



# COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY REVIEW

## November 2013 Community Consultation Summary Report



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## INTRODUCTION

The information contained in this summary report includes the direct feedback received by the Columbia River Treaty Review Team from attendees at the November 2013 community sessions as well as feedback received from paper and online feedback forms, letters, and emails.

## OVERVIEW

### Background

The Province of British Columbia initiated a Columbia River Treaty review process to evaluate future decision options, including possible continuation, amendment or termination of the Treaty. The outcome of the review is to provide a recommendation to government on the future of the Treaty. The Ministry of Energy and Mines is the coordinating agency for the Treaty review.

The Columbia River Treaty Review provides an opportunity to increase the Province's understanding of Basin residents' interests and values. The Province wants to ensure the implications of Treaty options on those interests are communicated to, and well understood by, Basin residents, and that those residents have full opportunity to provide input to help inform the Provincial recommendation on the Treaty.

The Province is conducting a separate consultation process with First Nations.

The Treaty Review Team is being advised by the Columbia River Treaty Local Governments' Committee (Local Governments' Committee) and Columbia Basin Trust on the public consultation process.

Phase One of public consultations was carried out in seven Columbia Basin communities (Jaffray, Creston, Nakusp, Castlegar, Valemount, Revelstoke and Golden) in May and June of 2012. More than 360 residents attended and provided information on local interests and feedback on how they wanted to be consulted in the future. A majority of Basin residents wanted further community sessions; a large number wanted to have a conference; and some wanted the Province to get input from a group of knowledgeable and committed Basin residents. Residents also wanted to see more youth involvement in the Treaty Review process.

Phase Two community workshops were held in November 2012 in eight communities: Jaffray, Creston, Trail, Nelson, Nakusp, Revelstoke, Golden and Valemount. The Trail workshop was live-streamed, providing an additional opportunity for the public across the Basin and beyond to participate. Approximately 360 people participated in Phase Two events. In addition, the

Treaty Review Team held two meetings, in Cranbrook and Castlegar, with regional and municipal elected officials.

Phase Three community consultations were held in the communities of Golden, Nelson, Fauquier and Kaslo. The Treaty Review Team collaborated with community representatives and/or local government representatives to develop customized agendas for these well attended community meetings.

All presentations and material used during the community consultations and summary reports of the feedback received from Basin residents is posted to the Treaty Review website:

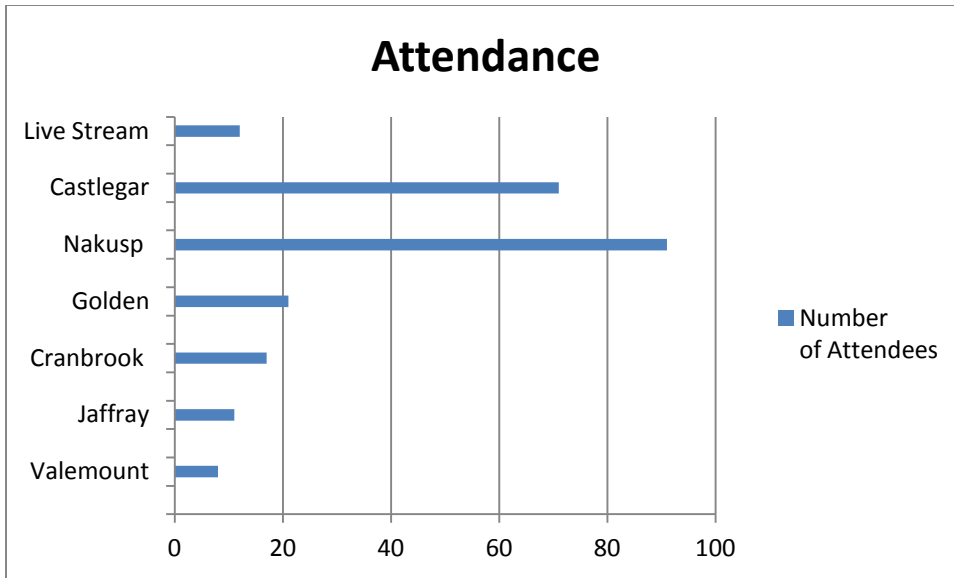
<http://blog.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty/community-sessions/>

