



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

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY  
INFORMATION SESSION SUMMARY  
GOLDEN

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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.

## GOLDEN INFORMATION SESSION

The information session in Golden took place on November 8, 2011.

Approximately 114 people attended the open house and evening session, hosted 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 the session was not consultation; that is a responsibility of the provincial government.

Norm MacDonald, MLA, welcomed participants, and Christina Benty, Golden Mayor, 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.

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

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.

## Golden Discussion and Top-of-mind Themes

Following the presentation, participants discussed their key questions and thoughts about the CRT at their tables, then participated in a question-and-answer period with Gosal and members of CBT's Water Advisory Panel.

### CBT Water Advisory Panel Members:

- Hans Schreier, University of British Columbia; and
- Marvin Wodinsky, former Acting Consul General of Canada in Seattle.

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, 75 per cent learned a lot about the CRT, and another 26 per cent learned a few things. This is in light of the fact that 56 per cent of participants considered themselves somewhat knowledgeable about the CRT prior to attending the session.

**Compensation:** Benefits that were promised were never realized and compensation for fish and wildlife did not materialize.

**Consultation:** How can we ensure our small population is represented and that the provincial government listens?

**Downstream Power Benefits:**  
Does the Canadian Entitlement —\$150 – 300 million US/year —come back to the Columbia Basin? Can BC keep the electricity instead of building new dams?

**Education and Research:**  
Do we have enough information on changing climate and water flows to make long-term decisions?

**Environment:** Fish, wildlife, climate change and environmental considerations should influence future decisions. How feasible is salmon restoration in the Columbia River?

**Flood Control:** What happens to Assured Annual Flood Control if the CRT is terminated and what are the implications? What will happen to Kinbasket Reservoir levels when Assured Annual Flood Control expires and flood control changes to an On Call scenario?

**Local Issues:**  
Can there be less drawdown of water levels on Kinbasket Reservoir to allow for tourism, recreation and fisheries?

**Negotiation:** What leverage do Canada and U.S. have? What are their positions and who is involved in the negotiations? Will the Non-Treaty Storage Agreement, negative impacts and compensation be included in renegotiation? What are the long-term time frames of the CRT?

**Recreation:** Reservoirs need to be better managed for recreation, with debris management and stable water levels.

## 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: GOLDEN 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 Golden 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).

**BC Hydro:** What happens if they privatize BC Hydro? What is the water rental fee BC Hydro pays to the Province of BC annually?

**Climate Change and Weather:** Is there research on how these dams have changed weather patterns? Do we know enough about changes to water flow because of climate change to make long-term, rational decisions?

**Compensation History:** What is being done to correct promises that never materialized (e.g., power supply, recreation)? Compensation benefits for the fish and wildlife losses haven't been realized to date. How were the displaced people compensated and where were they moved to?

**Consultation:** Hoping the provincial government listens to the people of the Basin. How can we ensure our small population is represented and our concerns will be listened to?

**Downstream Power Benefits:** What does \$150 – \$300 million US/year really mean and where does it go? Is one side getting a better deal? What direct economic benefits do Basin communities see of the \$150 – \$300 million US/year that is returned to the Province? Why can't BC keep all 50 per cent of the downstream benefits as power rather than sell it (e.g., to avoid building new dams)? If the CRT were terminated, how would the loss of money be recovered?

**Environment:** Are there other river systems that brought back their lost salmon? How realistic is this and at what cost? How do increasing water temperatures impact salmon restoration? Who plans for environmental remediation from changed water levels? Will environmental considerations be part of any renegotiations? Mica had the most environmental change as a result of its reservoir. Water flow needs to be consistent and take care of existing fisheries and wildlife.

**Flood Control:** What happens to the Assured Annual Flood Control if the CRT is terminated and what are the implications?

**Negotiation:** What are the time frames for revising the CRT after 2014/2024? What happens if termination is triggered in 2014 vs. 2024? If the CRT continues, can the U.S. give 10 years' notice at any time or can we put another time frame on the CRT? What is the U.S. talking about re: changes and what leverage does it have? What are the predicted negative effects on BC if the U.S. promotes changes to the CRT? Should the Non-treaty Storage Agreement be covered with a future CRT? What are the pros and cons? How will the negotiations process work? Who will be involved? What leverage do Canada and BC have at the bargaining table?

**Recreation:** Is it possible to manage Kinbasket Reservoir for recreation 12 months of the year? Debris clean-up. Recreational upkeep. Ensure reservoirs are maintained. What is the minimum number for drawdown to meet all needs?

**Reservoir Operations/Non-treaty Storage Agreement (NTSA):** Under the On Call regime, can water levels be managed for ecosystems, and recreational and power values? With climate change, could we have to draw down our reservoirs for the US? What happens to water levels in Kinbasket when assured flood control expires? Is the Dalles the appropriate point to deter water flows (relative to Canadian dam hold-back)? Shouldn't it be further upstream? What is the relationship between CRT and non-CRT dams? Dam at the narrows opposite Bush Harbour (downstream) to stabilize lake level? What is the payment mechanism for Kinbasket Reservoir? CRT 7.1 MMAF and NTSA 4.5 MMAF storage. Should the NTSA be covered under the CRT? Allow the NTSA to be separated from CRT Kinbasket for operation analysis. Create a technical advisory committee re: Golden NTSA sales and analysis.

**Sustainability:** Our growth model needs to change.





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