



COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY REVIEW

Summary Report

March 2013 Community Consultations: Golden and Nelson



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BACKGROUND

The Province of British Columbia has initiated a Columbia River Treaty Review (Treaty Review) process to evaluate future decision options, including possible continuation, amendment or termination of the Treaty. The outcome of the review will be to provide recommendations to government on the future of the Treaty. The Ministry of Energy, Mines and Natural Gas is the coordinating agency for the Treaty Review and has established a Columbia River Treaty Review Team (Treaty Review Team).

The 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 Provincial recommendations 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. The Summary Report of Phase One community sessions can be viewed [here](#).

Phase Two of public consultations was carried out in eight Columbia Basin communities (Jaffray, Creston, Trail, Nelson, Nakusp, Revelstoke, Golden and Valemount) in November 2012. The Trail workshop was live-streamed, providing an additional opportunity for the public across the Basin and beyond to participate. In addition, the Treaty Review Team held two meetings, in Cranbrook and Castlegar, with regional and municipal elected officials. Approximately 375 people participated, receiving information about potential Treaty scenario modelling results

and providing input on how the scenarios could impact key Basin interests. The Summary Report of Phase Two community sessions can be viewed [here](#).

The November 2012 community sessions in Golden and Nelson were well attended and the Treaty Review Team committed to returning to both communities for more dialogue if invited to do so. The Columbia River Treaty Local Governments' Committee extended an invitation and the Treaty Review Team held evening community information sessions in Golden on March 20, 2013 and in Nelson on March 21, 2013.

ADVERTISING AND ATTENDANCE

Pre-registration was not required, and the evening sessions were widely advertised (at least twice in local print media). A notice was placed on the Golden Civic Centre marquee for 2 weeks prior to the event. Email invitations were included with mail outs from BC Hydro, Columbia Basin Trust and the Local Governments' Committee. Columbia Basin Trust also included information about the community sessions in its newsletters. Other methods of communication included Facebook and Twitter, Columbia River Treaty Review website event-calendar, and through the Columbia River Treaty Review e-newsletters. Advertisements and invitations combined information about the March 20 evening session in Golden and the March 21 session in Nelson with information about the Columbia River Treaty Review technical conferences in Golden on March 20 and in Castlegar on March 22. Very low registration for the Golden conference resulted in a cancellation and an offer to the seven people registered of travel cost assistance to attend the Castlegar conference. Two people accepted the offer. In June 2013, a report on the Columbia River Treaty Technical Conference in Castlegar will be available [here](#).

Approximately 35-40 residents of Golden, Invermere and the surrounding areas attended the March 20 information session at the Golden Civic Centre in Golden.

Approximately 20 residents of Nelson, Kaslo and surrounding areas attended the March 21 information session at the Prestige Lakeside Resort in Nelson.

FORMAT OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSIONS

The Local Governments' Committee worked with the Treaty Review Team to develop the agendas for the Golden and Nelson evening sessions, tailoring the sessions somewhat to each community, as follows:

- Welcome and introduction by a representative of the Local Governments' Committee.
- Update by the Province on the Treaty Review process and timeline.
- BC Hydro presentation on the outcomes of modelling Treaty options and the implications for key Basin interests. Introduction of a new tool providing a visual representation of modelling results.
- US perspectives on the Columbia River Treaty.
- Domestic issues – Basin wide.
- Domestic issues – community.

Presentations used during the Golden and Nelson community information sessions are available at the Columbia River Treaty Review [website](#). No new material was distributed although handout material from previous community sessions was available.

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

COMMUNITIES

Golden

The community information session in Golden was held at the Golden Civic Centre on March 20, 2013 from 7:00 -8:30 pm. The session was attended by approximately 40 people.

A key concern of a number of attendees was the impact the creation of Kinbasket Reservoir has had and continues to have on the local forestry industry. Attendees talked about the loss of good paying jobs, noting that the loss of 200 jobs in Golden has had a much greater impact to the community than the loss of the same number of jobs would have in Vancouver. They also noted that while tourism and recreation jobs have been created, these jobs do not compare with the forestry jobs lost. Kinbasket Reservoir continues to impact the forestry sector and

affects the management of the resource, an attendee stated, predicting that in 10-15 years there would be no forestry industry left in the area. Several residents explained that the loss of the Big Bend Highway meant Golden forestry companies had higher operating costs because they had to maintain an extensive road system to Golden area timber supplies, with the result that companies located in communities to the west of Golden were now able to access this same timber supply at lower costs because those companies were able to use publicly funded highways to access the supply and did not have to pay for the maintenance of the same amount of road as companies located in Golden. The road problem will always add extra costs to companies operating out of Golden an attendee stated.

Another community member noted that forestry roads were used to access camping and recreation around Kinbasket Reservoir and that maintenance of the roads was a concern to local residents. One attendee asked what the provincial standards for forestry roads were and whether they had to be maintained to a certain level. He was asked to email his question to columbiarivertreaty@gov.bc.ca so it could be forwarded to the appropriate agency. An exchange followed between attendees and Kathy Eichenberger, Executive Director, Columbia River Treaty Review on possible next steps to address road access problems for forestry and recreation and the availability of adequate recreation and boat launch sites. A resident noted that these issues have been raised in the past and are still not resolved. The audience was asked whether a community group or person could be a local champion and help move the issue forward. The Treaty Review Team is looking into the issue of road and recreation access around Kinbasket Reservoir and will organize a June meeting between provincial agencies and Golden area stakeholders.

