

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **Columbia Basin Regional Advisory Committee**

#### **Meeting #10**

**Oct. 8 – 9, 2019 – Regent Hotel, Revelstoke, B.C.**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Columbia Basin Regional Advisory Committee (CBRAC) held its 10th meeting on Oct. 8 and 9, 2019, in Revelstoke. This was CBRAC's second meeting in Revelstoke, which is located on the banks of the Columbia River, south of the Revelstoke Dam.

The following is a summary of the presentations and discussions that occurred at the meeting. The agenda, list of attendees and presentations can be found on the CBRAC website, at [engage.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty/columbia-basin-regional-advisory-committee](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty/columbia-basin-regional-advisory-committee).

25 CBRAC members attended this meeting, along with the Lead Negotiator for the Canadian Columbia River Treaty negotiating team, and representatives from Columbia Basin Indigenous Nations, BC Hydro, Columbia Basin Trust, and local, provincial and federal governments.

During the two days of meetings, CBRAC had informative updates from Global Affairs Canada and the B.C. Government on Canada-U.S. Columbia River Treaty negotiations, and from Indigenous Nations' representatives on their perspectives on the Treaty. CBRAC heard an update and provided feedback on Indigenous Nations-led ecosystem work, and work the Province is doing to address key Treaty-related community interests. The CRT Local Governments' Committee provided an update on their recommendations to the Province for a modernized Treaty, and BC Hydro delivered an update on Basin hydroelectric operations. There was a discussion about the recent Columbia Basin Transboundary Conference, which took place in Kimberly, B.C. in September. One of the highlights of this meeting was a dialogue with Wildsight's Columbia River Field School students and alumni about their canoe journey along the Columbia River this past summer. Prior to the meeting, CBRAC members visited the Revelstoke Museum to see "Stories Beneath the Surface," an exhibit about the communities that were displaced south of Revelstoke as result of the Hugh Keenleyside dam.

This summary is based on notes taken during the meeting, as well as written comments from participants. Though not everything was captured verbatim, these notes are meant to reflect the spirit of the discussion.

**DAY 1: OCT. 8, 2019**



### **REVELSTOKE MUSEUM FIELD TRIP**

- On the morning of Oct. 8, CBRAC members embarked on a field trip to the Revelstoke Museum to learn about the impacts Treaty dams have caused in the Revelstoke area.
- CBRAC members took in “Stories Beneath the Surface,” the museum’s newest exhibition, which explores the history of the communities between Revelstoke and the Upper Arrow Lake that were displaced by the construction of the Hugh Keenleyside Dam.
- The exhibit showcased the communities of Arrowhead, Beaton, Sidmouth, Twelve Mile, and Mount Cartier, with photographs, artifacts and information about each community and the people who lived there. A multi-media station featured interviews with three former valley residents, speaking about their lives, the loss of their farms and their way of life, and displacement. Before viewing the exhibit, CBRAC received a presentation from museum curator, Cathy English, explaining some of the history the exhibit showcases.

## SESSIONS

### REFLECTIONS ON THE COLUMBIA BASIN TRANSBOUNDARY CONFERENCE

- During this session, attendees who had taken part in the Transboundary Conference in Kimberly, Sept. 12 - 14, 2019 shared their experiences and key take-aways.
- Reports on the conference were overwhelmingly positive. Of note were the high engagement by youth and the strong representation of Indigenous perspectives and culture.
- Those who had been at the conference spoke about the diversity of attendees – Canadian Indigenous Nations, U.S. Tribes, elected officials, grade school and college aged youth, among others.
- One of the conference highlights was a field trip to the Columbia River headwaters, which featured Indigenous stories, song and dance.
- It was also noted that the conference was significant in terms of reconciliation, with Indigenous Nations perspectives, values and ceremony being key parts of the agenda.
- The vision and hard work of Kindy Gosal, Director of Special Initiatives at the Columbia Basin Trust, was acknowledged.
- CBRAC expressed interest in the Transboundary Conference session on Columbia River governance and wants to keep exploring the topic of governance as a committee.

