

MEETING SUMMARY

Columbia Basin Regional Advisory Committee Webinar

June 26, 2020, 12pm – 1:30pm Pacific Time

The Columbia Basin Regional Advisory Committee met on June 26, 2020 by webinar. This session was in lieu of the committee's spring meeting, previously scheduled for May 2020 in Valemount, B.C., which was cancelled due to COVID-19.

The webinar began with an acknowledgement of the traditional Indigenous territories that all participants, spread throughout the Canadian Columbia Basin and Victoria, were joining the call from.

The session continued with updates on Canada-U.S. Treaty negotiations, BC Hydro Columbia Basin operations, community interest projects and the Province's public engagement plans for the rest of the year. CBRAC members also provided input on how they would like to stay connected as travel restrictions remain in place, preventing face to face meetings.

A summary of each update is listed below. The agenda and all presentations are available on the CBRAC website: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty/2020/07/08/june-26-2020-meeting-11/>

Canada-U.S. Columbia River Treaty Negotiations – *Kathy Eichenberger, lead negotiator representing B.C. on the Canadian Columbia River Treaty negotiating team.*

- Kathy Eichenberger, Executive Director for the B.C. Columbia River Treaty Team, and B.C.'s lead negotiator on the Canadian Columbia River Treaty negotiating team, shared a brief update on the progress of Canada-U.S. negotiations.
- She explained how the Canadian team has been meeting virtually multiple times a week to prepare a response to the framework that had been tabled by the U.S. negotiating team in March 2020.
- She said that the response is informed by Indigenous interests, Columbia Basin community and public interests and the Local Governments' Committee recommendations; and

- it addresses the key issues that have been discussed since negotiations began in 2018 – ecosystems and cultural values, power generation, flood risk management, Libby Dam coordination, and flexibility.
- The Canadian positions and responses are developed through trilateral collaboration with Canada, B.C. and the Columbia Basin Indigenous Nations.
- She explained that the majority of strategic planning and preparation for negotiations is completed by the Negotiation Advisory Team, a group comprised of senior policy representatives from all five governments (Canada, B.C., and the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and Syilx/Okanagan Nations).
- Kathy voiced how impressed she is with the success of the collaboration, especially during the pandemic.
- She mentioned that the 10th round of Canada-U.S. negotiations would be happening soon, though a date has not been confirmed.
- She confirmed that, though details of the negotiations are confidential right now, the Province will engage more fully with Basin Indigenous Nations, communities and local governments when there are options to consider.
- When asked whether the upcoming U.S. election will affect the negotiations, Kathy said she understands that the U.S. Department of State will continue to work during the election period, but ultimately they will have to wait to see, and adapt as necessary.

BC Hydro Operations Update – *Gillian Kong, Specialist Engineer, Operations Planning*

[See presentation here](#)

- Gillian Kong presented the most current update on BC Hydro Columbia Basin operations, including a Basin-wide weather and water inflow summary, and inflow details specific to Kinbasket, Revelstoke, Arrow and Duncan Reservoirs.
- BC Hydro delivered similar updates to the public through a series of conference calls earlier in June and in May. The information presented at this CBRAC webinar had been updated to reflect activity that had occurred since those public updates.
- Gillian shared that the runoff forecast as of June 25th for the entire Columbia Basin at The Dalles was above normal, at 109% for April – September 2020, which is 15% higher than the observed runoff in 2019.
- She said that, for the Canadian portion of the Basin, the runoff forecast for 2020 was well above normal at 114% of normal, which is 27% higher than the observed runoff in 2019.
- See the presentation for more details.

Community Interest Projects – *Ingrid Strauss, Senior Project Manager, B.C. Columbia River Treaty Team*

[See presentation here](#)

- Ingrid Strauss of the B.C. Treaty Team presented an update on how the Province is seeking to address some of the Treaty-related interests raised by Basin communities over the years.
- Ingrid’s presentation included updates on:
 - **The Columbia River Treaty Heritage Project** – a proposed touring route that would seek to acknowledge the losses experienced in the Basin as a result of the Treaty dams.
 - **Agriculture support and enhancement** – research to determine what programs exist for the Columbia Basin agriculture sector, and where there are opportunities for further support. (this piece was presented by Brooke McMurchy of the B.C. Treaty Team.)
 - **Creston Valley Dike Management** – examining issues and potential solutions related to the Creston Valley dikes.
 - **Duncan Dam fish passage** – The Province is continuing to monitor work by BC Hydro and the Technical Working Group to examine upgrading or replacing the weir at Duncan Dam.
 - **Data acquisition of the Kinbasket and Arrow Lakes Reservoirs** – utilizing aerial imagery of Arrow and Kinbasket reservoirs supplied by BC Hydro to develop geospatial mapping products of both reservoirs, including digital elevation models. The data will support the research being conducted by the Indigenous Nations-led ecosystem function sub-committee which, in turn, will inform the Treaty negotiations. When completed, the Province and BC Hydro will provide the geospatial mapping products to Selkirk College for use with the Columbia River Treaty portal the College is developing as part of their Rural Open Data project <https://www.ruralopendata.ca/>
 - **Grants in Lieu of Taxes (GILTS)** – responding to the request for more information on how Grants in Lieu of Taxes are distributed.
 - **Kinbasket Recreational Opportunities** – in response to public requests for enhancing access to recreation on Kinbasket reservoir, the B.C. Treaty Team has initiated a discussion with those responsible for economic development in Golden, Revelstoke and Valemount.
 - **Nakusp Marina and Breakwater** – responding to concerns raised by Nakusp residents regarding the Village’s deteriorating breakwater and marina. In March 2020, the Province provided \$30,000 to the Village to undertake engineering and

preliminary work on the marina and breakwater. The Village currently has a project underway to replace a portion of the breakwater.

2020 Columbia River Treaty Public Engagement Plans – *Brooke McMurchy, Policy Advisor, B.C. Columbia River Treaty Team*

[See presentation here](#)

- Brooke McMurchy of the B.C. Treaty Team shared the Province’s plans for engaging with the public on the Treaty during 2020.
- She confirmed that there will be no in-person meetings or engagement until health authorities deem it safe to do so; however, the Province will continue to provide updates, and engage with the public through web platforms, social media, email, phone and posted mail.
- She highlighted the Province’s engagement goals in 2020 are to:
 - Keep Basin residents and interested parties updated on Treaty negotiations and work underway on Treaty-related issues
 - Make progress on addressing community interests
 - Explore opportunities for expanding youth engagement
 - Increase inclusivity of engagement
- The B.C. Treaty Team will continue to provide updates to the public through its website, Facebook, Twitter, Newsletter and local media. It will connect regularly with CBRAC and the Local Governments’ Committee.

2020 CBRAC Plans and CBRAC Terms of Reference – *Brooke McMurchy, Policy Advisor, B.C. Columbia River Treaty Team*

- CBRAC was asked for their thoughts on how to stay connected while in-person meetings are not possible.
- Some members voiced their support for regular webinars
- The B.C. Treaty Team will send a survey to CBRAC asking their preference for frequency and duration of online meetings.
- The CBRAC Terms of Reference has been updated to reflect feedback discussed at the October 2019 meeting in Revelstoke. The updated draft has been approved by the CBRAC Steering Committee and sent to the Indigenous Nations CBRAC representatives for their review. It will be sent to CBRAC for review afterwards.

The next CBRAC meeting will be scheduled once survey results are received.