An attendee expressed concern about the distribution of compensation for reservoir and dam impacts noting Grants in Lieu of Taxes did not adequately consider reservoir impacts. Another attendee questioned the lack of distribution within the Basin of the benefits from the Non-Treaty Storage Agreement.

There were questions regarding BC Hydro operations and how there could be more local involvement. There were also questions about run of river generation at Surprise Rapids and debris control on Kinbasket Reservoir. An attendee suggested that boom-like structures could be used to prevent debris from the Columbia River from entering the reservoir.

A few attendees wanted to talk about specific areas of interest about the Treaty and the Treaty Review including:

- Issues the Canadian and U.S. Entities are discussing currently
- How Called Upon Flood Control impacts storage behind Mica Dam

- How the amount of money received for Called Upon Flood Control would be affected if the U.S. decreased the amount of the Canadian Entitlement
- What could be done for the return of Canadian salmon given that flexibility under the Treaty allows hydro operations that support U.S. salmon in the Columbia River
- Treaty Review modelling of Kinbasket Reservoir operations:
 - Whether upstream environmental impacts are considered in modelling Kinbasket Reservoir and how far upstream
 - Confirmation that Canada and the U.S. are using the same information for their modelling analyses
 - Confirmation that modelling runs had been done that improved conditions for the area's forestry and recreation

Nelson

The Nelson community information session, held on March 21, 2013 from 7:00 -8:30 pm at the Prestige Lakeside Resort, was attended by just over 20 people.

The evening session included a number of lively and informed discussions amongst and between attendees and the Treaty Review Team. Several discussion topics focussed on mitigating the environmental impacts of the Columbia River Treaty dams. Although a few attendees identified removal of Duncan and Libby Dams as a benefit from an environmental perspective, much of the focus was on Arrow Lakes Reservoir and Hugh Keenleyside Dam. Discussion topics included:

- How the loss of the Canadian Entitlement under a Treaty Terminate scenario could be compensated for including: keeping Arrow Lakes Reservoir high to generate more power; adding another turbine to the Arrow Lakes Generating Station; adding generation to Duncan Dam; maximizing the number of turbines at Revelstoke and Mica Dams; and changing operations at Mica Dam.
- The power generation loss due to removing Hugh Keenleyside Dam, the potential savings in mitigation costs and the increased flood risk to the U.S.
- The value of agricultural land lost when Arrow Lakes Reservoir was formed, the increase in value of more useable agricultural land because of the flood control provided by the Treaty dams and the now likely lower value of the agricultural land that could be reclaimed if the Hugh Keenleyside Dam was removed.
- The ecological advantages of running Arrow higher and whether the underlying issue, in particular with regards to access to spawning grounds and shoreline spawning, was fluctuating water levels rather than reservoir levels.

There were questions regarding opportunities for enhancing ecological and fisheries benefits under Treaty Continue and Treaty Terminate scenarios. An attendee sought confirmation that the modelling studies had included scenarios that improved ecological benefits. Another attendee asked whether Treaty negotiations could include fish ladders at U.S. dams on the Columbia River and eventually the return of salmon to Arrow, Kootenay and Slocan Lakes.

One attendee asked whether future Treaty scenario analysis included an assessment of the impact of climate change on future flow regimes, noting that climate change could affect the socio-economic conditions in the Basin and therefore could impact the benefits and costs associated with the Treaty.

A few people had questions about where the Canadian Entitlement went and what percentage of general revenue it represented. Someone wanted to know whether the Province could afford the loss of Canadian Entitlement power or its approximately \$200 million value under a Treaty Terminate scenario. Another person wondered if future agreements under the Treaty could specify a limited time frame, such as 20 years.

An attendee suggested that Kootenay Lake be included in discussions regarding the future of the Treaty, claiming that operation of Libby Dam had not met Treaty requirements in two out of three years, and that insufficient draw downs can result in flooding at Kootenay Lake. It was suggested that sturgeon requirements under U.S. fisheries laws contributed to the issue and an attendee questioned whether U.S. fish laws override Treaty requirements.

NEXT STEPS

During the Golden community information session, the Province committed to organizing a June 2013 meeting between provincial agencies and Golden area stakeholders to examine road and recreation access at Kinbasket Reservoir.

The Province encourages Columbia Basin residents to continue to provide input on the future of the Columbia River Treaty. A feedback form can be found [here](#). Columbia Basin residents can also send feedback on this summary of the March 2013 Golden and Nelson community sessions, as well as feedback on an upcoming public consultation report that will be posted online in June 2013, to the Columbia River Treaty email address:

columbiarivertreaty@gov.bc.ca. Basin residents can post comments or questions on the Columbia River Treaty Review website's Discussion Forum: www.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty/category/blog/

To keep up to date on the Treaty Review, subscribe to the Columbia River Treaty Review newsletter and receive updates on the community consultation underway, including details of

the March 2013 conference Castlegar and future community meetings. To view newsletters and to subscribe, please visit [here](#). You can also follow the Columbia River Treaty Review on Twitter and Facebook. Visit www.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty for more information about the Columbia River Treaty and the Province's Columbia River Treaty 2014 Review.