



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

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY  
INFORMATION SESSION SUMMARY  
REVELSTOKE

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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.

## REVELSTOKE INFORMATION SESSION

The information session in Revelstoke took place on November 7, 2011.

A total of 93 people participated in the open house and evening session. The evening portion was hosted by Gary Ockenden, CBT Director, Community Engagement. Ockenden 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.

David Wilks, MP, and Norm MacDonald, MLA, provided welcomes. Loni Parker, Director, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, 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.

## Revelstoke Discussion and Top-of-mind Themes

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

### CBT's Water Advisory Panel Members:

- Nigel Banks, University of Calgary;
- 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, 63 per cent learned a lot about the CRT, and another 35 per cent learned a few things. This is in light of the fact that 62 per cent of participants considered themselves somewhat knowledgeable about the CRT prior to attending the session.

**Benefits and Negative Impacts:**

Residents need to understand the full range of benefits and negative impacts to ensure compensation is adequate. What are the environmental, economic and other benefits, plus negative impacts, of the CRT?

**Community Engagement:**

Basin residents need knowledge and information.

**CBT and CRT:** Does the future of the CRT affect the future of CBT?

**Climate Change:** The future CRT should consider glacial recession and changing water volumes.

**Compensation:** Upstream compensation is not equivalent to the negative impacts felt in Canada. A greater share of downstream power benefits should come to the Basin.

**History of CRT:** What is the backstory of the CRT, including other plans and options considered at the time (e.g., the Kootenay Diversion)?

**NAFTA:** Does NAFTA impact the current or future CRT?

**Negotiations:** What structural changes to the CRT are likely, if any? What aspects of the CRT can be renegotiated? Residents want to understand the U.S. negotiating position. What is the federal role? What is the provincial role?

**Operations:** How do other dams and power facilities, such as Waneta and Libby Dam, factor into the CRT?

**Power Generation and Rates:** Basin residents should not pay more for power than residents in the Lower Mainland.

**Non-Treaty Storage Agreement:** Referring to the storage of water in excess of Canada's CRT obligation to store 15.5-million acre feet of water, residents asked for more details on this agreement and how, or if, it relates to the future CRT.

**Water Management and Values:** There is a need for a broad water management plan for the entire Basin that addresses more than power and flood control. The CRT needs to consider a range of environmental values, plus social and economic values.

## 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: REVELSTOKE 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 Revelstoke 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).

**Agriculture:** What agricultural and environmental possibilities could we pursue with a new CRT? A lot of farmland and habitat was lost with the flooding of the reservoirs; is there a way we can mitigate these impacts? Regions other than the Basin are affected by the CRT: e.g., Washington State now has a source to irrigate apple orchards.

**CBT:** Would CBT be affected by changes to the CRT and in what ways?

**Compensation:** Based on the \$150 – \$300 million US/year revenue, how does that compare to environmental and agricultural losses? Will there be an assurance the Basin will receive a specific allotment of money from any new CRT or projects from the BC government?

**Dams:** Last year a cable from the U.S. Secretary of State indicated that Mica Dam was an important asset to U.S. national security.

**Environment:** There is concern about funding cuts to fish and wildlife compensation that have already taken place, including the loss of jobs in Revelstoke. Need to manage for long-term sustainability. The U.S. has specific at-risk protection; what is the Canadian side doing to ensure environmental values are maximized? How does the CRT envision environmental sustainability?

**Flood Control:** Since the U.S. has never used On Call Flood Control, would it be of less value than perceived historically?

**Negotiation:** If the CRT is terminated, what do the U.S. and/or Canada get? Would Canada be able to generate more power if the CRT were terminated and is it enough to meet what we currently get back as downstream power benefits? What would be the benefits to the Province of BC if the CRT were discontinued? What is BC doing to calculate whether to continue the CRT or not? Has the BC government done an economic analysis of the options and desires of the U.S.? In the U.S., there are many states involved in potential renegotiations; how united are they and do they have differing opinions? What is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers looking at? How does Canada ensure we don't get “out-negotiated” by the U.S.? Is there any likelihood that negotiation will be about the transfer of water?

**Other Ideas:** Build weirs/dykes between Revelstoke and the ferry to optimize the consideration of wildlife, farmland, flood levels and mosquitoes. Revenue potential exists to stabilize the water level of the Arrow Lakes and sell waterfront recreation property. Has there been any thought to subdividing land fronting on the Revelstoke Reservoir to provide provincial tax revenue and stimulate the local economy?

**Reservoir/Dam Operations:** Need more enforcement of rules in the drawdown zone. Control Keenleyside Dam during summer months to not draw down the reservoir during July and August, eliminating mosquito problems. Is it possible to maintain Lake Revelstoke at a higher level to launch the Dragon Boat in Aug. and Sept.; what are the costs? How far are the dams into their lifespan and who pays for the next dams?



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