### **Advertising and Attendance**

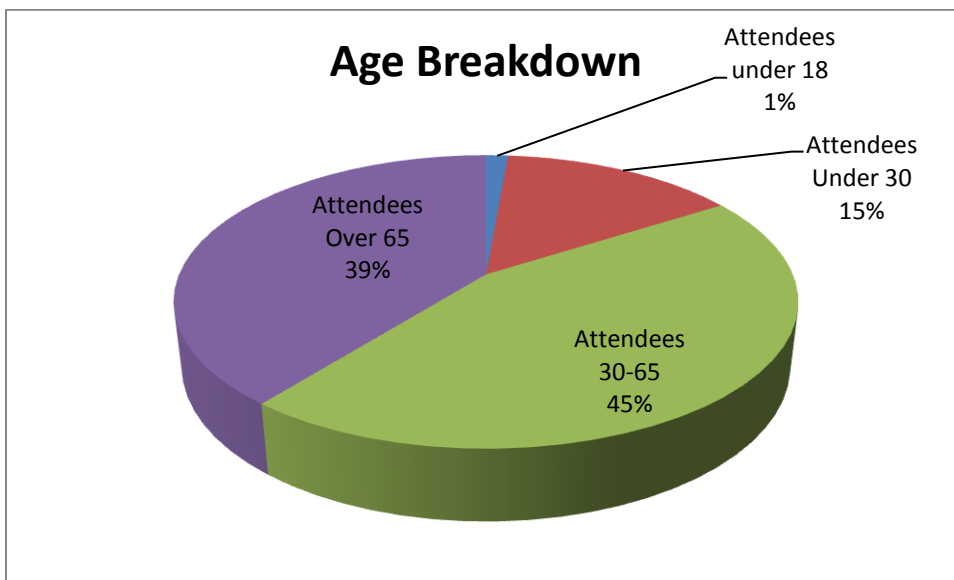
Phase 4 consultation workshops were held in November 2013 in six communities: Jaffray, Cranbrook, Golden, Nakusp, Castlegar and Valemount. At the community's request two meetings were held in Nakusp, one in the afternoon and the other later in the evening; the Castlegar workshop had a LiveStream option; and, the Valemount community meeting was via videoconference. The Cranbrook meeting for regional district and municipal elected officials was also attended by the public. Approximately 230 people attended the November 2013 community sessions and LiveStream option.

Pre-registration for the meetings was not required, and the sessions were widely advertised. Advertisements about the community workshops were placed in twenty-two local newspapers and nine online publications two weeks prior to the sessions. Notice of the community workshops was included with the Minister of Energy and Mines' mid-October news release on the Province's draft recommendation and was also included in the news release by the Local Governments' Committee on their draft recommendations to government. Workshop information in both news releases was reported by most Basin newspapers. Details regarding the community workshops were posted on the Treaty Review website, featured in the October 2013 Treaty Review e-newsletter sent to approximately 550 email addresses, and posted on Twitter and Facebook. Handbills about the events were provided to the Local Governments' Committee for distribution and posting in local government offices and were also distributed at an October 2013 CBT symposium attended by over 300 Basin residents. CBT also included information about the workshops in their e-newsletter and on their website.

Over 230 Basin residents attended the November 2013 community meetings. The number of participants at each community session is shown below. Attendance numbers at the two Nakusp sessions were roughly equal (approximately 45 people) and are combined in the table.



The approximate age breakdown of those attending the sessions is shown below:



### Format of Community Sessions

Community sessions followed a similar format:

- Introduction and welcome by a representative of the Local Governments' Committee.
- Review by BC Hydro of the analysis of scenarios requested by Basin residents and First Nations: mid-level constant pool Arrow Lakes Reservoir and basin-wide ecosystem scenario. This was followed by a question and discussion period.

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- Review of the draft Columbia River Treaty Review public consultation report and review of the draft B.C. recommendation on the future of the Treaty and the principles underlying the recommendation. This was followed by a short question and discussion period before attendees moved into smaller groups to allow more opportunity to provide feedback to the Treaty Review Team.
- Next steps and conclusion of the Province’s portion of the community workshop.
- Local Governments’ Committee led review of their draft recommendations to governments.

Presentations and handout material used by the Treaty Review team during the November 2013 community workshops are available at:

<http://blog.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty/community-sessions/>

Local Governments’ Committee information is available at:

<http://www.cbt.org/crt/LocalGovernmentsCommittee.html>

The following section encompasses the highlights, main discussion points, and feedback from each community workshop.

## COMMUNITIES

### Jaffray

The November 4, 2013 evening session in Jaffray was held in the Jaffray Community Hall and attended by 11 people, including two Sounding Board representatives. Flood control and its value to the U.S. was a key discussion theme. There were concerns of how flood control post-2024 would affect Koochanusa Reservoir and how the Reservoir would have to be managed if Arrow Lakes Reservoir provided less flood control. Bringing Libby Dam under the Columbia River Treaty was viewed as a positive step by some attendees.

