



## Columbia River Treaty Update for the Local Governments Committee March 2024

***Issued April 15, 2024***

This document contains non-confidential information that can be shared publicly.

### **Highlights**

- Arrow Lakes Reservoir Virtual Information Session Question and Answer Report

### **Canada-U.S. Treaty Negotiations**

- The next round of negotiations has not been scheduled; however, representatives from Canada and the U.S. have continued holding virtual meetings to resolve outstanding issues.
- The Canadian negotiation delegation, which includes Canada, B.C. and the Ktunaxa, Secwépemc and Syilx Okanagan Nations, remains committed to reaching Agreement-in-Principle as soon as possible, however a modernized Treaty will have to meet B.C., Indigenous, and Basin community objectives, as well as U.S. needs, in a fair and balanced way.
- The Canadian delegation will not agree to a modernized Treaty unless it leads to improvements in the B.C. Basin and reduces impacts that Basin communities and ecosystems have been experiencing since the Treaty came into force.
- Work is also continuing on the Canadian side to determine how different river management scenarios would enhance ecosystem, Indigenous cultural values, and socio-economic objectives in the B.C. Basin.
- The B.C. CRT Team provided an interim update on Treaty negotiations to the LGC at the committee's strategy session on February 22, 2024 and will continue to share updates with the committee as negotiations progress.

### **Public Engagement**

#### **Arrow Lakes Reservoir Virtual Information Session Question and Answer Report**

- On October 18, 2023, the Province of B.C. CRT Team hosted a virtual public information session to provide details and answer questions about the extremely low water levels in the Arrow Lakes Reservoir in the summer and fall of 2023.
- A detailed report responding to all relevant questions raised before and during the event is now available on the [B.C. CRT website](#) in PDF and mobile friendly formats. The report offers important context around Treaty requirements, BC Hydro operations, and Canada-U.S. negotiations to modernize the Treaty.



- The information session recording, agenda, and PowerPoint slides are also available on the [B.C. CRT website](#).

### **Ongoing Communication**

- The B.C. CRT Team welcomes suggestions for how to connect more effectively with Basin residents, especially youth, on the CRT. Please email [Brooke.McMurphy@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Brooke.McMurphy@gov.bc.ca) if you are aware of any opportunities in your communities.

### **Community Interest Projects**

The B.C. CRT Team continues its work on addressing community interests that have been raised throughout the Province's public engagement on the Treaty. Progress updates on some of the projects are listed below.

#### **Columbia River Treaty Heritage Project (Columbia River Treaty Uncovery Tour)**

- No new updates since February 2024.
- The contract for the project contractor team, Denise Cook Design, ended in September 2023.
- After a competitive RFP process, a new Project Manager, Cadence Strategies (Suzanne Denbak), has been selected to work with the lead applicants to move their projects forward and to seek out new community applicants for additional locations.
- The process to explore commemorative projects at Revelstoke Reach, Valemount and Waldo Cove Regional Park was initiated by Denise Cook Design. Cadence Strategies will continue this work and has connected with community members in Nakusp to explore a potential project in that community.
- The Columbia River Treaty Heritage Project Steering Committee continues to meet monthly.

#### **Ecosystem Enhancement – Arrow and Kinbasket Reservoirs Spatial Mapping Products**

- No new updates since February 2024.
- In September 2022 Selkirk College Project Council group met to start planning the launch for the CRT Portal of their [Rural Open Data](#) initiative. Arrow and Kinbasket Reservoirs Spatial Mapping Products, developed with funding and in-kind contributions from BC Hydro and the B.C. CRT Team, will be included.
- The project experienced a series of delays in 2023 but plans are moving forward again with a launch planned for April or May 2024.

#### **Valemount Air Quality**

- No new updates since February 2024.
- B.C. CRT Team has followed up with an air quality specialist at the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy who was contacted by a Village of Valemount Councillor regarding the air quality monitors in the Village of Valemount and measurement of dust potentially originating from Kinbasket



Reservoir. The air quality specialist provided the Councillor with clarifying information regarding the data collected by the monitors.

### ***Projects Being Monitored***

#### **Columbia Basin Agriculture Support**

- B.C. CRT Team continues to monitor the Kootenay agriculture sector to identify gaps in agriculture support in the Columbia Basin. Response from the sector over the years on suggestions for support and enhancement has been disappointing.

#### **Connectivity/Broadband**

- The Broadband Connectivity Industry Working Group and its sub-groups, which were formed to improve collaboration between infrastructure owners, government, and telecommunications service providers, continue working towards identifying and implementing actions that will improve the end-to-end attachment process for infrastructure like utility poles, and lead to more efficient and timely deployment of broadband internet service in B.C. Columbia Basin Trust is a member of the Working Group.

#### **Creston Valley Dikes Management**

- Creston Valley Flood Management Partnership (CVFMP), through the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK), received a grant from the UBCM Disaster Risk Reduction – Climate Adaptation Fund. The grant was approved in early March 2023.
- The Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low-Carbon Innovation is supporting the delivery of projects under this grant by providing one-time funding to RDCK for a CVFMP coordinator. Previous funding for the CVFMP coordinator was provided by a one-time grant from Columbia Basin Trust through the Town of Creston.
- The B.C. CRT Team continues to monitor the work undertaken by CVFMP and is available to support the CVFMP's coordinator as required.

#### **Duncan Dam Fish Passage**

- Due to prolonged high-water levels in spring 2022, construction of the permanent weir by IDL Projects Ltd. has been deferred to spring 2023.
- The project is expected to be completed in 2024.

#### **Kinbasket Recreational Opportunities**

- In July and August 2022, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and the B.C. CRT Team provided information to Mayor of Valemount, Owen Torgerson, regarding a potential project to install webcams at the Valemount marina. On August 8, 2022, the B.C. CRT Team requested a proposal from Valemount. No proposal has been received to date.



- In October 2021, the Town of Golden committed to organizing a call with the B.C. CRT Team and key stakeholders. In May 2022, the B.C. CRT Team reaffirmed their willingness to work with the towns of Golden, Revelstoke and Valemount on exploring Kinbasket recreational opportunities. The call has not yet occurred.

### **Koocanusa Debris Management**

- Unexpectedly high reservoir levels in the summer of 2021, linked to greater glacial melt entering tributaries due to the summer's heat dome, resulted in even more debris entering Koocanusa. No changes are expected in BC Hydro's debris management program.
- Better coordination of Libby Dam operations, which is being discussed with the U.S. during Columbia River Treaty negotiations, could improve debris management.

### **Lardeau Valley**

- No new updates since November 2021.
- Columbia Basin Trust's Community Readiness Program was suggested as a source of funding to support the purchase of emergency readiness equipment for community-wide benefit for the Lardeau Valley.

### **Projects on Pause**

- **Grants in Lieu of Taxes** – Standing by for questions from the Local Governments' Committee.