



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

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY  
INFORMATION SESSION SUMMARY  
CRESTON

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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 2011 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 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 between June 2011 and November 2011 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.

## CRESTON INFORMATION SESSION

The information session in Creston took place on November 28, 2011.

Approximately 86 people attended the open house and evening session, hosted by Garry Merkel, Chair, CBT Board of Directors. John Kettle, Chair and Director, Regional District of Central

<p>Afternoon</p>	<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> <p>Speakers’ Corner: residents were encouraged to record their CRT thoughts on video to share across the Basin.</p>
<p>Dinner</p>	<p>Free dinner and ongoing open house.</p>
<p>Evening</p>	<p>Presentation and discussion with residents, CBT and resource people.</p>

Kootenay (RDCK), welcomed participants and acknowledged Garry Jackman, RDCK Director, who was in attendance. Kettle 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.

Jerry Schmalz, Town of Creston Councillor, welcomed participants on behalf of Ron Toyota, Creston Mayor.

Merkel noted that this session was really the start of a conversation and CBT will continue to share information with Basin residents and work with the CRT Local Governments' Committee. He also 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.

Kindy Gosal, CBT Director, Water and Environment, led the presentation, acknowledging the past and encouraging people to think about building a better future. During the presentation, Gosal 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.

## Creston Discussion and Top-of-mind Themes

Following the presentation, Gosal and three members of CBT’s Water Advisory Panel answered questions from Basin residents.

### CBT’s Water Advisory Panel Members:

- Chad Day, Simon Fraser University;
- Jim Mattison, Comptroller of Water Rights (BC), retired; and
- Hans Schreier, University of British Columbia.

The discussion, along with top-of-mind comments provided by participants on sticky notes before leaving the information session, focused on the themes shown on the following page. 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.

Based on post-session participant surveys, 83 per cent learned a lot about the CRT, and another 17 per cent learned a few things. This is in light of the fact that 33 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 Koochanusa 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.



**Climate Change:** Climate change impacts could alter water flows. The CRT in the future needs to account for climate change and any potential changes to water volume.

**Community Engagement:** Basin residents need to be informed and involved in discussions related to the future of the CRT. Residents need a process in which they can identify their priorities. Basin residents want to understand U.S. perspectives on the CRT. Consider holding a cross-border conference to understand issues on both sides of the border.

**Compensation:** Is the current compensation to Canada adequate? More financial compensation should come directly to the Basin instead of going to Victoria.

**Downstream Power Benefits:** Is the Canadian Entitlement to downstream power benefits adequate? More benefits should come to the Basin.

**Environment:** Environmental sustainability should be a goal in any future CRT. Will there be an environmental impact review of the CRT?

**First Nations:** Include First Nations in the process.

**Fish:** Return salmon to the Columbia River.

**Negative Impacts:** Fruit growers in Canada have been impacted by CRT-enabled irrigation benefits in the U.S.

**Negotiations:** What are the pros and cons of terminating and continuing the CRT for Canada and the U.S.? Libby Dam operations should be included in the future of the CRT. Is NAFTA relevant to the CRT? Who is on the negotiating team? What are the key negotiating issues (e.g., fish, power, people or other issues)?

**Operations:** Modify operations to address mosquito control issues. What is the lifespan of CRT dams?

**Roles and Responsibilities:** Who are the players involved in operations and future negotiations? There should be a local voice on the Permanent Engineering Board, which oversees implementation of the CRT.

**Water Levels:** Why do water levels change and who decides? Are there maximum and minimum levels?

## APPENDIX: CRESTON 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 Creston themes are summarized below, while the themes from all 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:** Appreciation for sharing information. Will CBT be impacted by changes to the CRT?

**Community Engagement:** Increase/improve Basin resident involvement in the future of the CRT. Basin residents need to identify priorities. Want a cross-border conference to understand issues.

**Compensation:** Is it adequate? Are downstream benefits adequate? CBT should deliver nutrient restoration in Arrow/Kootenay lakes. Can we get more power/\$ in the Basin instead of going to Victoria? Job creation to counter economic impacts in the Basin?

**Dam Construction/Removal:** Any plans to build new dams as part of the current/new CRT? Does Canada have the option to remove existing dams in Canada? Post 9/11 security at dams: is it adequate? Lifespan of dams? Add generating capacity to Duncan instead of independent power projects.

**Downstream Power Benefits:** How are they calculated? Are they adequate? Increase regional access to downstream power benefits; more should come to the Basin.

**Environment and Fish:** Will there be an environmental impact review of the CRT? Return salmon to the Columbia River. Install fish ladders for sturgeon at Brilliant Dam. Both countries need to work to maintain/improve water quality. Water temperature is increasing with negative impacts to fish.

**First Nations:** Document the Arrow Lakes shoreline to identify First Nations’ losses/sites.

**Libby:** Who manages Libby and how?

**Negotiating Team:** Who, from what agency, will be/is negotiating for Canada/the U.S.? What is the provincial role in this discussion? Who oversees U.S. operations to ensure they are in compliance? We need a local voice on Permanent Engineering Board.

**Negotiation Priorities:** Fish, power or people: which will be more important at the negotiation table? What are the key negotiating points? What can Americans do with water now/with no CRT? What are the benefits/impacts to Canada/the U.S. if the CRT is terminated? Include Libby in future negotiations. What is the connection between the North American Free Trade Agreement and the CRT?

**Non-power Downstream Benefits:** For example, irrigation benefits in the U.S. (CRT-enabled irrigation) led to agriculture impacts in Canada.



**Sustainability:** Sustainability should be a goal in any future CRT. Residents of the Basin should be stewards of sustainable watersheds.

**Water Levels and Flows:** Changing water levels impact boaters and landowners. Why do water levels change so much? What is the impact of climate change/glacial recession on water levels? Do forecasts consider climate change impacts on water levels? What are the maximum and minimum levels? Can current operations be modified to address the mosquito issue at Kuskanax? How will the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area and Creston flats be impacted?



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