Residents wanted to see the benefits to the U.S. for flood control reflected in the Canadian Entitlement that B.C. receives. Many attendees felt the real issue for discussion between B.C. and the U.S. was beyond flood control and really about water supply – how much was demanded and when – and the value of this supply in the future.

Healthy ecosystems - in particular terrestrial ecosystems, flows and riparian zones - were identified by many residents as an important issue to consider during any future negotiations. Many felt it was important to be able to assign a monetary value to ecosystem benefits. A few

residents felt the “damage has been done now” so the system should be operated to maximize power benefits but the Basin should be compensated.

A few residents requested clarification regarding the values for the Canadian Entitlement given in the U.S. media versus the value used in the Canadian media. An explanation can be found in the December 2013 newsletter:

[https://www.eneletters.gov.bc.ca/Columbia\\_River\\_Treaty\\_Review\\_eNewsletter/December\\_2013/edition](https://www.eneletters.gov.bc.ca/Columbia_River_Treaty_Review_eNewsletter/December_2013/edition)

A few residents questioned whether it would be more effective for B.C. to issue notice to terminate the Treaty and then negotiate for improvements or to negotiate for improvements and then give notice to terminate if no progress was made. A few residents felt a number of issues identified in the public consultation report fell into “CBT’s basket”

Participants supported the draft public consultation report and draft recommendation and principles.

## **Cranbrook**

The session in Cranbrook was held in the morning of November 5, 2013 at the Regional District of East Kootenay offices. Originally planned as a consultation event for elected officials, interest by a number of area citizens resulted in the meeting being opened to the public. Seventeen participants attended the event, including four residents.

The importance of salmon to the area, particularly to First Nations, and measures that would be needed to return salmon to the Columbia River was discussed. Possible measures suggested by a few attendees included the U.S. paying for a fish ladder at Grand Coulee Dam and Canada building ladders past Hugh Keenleyside, Revelstoke and Mica dams. An attendee noted the return of salmon could jeopardize a lucrative U.S. sports fishery while another attendee noted the difficulty in restoring salmon runs, noting the problems experienced restoring the Adams River salmon run which has no dams to contend with.

An attendee requested clarification regarding the values for the Canadian Entitlement given in the U.S. media versus the value used in the Canadian media. Some attendees asked questions about the potential negotiation process.

Attendees discussed changing U.S. water supply demand, particularly in response to increasing agriculture needs and climate change related droughts. Participants noted that water supply was the value going forward and not power generation and that regardless of how the U.S.

chose to use the water once it crossed the border, the Canadian Entitlement received by B.C. should reflect the domestic impacts to supply that water.

Many attendees wanted to ensure there is proper recognition and valuation of ecosystem and environmental impacts from coordination under the Treaty. A few wanted to see Columbia River Treaty benefits maximized on both sides of the border and equitably shared. Many participants wanted to see continued dialogue with elected officials south of the border.

Ecosystem values and historical and ongoing environmental impacts around Kootenai Reservoir were discussed. A few attendees wanted to see more done regarding environmental damage around Kootenai Reservoir, including damage done by recreationists and debris; both the Province and CBT were identified as potential funders. A process like water use planning was suggested for Kootenai Reservoir.

Basin residents at the event supported or mostly supported the draft consultation report and draft recommendation and principles.

## Golden

Twenty-one participants attended the November 5, 2013 evening session held in the Golden Civic Centre.

A few attendees questioned the analysis of the constant mid-level Arrow Lakes Reservoir and ecosystem wide scenarios, noting that declines in reservoir productivity due to lower water levels may be balanced by increased productivity due to a more productive riparian zone/ecosystem. They wanted to see more of the details behind the modelling work done.

Many attendees were interested in what Called Upon Flood Control post-2024 would look like and whether there had been any discussions with the U.S. around demand for water for irrigation or to meet drought conditions. Some felt that Treaty discussions should now include water supply. They wanted to see a “full cost accounting”, using future values, to evaluate impacts to B.C. to provide water, include the values associated with natural capital, salmon return, transportation and increased foreshore. Some wanted to see a monetary evaluation of U.S. benefits, in particular real estate on flood plains.

A few attendees felt there was a need for a formalized process to resolve non-Treaty issues so that local issues didn't “get swept under the rug”. Some attendees wanted Kootenai Reservoir included in the Treaty operations.

