

**EXCERPT FROM**

**SUMMARY REPORT: COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY REVIEW**

**NOVEMBER 2012 COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS**

***NAKUSP FEEDBACK***

**Introduction**

The information contained in this excerpt<sup>1</sup> is the direct feedback received by the Columbia River Treaty Review Team from attendees at the November 2012 Columbia River Treaty Review community consultation sessions.

**Background**

The Columbia River Treaty Review provided 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.

**Nakusp Community Session**

The Nakusp public consultation session, held at the Community Recreation Centre, attracted 50 participants.

---

<sup>1</sup> The full Summary Report for the November 2012 Community Consultation can be found at <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/6/2012/07/Treaty-Review-November-2012-Public-Consultation-Summary-Report1.pdf>

Many participants voiced concern that the local area was the hardest hit with relatively little in return. Special mention was made of the original inhabitants most directly affected, many of whom might not be alive for too much longer. Residents were frustrated because they felt Columbia Basin Trust's community funds are typically dispersed based on community size, and not on the level of impacts experienced.

Participants asked a number of questions about the Columbia Treaty Review process. Participants wanted to know who makes the final decision whether to terminate or not, and how the information collected at the sessions will be used. Some expressed cynicism noting that the social and economic situation for Nakusp has not changed, despite many promises made over the years, and that following decades of inequity, there is little hope that improvements will be made.

Participants voiced their concerns that people on and around the reservoir continue to be sacrificed as operations, in their mind, tend to benefit those downstream. One person queried whether Arrow Reservoir was discharged low-enough in 2012 because of a power deal involving Columbia Power Corporation and the Bonneville Power Administration, resulting in a Reservoir surcharge with high water causing property damage.

A number of participants were concerned about the impact on private property caused by the 2012 high water levels. They felt private property owners should not have to bear the expense of property damaged because of reservoir operations to minimize high water impacts elsewhere in the system. Some people felt there should be direct compensation to the community, and affected properties, in the event of extremely high or low water levels (although it was acknowledged that this was a unique year with very high flows). There were requests to BC Hydro to provide better communications (to the community) in the event of extreme high water levels.

Following the main presentations, there were four break-out group discussions. In the group discussions there were five key areas of conversation: water levels; Treaty options; transportation links; economic development; and compensation.

There were calls to keep water levels higher (e.g. 1,440 ft), for longer (from June 1 to- Sept 30), and reduced fluctuations between high and low water, and fewer of them especially during the boating season. For agriculture, it was stated, the best water levels should be between 1,428ft and 1,430ft.

It was noted that Canada has rights under the Treaty to use water for irrigation and industry; Some people noted that water levels can be so low that it is difficult to access, and water intake pipes get damaged from changing levels and debris.

Some stated that a fixed link crossing at the north end of Upper Arrow Lake Reservoir is a priority and has always remained an unfulfilled promise (although others are content with the lack of easy access and relatively slow pace of development). They noted the ferry service now provided is inadequate and that a new ferry will not provide a sufficient improvement. As a result of the absence of a fixed link, the town cannot attract people or industry resulting in the community losing its young people, and creating hardships for seniors who need to access services.

It was stated that in order to develop economic opportunities businesses need assurances with transportation given that the ferries are unreliable. Those ferries can be quickly filled by chip trucks that also damage the road and provide little benefit to the community.

Since some felt the community is “in crisis”, with a declining population, it was suggested that Economic Development, and Opportunity, Plans be drafted.

For those attendees who expressed an opinion on the future of the Treaty, the majority favoured continuing the Treaty or Treaty Plus. Some favoured Treaty terminates because they felt more benefits would stay in BC rather than go to the U.S. Attendees also recommended that the Treaty Review Team consider Treaty Plus and strongly seek to decrease negative impacts in the area and to ensure protection of the Basin’s water resources.

It was stated that with Treaty continuing or Treaty Plus, greater consistency of water levels might be more easily achieved.

There was the recommendation to have a board of governors, not BC Hydro, making agreements with the States, as it will be less motivated by power production.

As in many other sessions, the topic of fair and equitable compensation was raised, with participants stating that it is critical that people in the areas most affected are looked after, and that their views are listened to.

Nakusp, it was said, is last on the Province's priority list with respect to economic development, with the example of the fixed link being promised in 1964.

Some participants suggested that BC Hydro's Grants in Lieu of Taxes should be overhauled and increased.

There were a number of other topics that were raised, including:

- Fishing has deteriorated in the last decade, with smaller fish, and few kokanee. One opinion was that Nutrient Restoration Program (jointly delivered by the Province and the Compensation Program) is not successful in Arrow Lakes Reservoir.
- Better clean-up and debris removal from the lake must be a priority for BC Hydro.
- Hydro energy is not green because of the impacts on the environment.
- The reservoir needs to be as close to a natural system as possible, and include accommodation of white sturgeon.
- Why does the Province continue to look at IPPs instead of looking at existing reservoirs for power generation?
- The Trust and BC Hydro are building a wharf but no breakwater. A breakwater is needed.
- The return of the salmon should be a priority even if it means further community sacrifices.
- Enhance the re-vegetation program.
- Wetlands are not needed here; there were no wetlands here like there were in Revelstoke.