

**EXCERPT FROM**

**SUMMARY REPORT: COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY REVIEW  
NOVEMBER 2012 COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS**

***REVELSTOKE 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.

**Revelstoke Community Session**

Discussion at the Revelstoke session, that drew eight participants, focused on water levels and the trade-offs between communities. One participant noted Revelstoke may benefit from lower water levels (from a recreational and environmental perspective) as there is a tendency for Revelstoke residents to prefer to recreate on the land, especially on the flats. Nakusp, on the other hand, is more water-based for recreation, and higher water levels in Arrow Lakes Reservoir are preferred.

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<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>

The Review Team was informed by participants that water levels in Arrow were too high and were having a “big impact,” both from a recreational point of view and also on the environment. Low water in early summer aids vegetation growth but when the wetland becomes inundated, water-fowl cannot use it.

Higher water levels, a participant noted, even had a negative impact on the ski hill. While in the summer the water is generally too cold to swim in, in winter the large body of relatively warm water creates a warmer microclimate that shifts precipitation at low elevations from snowfall to rainfall which negatively impacts snow packs.

Whether high or low water levels, participants suggested that more consistent levels, with fewer and smaller fluctuations, is key to improving recreation opportunities and environmental values.

A participant shared that there are local records available of the impacts caused by the building of the dam and reservoir, and that this was not reflected in the *Review of the Range of Impacts and Benefits* report.

One participant wanted to know how much money the Province was willing to forsake to improve recreation or boat access for a handful of weeks.

Another topic of discussion concerned fish in the reservoir. While there may be more fish in the reservoir now than when it was a river, it was noted that it may not be the same type or quality of fish as before. One participant noted that if ocean-going salmon (prior to dam construction) were included in the metrics, then there may have been more fish in the rivers then, than fish in the reservoir now.

The session concluded with several observations about BC Hydro’s water management consultation process; that people attend and contribute thoughts, but then it stops, and there is no formal or informal process to continue providing input. One participant suggested that a committee could be created to fill in the gap, and also that a team of experts, possibly within BC Hydro, could be made available for the public to bounce ideas off, ask questions, and provide field observations. One participant cautioned that the Water Use Planning process did not really reflect the views of the general public as there was “too much process and data.” This had the effect of giving more weight to the voices that stayed to the end of the process.