During the small group discussions a number of other issues were raised including:



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- Education of the B.C. public on hydro operations and the U.S. public on the Columbia River Treaty. Ongoing input into the operation of the Kinbasket Reservoir.
- Equitable sharing of BC Hydro payments in lieu of taxes and the addition of reservoirs and transmission lines. Fair share of Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program going to Kinbasket reservoir.
- Return of the salmon is a high priority, although it was felt that downstream mitigation, in particular Grand Coulee Dam, was a U.S. responsibility. Feasibility studies were needed. Burbot enhancement and a hatchery at Kinbasket Reservoir were also mentioned.
- Recreational economic development around Kinbasket Reservoir or compensation in lieu if land could not be made available for safety/hydro-operation reasons.

### Nakusp

Two public consultation sessions were held at the Nakusp Community Complex and Arena on November 6, 2013. At the community's request one session was held in the afternoon and another held in the evening. The afternoon session was attended by 48 people and the evening session by 43 people. Some people attended both sessions.

Attendees discussed the analysis of the constant pool mid-level Arrow Lakes Reservoir scenario. Some attendees felt that recent experience with the reservoir at 1420 ft to 1425 ft was beneficial to kokanee access to tributaries while other attendees felt they were unable to access the water at 1420 ft and that the exposed foreshore was unsightly because nothing grew except some experimental cottonwood and vegetation and the bare soil caused dust storms. They wanted a level that ensures boat ramps are useable year round and promotes recreation/tourism. Some attendees were concerned that fluctuating water levels will continue to impact private property causing loss of land and siltation in the reservoir. Some felt private property owners should be compensated if water levels managed for ecosystem functions impacted their land. While there was not a consensus on the preferred water level, most attendees felt more stable Arrow Lakes Reservoir levels would be an improvement.

Some attendees questioned the value of the Canadian Entitlement received over the years and were told details are provided on the Treaty Review website (See:

[https://www.eneletters.gov.bc.ca/Columbia\\_River\\_Treaty\\_Review\\_eNewsletter/December\\_2012/Canadian\\_Entitlement/article](https://www.eneletters.gov.bc.ca/Columbia_River_Treaty_Review_eNewsletter/December_2012/Canadian_Entitlement/article)).

Other attendees felt the Canadian Entitlement was not just about power but about water supplied for multiple uses. Some attendees felt more of the benefits of the Treaty, like the Canadian Entitlement, should come back to the area most

impacted. A few residents want to see more economic development in the area and more infrastructure, such as a fixed link across the reservoir.

Some attendees were concerned that U.S. stakeholders were unaware of the impact in B.C. of managing water flows to meet Treaty requirements, whether it was used for power generation or not. Some attendees felt giving notice to terminate the Treaty was the strategy that would bring both sides together to negotiate for improvements. A few attendees felt terminating the Treaty would enable better ecosystem scenarios.

Ecosystem management was a concern for many attendees. People were concerned that permitting infrastructure on the flood plain limited the flexibility to manage water flows to benefit ecosystems. Some attendees wanted to see the U. S. use more of their own storage to provide flood control. Others felt water flows managed to address climate change should be included in any future negotiations but were concerned that management to reduce impacts in the U.S. would result in more negative impacts to the area. Many residents felt that if the U.S. wanted more flows at certain times of the year, they should pay for them. Most attendees felt negotiations would be more broadly about water supply.

Return of the salmon was an issue raised by a few attendees who wanted to see more done by the U.S. to ensure salmon runs in B.C. Some residents felt that efforts to bring sturgeon back to the lake were jeopardizing kokanee and trout, species of interest to residents. Some felt that protecting whitefish and trout in Canada just meant those fish were eaten by U.S. fish. Some attendees wanted to see more done to improve local fish stocks.

Some attendees wanted to see agriculture explicitly included in the principles accompanying the B.C. recommendation. They wanted recognition that B.C. water storage benefits U.S. agriculture interests and that providing further flows to the U.S. in the July-September growing season could impact the B.C. potato, vegetable and tree fruit sectors. A few attendees wanted to see more done to promote local agriculture and some wanted an "Agriculture Trust" established.

A few attendees felt that because of the low population around Arrow Lakes Reservoir, the issues in their community did not receive adequate attention. They also felt there should be more money put towards fish and wildlife habitat restoration. A few attendees were concerned that past impacts were not adequately valued.

Many attendees were concerned that the views of Basin residents would not be considered during negotiations. Some wanted to see a negotiating advisory group that included Basin representation. Some residents want to ensure B.C. receives improved benefits for the water

management provided to the U. S. and that B.C. and Basin residents have more say in how the water is managed.

Many attendees felt that the Treaty review process should include the Sinixt and a few attendees felt the public and First Nations consultation should not be separated.

## Castlegar

The evening session held on November 7, 2013 at the Sandman Inn Castlegar was attended by just over 70 people, with an additional 12 joining the discussion via the Internet as the session was live-streamed. Over one-third of the attendees were under 30 years of age, many of them students at Selkirk College. This was the highest attendance by young adults of any of the sessions.