### 2019 COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY COMMUNITY MEETINGS

*Brooke McMurchy, B.C. Columbia River Treaty Team*

[View presentation here](#)

- Brooke McMurchy provided a preview of the 12 meetings being hosted by the Province in communities across the B.C. Columbia Basin October and November 2019.
- These meetings are a continuation of the public consultation conducted in 2012-2013, and the community meetings held in 2018.
- Brooke explained that the purpose of the meetings is to provide updates on the current Columbia River Treaty negotiations; Indigenous Nations-led work to enhance ecosystems in the Columbia Basin; and how the Province is seeking to address community interests related to the Treaty.
- The meetings are also a valuable way for communities to connect with the Province and vice versa.
- Promotion for the community meetings included: a Provincial news release, local newspaper ads, posters in communities, emails to 2018 meeting attendees, B.C.

Columbia River Treaty Newsletter, Facebook and Twitter channels, Facebook invites and connection with the Wildsight Field School and Selkirk college.

- Brooke gave an update on the first meeting, in Revelstoke, which happened the previous evening: 35 people attended, questions were raised about fish (including salmon), ecosystems, and U.S. Tribal involvement in negotiations.

## **ADDRESSING COMMUNITY INTERESTS**

*Ingrid Strauss, B.C. Columbia River Treaty Team*

[View presentation here](#)

- Ingrid Strauss made a presentation on the Columbia River Treaty Heritage Project. This project builds on the discussion that took place at the [April 2019 CBRAC meeting](#)<sup>1</sup> of what could be done to acknowledge what was lost when the Treaty dams were created.
- The project's purpose is to preserve and magnify the history of the Treaty; to provide tangible recognition of impact/losses to Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples; to link existing related displays, sites and initiatives; to educate youth, residents and visitors to the Basin; and to stimulate broader community benefits.
- The project is expected to take the form of a branded heritage touring route linking a series of interpretive signs located at key locations related to the Treaty.
- The signage could feature cultural and historical information on impacts to Columbia Basin Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, communities, livelihoods, lands and environment.
- There could also be local, place-based stories connected to an overarching regional story linked to the Treaty.
- This project would be community driven, to make sure the stories told reflect what the communities want.

## **WILDSIGHT COLUMBIA RIVER FIELD SCHOOL**

*Field School Students and Alumni*

- This session featured students, alumni and staff from [Wildsight's Columbia River Field School](#)<sup>2</sup>, an immersive course for students ages 15-18.
- During the two-week program in August, students paddled key sections of the Columbia River and visited significant locations, such as the Columbia Wetlands, historic

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<sup>1</sup> <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/6/2019/05/2019-04-16-CBRAC-Table-Discussion-Acknowledging-what-was-lost.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://wildsight.ca/programs/crfs/>

Indigenous Nations sites, dams and reservoirs, and more. The program also featured guest experts, including Indigenous leaders, local and provincial government officials, scientists, conservationists, writers, artists, adventurers, and other lifelong residents.

- At the CBRAC meeting, Field School students and alumni talked about what they had learned through the program. They spoke positively about the experience, not only in terms of learning about the river, but also in terms of personal and career growth.
- There was also discussion about a possible shorter adult version of the program in the future.
- CBRAC members appreciated hearing the participants' perspectives, and found it encouraging that a new generation was learning about the Columbia River and the Treaty.

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## **DAY 2. OCT. 9, 2019**

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' COMMITTEE UPDATE**

*Linda Worley, Chair and Stan Doehle, Vice-Chair*

[View presentation here](#)

[View LGC Recommendations here](#)

- Linda and Stan spoke about the CRT Local Governments' Committee's (LGC) role, highlighting that the committee communicates regularly with Provincial and federal members of the Columbia River Treaty negotiating team and also engages with communities.
- They stressed that the LGC's role is to be the conduit to their constituents, helping them to be informed and stay engaged in the Columbia River Treaty process.
- They thanked the Province of B.C. Columbia River Treaty team for their ongoing engagement both with the LGC and communities.
- Also covered was the issue of ensuring that, as local government representatives change every four years, new representatives are brought up to the speed on Treaty issues quickly.
- The LGC is updating their recommendations to the Canadian Negotiating Team regarding the Treaty and to the provincial government regarding domestic Treaty-related issues. Linda and Stan briefly reviewed the changes in the recommendations from the 2013 version and invited CBRAC members' feedback by Dec. 9, 2019.



**COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY UPDATE**

*Sylvain Fabi, Lead Negotiator for the Canadian Columbia River Treaty Negotiating Team, Global Affairs Canada, and Kathy Eichenberger, Executive Director, B.C. Columbia River Treaty Team*

- Sylvain spoke about how important it is for Global Affairs Canada to engage Basin residents in the Columbia River Treaty process, as well as the importance of meeting people in person and spending time in the Basin.
- Sylvain highlighted two milestones from this year:
  1. the inclusion of Indigenous Nations representatives as official observers at the Canada-U.S. negotiations. Sylvain noted that the Indigenous Nations are much more than observers. Representatives from the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and Syilx/Okanagan Nations work closely with Canada and B.C. to prepare for each round of negotiations, collaborating on negotiating positions and options. They are present in the negotiating room and participate in caucus sessions with Canada and B.C. during each negotiating round. They are also involved in debrief sessions after each round of negotiations.

2. the milestone in July 2019, of five governments – the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and Syilx/Okanagan Nations, the Governments of Canada and B.C. - signing a Letter of Agreement to explore the feasibility of reintroducing salmon to the upper Columbia River. This was a historic achievement in terms of reconciliation.
- Sylvain gave an update on negotiations, referencing the most recent round, in ?aq'am, near Cranbrook.
  - He spoke of a positive spirit of collaboration between Canada and the U.S., with strong good will on both sides.
  - He talked about the leadership of Indigenous Nations on ecosystem function and salmon reintroduction.
  - At the last round, this included two presentations by Indigenous Nations observers'; one on salmon reintroduction and one on ecosystems, as well as expertise provided by U.S. Tribal representatives regarding the extensive ecosystem work that the U.S. has undertaken in the Basin, including transboundary efforts.
  - Sylvain stressed the great value of holding negotiations in the Columbia Basin.
  - Kathy acknowledged the importance of Global Affairs Canada supporting B.C.'s positions and interests.
  - She expressed how helpful and constructive the LGC is in keeping provincial and federal negotiators informed about the needs and concerns of Basin communities, and also highlighted the positive evolution of CBRAC, noting that what began as an experiment, has now exceeded expectations.
  - Kathy echoed Sylvain's comment that it's important to hold negotiations in the Basin, and that having the American delegation in the Basin helps them to understand why the issues are so important to the Canadian negotiating team.
  - Kathy noted that Minister Conroy, Minister responsible for the Columbia River Treaty, is a very involved in the Treaty file. She makes herself available to the Provincial Treaty Team, the LGC and the public. She is also a very strong advocate in public forums not only in Canada, but also in the U.S.
  - During a Q&A with Sylvain and Kathy following their remarks, there was discussion regarding flood control, ecosystems, the role of U.S. Tribes, and how the B.C./Canada approach is to follow the original principle of the Treaty: to create benefits and share them equitably between both countries.

