

COLUMBIA River Treaty



To: Regional Districts, Boards of Directors
Valemount Town Council

Date: February 14, 2020

From: Linda Worley, Chair
Columbia River Treaty Local Governments Committee

Subject: Update on Committee Activities

Since our last update in September 2019, the Committee has been very busy attending twelve CRT community meetings around the Basin, working with the BC CRT Team on specific community interests and maintaining communications with our U.S. local government colleagues and residents as well as regional indigenous nations, BC Hydro and our new Kootenay-Columbia MP.

Highlights for October 2019 to January 2020

- **CRT community meetings** - Twelve CRT community meetings were held across the Basin between early October and late November. A total of 349 Basin residents participated in these meetings as follows:

- Revelstoke - 35	- Creston - 11	- Nelson - 51
- Valemount - 21	- Golden - 22	- Meadow Creek - 27
- Cranbrook - 23	- Invermere - 19	- Nakusp - 50
- Jaffray - 36	- Genelle - 28	- Fauquier - 26

At each meeting the local Committee member welcomed participants and provided a brief review of the draft updated Committee recommendations to government, inviting input from participants. This was followed by an update from federal and provincial CRT Negotiating Team members, including Indigenous Nations representatives; presentations from indigenous Nations about salmon restoration and integrating ecosystem function into the Treaty; and a presentation on provincial work to address region-wide and local community interests. These meetings were another opportunity for Committee members to talk with residents about the Committee's work to ensure the voices of Basin residents are incorporated in a modernized Treaty and to strengthen relationships with Indigenous Nation representatives.

- **Communications** – In mid-November our Vice Chair, Stan Doehle, members Diane Langman, Mayor of Warfield and Jane Walters, RDEK Rural Director as well as our Executive Director (ED) traveled to Spokane Washington for a very positive meeting with our U.S. local government colleagues in the Washington State Association of Counties and to attend the [2019 Lake Roosevelt Forum conference](#). During the conference our Vice Chair shared local government interests in CRT renewal and salmon recovery on discussion panels and our ED co-presented a summary of BC and US views on the CRT from the One River – One Future Transboundary Conference in Kimberley in September. There were many informal opportunities for Committee members to further strengthen their relationships with U.S. local government elected officials, U.S. Basin residents and regional Indigenous Nations representatives.

In January Stan Doehle, Committee Vice Chair and I met with the new Kootenay-Columbia MP Rob Morrison. We briefed him on the CRT and the work of the Committee. He was very impressed with the scale of the Committee's work.

Ongoing

- **Community interests** – Committee members continue to follow-up with the province on actions requested by community members at the 2018 and 2019 community meetings.
- **Negotiations** – In November, the U.S. State Department postponed negotiating sessions. This week it was announced that the 9th round of negotiations will be held on March 11 and 12 in Washington, D.C. The Committee will be updated on these negotiations shortly after this round.
- **Updating our recommendations** – Input from the community meetings and direct input to the Committee on our [draft recommendations](#) are being compiled and will be considered by the Committee early in 2020 to decide on revisions to complete the update process. Final recommendations will be shared with local governments and regional Indigenous Nations, MLAs and MPs as well as made available to the public.

The Committee has initiated two task groups to: 1) revisit options explored previously to include local governments in the governance structure for a modernized Treaty; and 2) work with the BC CRT Team to update information about the distribution of benefits in BC from the CRT and make this information easily accessible as a first step to understand the current sharing of benefits and, if needed, explore options for changes.

- **Communications:** In early December Committee members and Indigenous Nations representatives had our first quarterly telecon to share perspectives on CRT related topics. On this call we discussed the CRT community meetings and our draft recommendations.

The Committee continues a dialogue with BC Hydro in hopes of improving communications and engagement with local governments and Basin residents about ongoing operations. We are looking forward to a fulsome sharing of ideas with BC Hydro staff at our upcoming annual strategy session.

- **Columbia Basin Regional Advisory Committee (CBRAC)** – A CBRAC meeting was held on October 8 and 9 in Revelstoke. The agenda included the province's actions on community interests, negotiations update, BC Hydro operations updates and presentations from Indigenous Nations representatives about salmon recovery, ecosystem function integration in the CRT and their role in the negotiations. We also had a discussion with youth who participated in the [Wildsight Columbia River Field School](#), which ended with a commitment to continue these discussions. Some members toured a new museum exhibit about the communities south of Revelstoke that were displaced to create the Arrow Reservoir.

The next CBRAC meeting will be in Valemount on May 5-6 to facilitate a field trip to the Kinbasket reservoir when it is drawn down, leaving tens of kilometres of mudflats south of the community.

CBRAC terms of reference, membership and meeting summaries as well as presentations and reports discussed at these meetings are available on the [CBRAC webpage](#).

Upcoming

- Budget preparation and funding discussions with CBT and the province. (Feb. – March)
- The Committee's annual strategy session. (March)
- CRT session at the AKBLG AGM (April)

I encourage you to stay informed about CRT negotiations by visiting the [CRT engagement website](#) and signing up for the CRT e-letter. This site will be the source of accurate, updated information as negotiations progress.

The next Committee Update will be come to you in May.

Committee Members

RDKB - Linda Worley, Regional Director (LGC Chair) and Diane Langman, Village of Warfield Mayor/RDKBChair

RDEK - Stan Doehle, Regional Director (LGC Vice Chair) and Jane Walter, Regional Director

RDCK – Aimee Watson, Regional Director/RDCK Chair, Ramona Faust, Regional Director

CSRD – David Brooks-Hill, Regional Director and Mayor Ron Oszust, Town of Golden

Village of Valemount – Donnie MacLean, Councilor

AKBLG – Ange Qualizza, Mayor of Fernie