led the presentation, acknowledging the past and encouraging people to think about building a better future. During the presentation, Mitchell emphasized the following:

1. The purpose of the CRT is to coordinate flood control and optimize hydroelectric energy production in the Basin on both sides of the border.
2. The CRT has no official expiry date, but 2024 is the earliest some provisions can be terminated by either Canada or the U.S. (provided either country gives a minimum of 10 years' written notice).
3. In 2024 the Assured Annual Flood Control provision expires and the current On Call Flood Control provision changes to a Called Upon operation, if and when requested by the U.S.
4. The Canadian Entitlement—\$150 – 300 million US/year—stays in place as long as the CRT is in place. However, if the CRT is terminated, the Canadian Entitlement ends.
5. At this time no decision has been made by either country to terminate, renegotiate or modify

the terms of the current CRT. Given the importance of CRT issues, both the Canadian and U.S. entities are completing ongoing studies.

6. CBT's primary role in regard to the CRT is to act as an information resource for Basin residents and local governments.

The following three resources, which can be found at [www.cbt.org/crt/resources.html](http://www.cbt.org/crt/resources.html), summarize much of the information presented:

- Video: [Columbia River Treaty: Learn About Our Past and Think About Our Future](#)
- Video: [Columbia River Treaty: The Basics](#)
- PowerPoint: [Columbia River Treaty Overview Presentation](#)

It was also noted that the completion of the Grand Coulee Dam in 1941 eliminated salmon in the upper Columbia River, long before construction of the CRT dams. The loss of salmon was both a cultural and spiritual loss to local First Nations, which remain committed to returning salmon into the river.

### Columbia Valley Discussion and Top-of-mind Themes

Following the presentation, Kindy Gosal, CBT Director, Water and Environment, and Tim Newton, CBT Water Advisory Panel member, answered questions from Basin residents. The discussion, along with top-of-mind comments provided by participants on sticky notes before leaving the information session, focused on the themes shown below. The themes are organized alphabetically. No ranking is intended and themes do not necessarily reflect consensus. For a list of all the themes that emerged, visit this document's Appendix.

**CBT:** How does CBT funding evolve to provide benefits to the people? Will it run out and does the U.S. have a similar organization?

**Diversions:** Can we divert water from the north into the Columbia? The Kootenay Diversion should not happen; need to think about future generations.

**Hydroelectricity Development:** Is the decommissioning of dams and creation of new dams being considered and how much of the current power goes to areas other than BC? If the CRT is terminated, could we produce enough power to reduce the need for further development, like Site C?

**Climate Change:** What will Canada/the U.S. do if flow rates are less than required and climate change prevents each country from fulfilling its obligations?

**Downstream Power Benefits:** Is \$150 – 300 million enough and should Canada be fighting for more?

**Dams:** What is the lifespan of the dams in relation to On Call Flood Control?

**Fish:** Can we re-establish the Columbia River salmon fishery in Canada?

**Negotiation:** What are the benefits to Canada if the treaty is changed and what happens if the two sides can't agree? Canada should fight hard to benefit our country.

Based on post-session participant surveys, 88 per cent learned a lot about the CRT, and another 10 per cent learned a few things. This is in light of the fact that 38 per cent of participants considered themselves somewhat knowledgeable about the CRT prior to attending the session.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Further discussion of themes is available in CBT's *Columbia River Treaty 2011 Engagement and Education Summary Report*, located at [www.cbt.org/2011CRTSummaryReport](http://www.cbt.org/2011CRTSummaryReport). Answers to frequently asked questions are posted at [www.cbt.org/crt](http://www.cbt.org/crt), along with the Speakers' Corner video "[Voices from Kinbasket Reservoir](#)," which captures CRT ideas and comments from Basin residents.

To learn more about the CRT, visit [www.cbt.org/crt](http://www.cbt.org/crt). Also visit the site to subscribe to CRT email updates.

## APPENDIX: COLUMBIA VALLEY THEMES

Each information session had written and oral opportunities for residents to share opinions and ideas and ask questions. In all, CBT was able to collect over 1,000 pieces of input. The Columbia Valley themes are summarized below, while the themes from other communities 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).

**CBT:** How does CBT funding evolve to provide benefits to the people? Was it a one-time endowment; does it run out?

**Climate Change:** What will Canada/the U.S. do if flow rates are less than required? What happens if climate change, flow rates, etc., prevent each country from fulfilling its obligations?

**Dams:** What is the lifespan of the dams in relation to On Call Flood Control? Are there other dams being considered? Fact: 450 dams on the Columbia—too many dams! Negotiate the decommissioning of many of these dams for the health of the river.

**Diversions:** No diversion in 2024. Plans must always think of future generations.

**Downstream Power Benefits:** Is \$150 – 300 million enough and should Canada be fighting for more?

**Fish:** Can we re-establish the Columbia River salmon fishery in Canada?

**Hydroelectricity Development:** If the CRT is terminated, could we produce enough power to reduce the need for further development, like Site C? How much power goes to areas other than BC? Do any of the run-of-river dams have anything to do with the treaty?

**Negotiation:** What are the benefits to Canada if the CRT is changed? What happens if the two sides can't agree? Canada should fight hard to benefit our country. Why is there a 10-year period of notice?



**HEAD OFFICE/SOUTHWEST BASIN**

Suite 300, 445 13th Avenue  
Castlegar, BC V1N 1G1

1.800.505.8998 / 250.365.6633  
cbt@cbt.org

**NORTHEAST BASIN OFFICE**

Box 393, 512 8th Avenue North  
Golden, BC V0A 1H0

1.800.505.8998 / 250.344.7065  
golden@cbt.org

**NORTHWEST BASIN OFFICE**

Box 220, 220 Broadway  
Nakusp, BC V0G 1R0

1.800.505.8998 / 250.265.9936  
nakusp@cbt.org

**SOUTHEAST BASIN OFFICE**

Suite 201, 828 Baker Street  
Cranbrook, BC V1C 1A2

1.800.505.8998 / 250.426.8810  
cranbrook@cbt.org

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