## **INDIGENOUS NATIONS PANEL: PERSPECTIVES ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY NEGOTIATION PROCESS**

***Nathalie Allard***, *Ktunaxa Nation Council*, ***Jay Johnson***, *Syilx/Okanagan Nation* and ***Dale Tomma***, *Secwepemc Nation*

- Nathalie Allard of the Ktunaxa Nation characterized the Official Observers' participation as positive and productive.
- Nathalie spoke about the transition from the Indigenous Nations having worked with Canada and B.C. in preparation for Rounds 5 and 6 to being involved as official observers at negotiations for Rounds 7 and 8.
- She noted that the work being done today is for the next generation.
- Jay Johnson representing the Syilx/Okanagan Nation stressed the importance of the observers being in the room during negotiations and how much their involvement means, both for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.
- Jay also spoke with pride about Indigenous Nations working together, and with Canada and B.C., on issues like salmon, and said he's pleased that Canada and the U.S. negotiation delegations are open to discussion around subjects like salmon and ecosystems.
- Dale Tomma of the Secwepemc Nation characterized the observers' relationship with Canada and B.C. as meaningful and respectful, in spite of some growing pains.
- She echoed others' comments that the real importance of the work being done today is for future generations.
- Following their comments, Nathalie, Dale and Jay participated in a Q&A, discussing topics such as Indigenous Nations' role in the negotiation process and the role of U.S. tribes.

## **ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION**

***Bill Green***, *Ktunaxa Nation Council* and ***Shannon Goss***, *Okanagan Nation Alliance*

[View presentation here](#)

- Bill Green began with a short presentation about the historical Letter of Agreement signed by the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and Syilx/Okanagan Nations, the Government of Canada and the Province of B.C., to explore feasibility of reintroducing salmon to the Upper Columbia River. He explained that Canadian Columbia Basin Indigenous Nations are leading that work, in strong collaboration with the B.C. Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

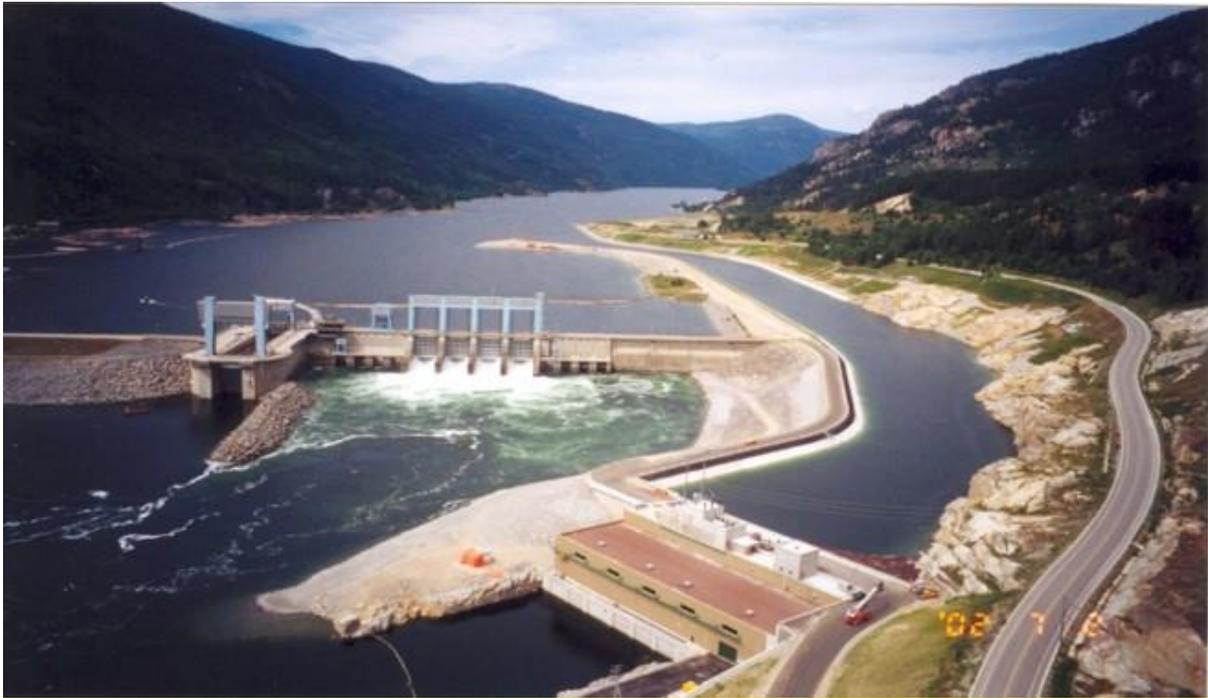
- Bill and Shannon then made a presentation titled “Towards Integrating Ecosystem Function in the Columbia River Treaty” about the Indigenous Nations-led work being done to address ecosystem function in the Columbia Basin.
- The work looks at Basin ecosystems in terms of Western science, and from an Indigenous perspective of “caring for the land and providing food.”
- The presentation pointed out that ecosystem function and Indigenous cultural values are closely linked.
- The presentation noted the impact the Treaty has had on Basin ecosystems.
- It identified that there is widespread support to include ecosystem function as an aspect of a modernized Treaty.
- Based on the work Indigenous Nations have been doing, the presentation put forward the following overarching goals:
  - Improved ecosystem function to support Indigenous cultures (including responsibility, access and uses) and Basin resident values;
  - Flexibility in reservoir operations to facilitate active adaptive management; and
  - Reservoir operations that balance achievement of the range of ecosystem function objectives.
- The presentation noted that the Ecosystem Function report is a work-in-progress for which input is being sought from CBRAC and during the Province’s community meetings in October and November, 2019.
- There was also a Q&A that include discussion of ecosystem-related topics, including sediment transport rates, ecosystem enhancement opportunities in Kinbasket Reservoir, wetland recovery opportunities, importance of including the Kootenay system explicitly, invasive species and salmon

