



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

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY
INFORMATION SESSION SUMMARY
VALEMOUNT

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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.

VALEMOUNT INFORMATION SESSION

The information session in Valemount took place on June 27 and 28, 2011.

Approximately 65 people attended the open house and evening session, hosted by Kindy Gosal, CBT Director, Water and Environment. Gosal emphasized the purpose of the session was to educate and inform people about the CRT. He noted that the session was not a consultation; that is a responsibility of the provincial government.

Bob Smith, Village of Valemount Mayor and CBT Board Member, welcomed participants and 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.

<p>June 27 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>
<p>June 28 Afternoon</p>	<p>Open house (as above).</p>

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, 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.

Valemount Discussion and Top-of-mind Themes

CBT Water Advisory Panel members Nigel Bankes, University of Calgary, and Tim Newton, Permanent Engineering Board, presented on the negotiation process, roles and responsibilities, CRT operations and future scenarios.

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.

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. Answers to frequently asked questions are posted at 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. Also visit the site to subscribe to CRT email updates.



Downstream Power

Benefits: How much does Canada receive each year and is it cash or do we also receive power? Where does the money go and why doesn't it stay local?

Environment:

How can we maintain our wetlands and protect our groundwater? Did the CRT dams have impacts on salmon?

Flood Control:

Will Canada and the U.S. negotiate Assured Annual Flood Control between 2014 and 2024?

Kinbasket Reservoir

Operations: What would Kinbasket levels look like with different CRT scenarios (i.e., terminate or continue). Need stable levels for residents and the environment.

History/Compensation:

Promises were made to the community prior to dam development and were never realized. Compensation is required for land expropriated.

Negotiations:

How strong is the relationship between the two countries and how will negotiation conflict be dealt with?

Recreation:

There is interest in developed hot springs for the area and having higher water levels for recreation.

Reservoir/Dam Operations:

More controlled water levels are required. Would Kinbasket water levels be more stable without the CRT? What is the Non-Treaty Storage Agreement and how does it work?

APPENDIX: VALEMOUNT 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 Valemount 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.

CBT: How would termination affect CBT? Does CBT have any of the media/stories or “propaganda” that was published prior to the construction of Mica Dam?

Compensation/Mitigation: Promises made prior to dam development. We want our farm back. Loss of road access to the south. Lack of dust control.

Downstream Power Benefits: Where does the Province’s \$150 – 300 million US/year go? Why don’t we get it locally? Were we paid cash for the Canadian Entitlement and flood control or did we get power back up a transmission line?

Environment: Can we maintain our wetlands? Protection of groundwater. What impact did the CRT dams have on salmon?

External Agreements: What is the Non-treaty Storage Agreement and how is it used?

Flood Control: Would Canada and the U.S. negotiate Assured Annual Flood Control during 2014 – 2024?

Negotiation: How will unforeseen impacts (dust/no water) be dealt with in CRT talks? Have Canada and the U.S. been without conflict through the duration of the CRT? If there has been conflict in the past, has it been resolved? Should we have faith that the CRT will be fairly negotiated? Why would Grand Coulee Reservoir be emptied if the CRT is terminated?

Recreation: Can we negotiate to move the reservoir closer to Valemount for recreation purposes?

Reservoir/Dam Operations: More controlled water levels. Could Canada have dammed the Columbia River without the consent of the U.S.? Kinbasket Reservoir fluctuates significantly; can Canada operate outside of the CRT to keep Kinbasket higher? Would Kinbasket Reservoir be more stable without the CRT?



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

828D Baker Street
Cranbrook, BC V1C 1A2

1.800.505.8998 / 250.426.8810
cranbrook@cbt.org

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