Although most attendees were in favour of a more constant pool at Arrow Lakes Reservoir for ecosystem, social and recreation reasons, many attendees were concerned about what the water level should be. Some were concerned about a mid-level constant pool scenario possibly leading to increased flooding downstream. Some attendees were concerned about the impact on power production and on recreation. A few attendees felt a higher water level - around 1435 ft – was preferable while others felt more work was needed to find the “sweet spot”. Many attendees felt it was important to optimize the ecosystem health of the whole Basin. Some attendees felt that while each area wanted more stable reservoirs, it was important to avoid pitting one reservoir against another.

Many attendees feel that in the future the benefits of the Treaty will be about water supply and its increasing value and about managing flows for drought, floods and climate change impacts. A few attendees felt agricultural impacts needed to be evaluated. While a few attendees wanted to see salmon runs restored and Hugh Keenleyside and Duncan Dams removed, a number of attendees wanted to see more focus on what they felt were more viable fish species than salmon.

Many attendees feel the region impacted by the Treaty should receive more benefits and that some of those benefits should go to environmental restoration. Many attendees wanted to see dollar values attached to the benefits to the U.S. and the impacts in B.C. Some attendees felt the Sinixt should be involved in the Treaty Review process. A few attendees wanted to see no further development on flood plains.

Most attendees were very concerned that B.C. is well prepared and well supported for a tough negotiation and that regional interests, including those around Libby Dam operations, are considered. Many attendees would like to see both B.C. and the U.S. achieving improvements

under the Treaty framework through the same spirit of cooperation that has brought about modifications to the Treaty in the past. Attendees wanted to continue to be kept informed of the process and a number of attendees wanted to see more youth educated about and involved in the review of the Treaty.

### Valemount

Instead of taking up the Treaty Review Team's offer to provide Valemount residents with a bus in order to attend the November 5, 2013 community session in Golden, residents chose instead to have a dedicated electronic meeting. A community videoconference was held with Valemount residents on November 14, 2013 with eight people attending the session held in the Council Chambers. Before beginning the format followed in the other community sessions, attendees discussed debris and stable water levels at Kinbasket Reservoir, how something approximating a year round lake might be possible - at least around Valemount - and what the impacts would be for recreation and to power production at Mica. Attendees also discussed potential economic opportunities that could be developed if the geothermal project at Canoe Reach was successful. Residents felt that the opportunities that may materialize could offset forest industry losses to the community due to the creation of Kinbasket Reservoir. Most attendees felt the Province should do more to support economic opportunities in Valemount to compensate for historical losses and the Mayor committed to sending a letter to the Treaty Review Team requesting provincial support for the geothermal project. The Treaty Review Team committed to exploring options.

Many attendees were concerned about B.C. being prepared for tough negotiations and ensuring a fair return to the Province. A few participants wanted negotiations to consider ecosystems, invasive species and salmon restoration. Reviewing the Treaty every ten years and equitable sharing of benefits to impacted communities was a concern of some. Some attendees wanted to know more about Columbia Basin Trust and about how Valemount figured in its programs and activities.

### CONCLUSION

Most Community workshop attendees supported the draft B.C. recommendation and principles and draft public consultation report. They identified water supply and its increasing future value as a key consideration in any future negotiations. Including basin-wide ecosystem improvements, as well as improved fisheries, in any future negotiations was also important to most attendees. They felt managing water flows for climate change impacts, including droughts and floods, should receive fair compensation from the U.S. and that the continuing impacts from current operations should be acknowledged and compensated. Impacts to the

B.C. agriculture sector from water flow management for the U.S. should also be considered. Most Basin residents felt that the Canadian Entitlement should be higher and that more of it should come to the Basin and be distributed based on impact and to support economic development.

Most attendees were concerned about any future negotiations and wanted to ensure that the B.C. negotiation team was tough, well prepared and well supported, including having access to a negotiation advisory committee that included Basin representation so that Basin views would be considered. Most attendees supported the notion of both sides negotiating improvements under the framework of the Treaty, in the spirit of cooperation that has been demonstrated in the past.

Many attendees were satisfied that consultation of Basin residents on the future of the Treaty was meaningful and comprehensive. Most residents who participated in the consultation process felt that they were heard, and that the Treaty Review Team captured their views and perspectives. Many wanted similar engagement to continue during the course of any future Treaty negotiations.

Visit [www.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty](http://www.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty) for more information about the Columbia River Treaty and the Province's Columbia River Treaty Review.