#### **TABLE DISCUSSION ON ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION WORK**

- CBRAC was asked to have table discussions about the ecosystem work-in-progress, and to consider the following questions:
  - Is the ecosystem work-in-progress going in the right direction?
  - Is there anything that has been missed, and if so, what?
  - Do they have specific feedback on any of the goals or objectives guiding this work?
- In general, CBRAC found that the work is going in the right direction, but they needed more information to provide further input. They also needed more time with the materials as it was a lot to absorb in one afternoon.
- Further feedback included the suggestion to consider bringing back wetlands; the question of whether salmon would be able to survive in present-day ecosystems; the

need to have stricter zoning rules to prevent/limit building in reservoir draw-down zones; and the need for more clarity on how ecosystem productivity fits in.

- CBRAC members are keen to stay engaged and informed as this work progresses.



## BC HYDRO OPERATIONS UPDATE

*Darren Sherbot and Gillian Kong, BC Hydro*

[View presentation here.](#)

- Darren Sherbot and Gillian Kong provided an update on BC Hydro's operations and water levels in the Basin.
- They noted that low precipitation and snowpack had led to low water supply in 2019, which was also the 11th driest year on record for the Basin.
- However, due to above-average precipitation in July and September in many parts of the Columbia Basin, the year as a whole was not as dry as anticipated.
- The presentation, linked above, includes details for each reservoir.
- Darren and Gillian noted there had been no flood concerns in 2019.
- Peak flow at Birchbank for 2019 was relatively low at 91.9 kcfs on 28 July, comparable to 2001 – the driest year on record.



## **CLOSING COMMENTS**

- I enjoyed this meeting. It's wonderful to hear about what's going on in the First Nations group. A lot of messages are very similar to those in non-indigenous communities.
- I am happy to see where this group is going. All our values are aligned, and we are stronger together.
- I had very valuable discussions about the ecosystem work at this meeting. There is a deep care in Basin communities for the ecosystem.
- We have a perfect mix of people and interests in this group. It's a good use of our time.
- When CBRAC was first formed, we spent enough time to learn about the issues. And when we met Canada's lead negotiator, we had enough information to ask relevant questions and provide useful feedback. I hope we can keep learning at this pace, especially about the ecosystem.
- There is always something that resonates with me. We are working with the bad situation here. It's was so refreshing to hear that. Because we always talk about the benefits of the Treaty.
- I have been a part of the discussions about the Treaty for a long time. At the first public meetings in 2012, there were grievances. The meaning has shifted from what was lost to where we can go from here.