

Stakeholder Listening Sessions June-July 2012

Discussion Summary

Background

Under the Columbia River Treaty, Canada and the United States (U.S.) jointly manage the Columbia River for power generation and flood risk management as it flows from British Columbia into the United States. The U.S. Entity, designated to implement the Treaty for the U.S., is comprised of the Administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration as Chairman and the Division Engineer of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Northwestern Division as Member.

The U.S. Entity is currently conducting a review to evaluate the future of the Columbia River Treaty after 2024. The Columbia River Treaty 2014/2024 Review (CRT Review) establishes a framework for interested parties to collaborate with the U.S. Entity as it studies and evaluates alternatives needed to better understand the implications of post-2024 Treaty scenarios. The U.S. Entity is working toward providing a recommendation to the U.S. Department of State by late 2013 as to whether it is in the best interest of the U.S. to continue, terminate, or seek to amend the Treaty.

The CRT Review Sovereign Participation Process establishes a framework for sovereign parties to collaborate and coordinate with the U.S. Entity in the process of conducting technical studies and evaluating alternatives needed to better understand potential Treaty futures. A Sovereign Review Team (SRT) and Sovereign Technical Team (STT) have been established to assist with this review.

A broader group of regional stakeholders (outside of the sovereigns) are also invited to regularly participate at key milestones in the study process.

This report documents four meetings with regional stakeholders that occurred on June 27, 2012 in Portland; July 9 in Spokane; July 13 in Boise; and July 18 in Kalispell. The purpose of these meetings was to share and discuss the results of the first round of modeling on a set of alternatives related to the Columbia River Treaty and the management of the Columbia River System. In addition, stakeholders in attendance shared their ideas and priorities for the issues that should be examined in Iteration 2 of the analysis.

Listening Session Attendance and Format

Approximately 55 people signed in at the Portland meeting, 30 in Spokane, 26 in Boise, and 27 in Kalispell. Each of the listening sessions began with a “Treaty 101” presentation at 8:30 a.m. This general overview of the history of the Columbia River Treaty, Treaty provisions, and the current CRT Review process was a helpful introduction for those attendees who are new to the CRT Review.

This was followed at 10:00 a.m. by a presentation regarding the modeling results of “Iteration 1,” the first phase of alternative analysis to be completed under the CRT Review. After this

presentation, attendees participated in detailed discussions regarding these results, which were generally divided into three subject areas: ecosystem-based function, flood risk management, and hydropower. Attendees also shared their ideas about the issues and questions they believe should be addressed in Iteration 2 of the analysis.

A number of common themes emerged. These are outlined below. Participants in each location also voiced some localized questions and concerns related to their specific geographic area, and those have also been summarized in this report.

In addition to participation in the discussions, attendees were invited to submit written comments, which have also been included in this report.

Common Themes and Questions

Common themes in all of the listening sessions include:

- 1) **Uncertainty of Canadian Operations and Assumptions.** Attendees had numerous questions about the degree to which the analysis currently being performed in the United States is connected to, and integrated with, the Treaty analysis underway in Canada. They noted that there is a great deal of uncertainty associated with the way in which Canada might operate without a Treaty, and wanted to make sure this was being adequately accounted for and addressed in the CRT Review modeling. One comment was that *it seems that a second parallel process across the border is counter-productive.*
- 2) **Climate Change.** Climate change was a focus of discussion. Participants wondered where and how it was being addressed and accounted for in the alternatives under analysis. This was a high priority for attendees.
- 3) **Water Supply.** A number of attendees were concerned about water supply issues related to the Treaty. While irrigation remains a primary concern, they noted that water supply needs also extend to municipal and industrial sources of supply. Stakeholders who raised this issue are concerned that water supply is being treated through an impact assessment process rather than as a primary driving purpose in the CRT Review process. They are concerned that this approach is likely to give water supply issues short shrift in comparison to the other issue areas under analysis.
- 4) **Effects on Fish.** Although stakeholders appreciated the Iteration 1 analysis related to reservoir levels and river flows, they are eager to see the data results related specifically to the effects of these levels on both anadromous and resident fish populations. A concern was also expressed related to the current Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion (BiOp). A number of those attending noted that this current BiOp figured prominently in the alternatives, and asserted that this should not be relied on, given that the BiOp is likely to change. They hoped that the alternative analysis wasn't being unnecessarily constrained by the current BiOp. *The Northwest Power Act directs both BPA and the Corps to work toward restoration of all fish – this goes beyond the BiOp.*

- 5) **Broader Ecosystem Questions.** Listening session attendees had a number of questions related to the broader ecosystem analysis, especially in relation to the Clean Water Act. They wondered when metrics such as total dissolved gases and temperature would be evaluated. In addition, some participants wondered if a comprehensive review had been performed on the ecosystem function of the basin as a whole, and if those conducting the CRT Review had determined the priority areas of concern throughout the Basin. They highlighted the importance of thinking beyond fish to consider the ecosystems and their functions for the full array of affected species. There were a number of questions related to the way in which ecosystem function had been defined for purposes of CRT Review, as well as the ultimate goal of the alternative analysis. *Are we striving for an assessment of the current ecosystem functions, or are we striving for restoration of those functions?*
- 6) **Revised Approaches to Flood Control.** There were numerous questions about possible approaches to flood control that go beyond the current reliance on levees. Participants wondered about levee removal, for example, and reconnection of flood plains, noting that this approach could have both environmental and flood control benefits. Groundwater recharge was also suggested as a possibility for diverting and storing water, and thereby alleviating flood risk.
- 7) **Effective Use and Called Upon.** These terms and concepts can be confusing, and they were the focus of many questions during the stakeholder listening sessions. Participants wondered exactly what they meant, when they would come into play, and the monetary and environmental costs associated with each of them. They are interested to see more analysis of this in Iteration 2.
- 8) **450 and 600 kcfs; Flood Risk Management.** Attendees wondered how these two “bookends” to flood risk management had been determined, as well as the impacts of these two levels of river flows. They are interested in the continued evaluation of flood risk possibilities, especially in relation to the higher 600 kcfs level. A number of people asked this question: *Is there a sweet spot you are aiming for between those two levels?*
- 9) **Conservation and Alternative Sources of Power.** Stakeholders questioned the way in which alternative power supply sources, especially wind power, had been accounted for in the analysis, and hope to see more explanation of this in Iteration 2. Likewise, there were several comments about the role of water and power conservation, and the degree to which that could be encouraged or hindered by the Treaty. *What role should the Treaty have in promoting the more efficient use of water and more efficient consumption of electricity? It seems impractical that everything is a supply problem – it’s a consumption problem too.*
- 10) **Canadian Entitlement.** This remains a focus of considerable concern, especially for those mid-Columbia utilities responsible for providing a significant portion of this entitlement to Canada. While these stakeholders appreciated the preliminary modeling results relating to this issue, they are eager to be engaged in the continued, more detailed cost analysis related to the entitlement. The suggestion was made that any Treaty recommendations include a renegotiation of the current entitlement.

- 11) **Preferential and Slice Customers.** Utility representatives in attendance – customers of the Bonneville Power Administration -- had numerous questions about the way in which they might be treated should the Treaty be modified or terminated. *Would customers see the benefit of the generation retained by the U.S. if the Treaty is terminated?*
- 12) **System Reliability and Flexibility.** Another key concern had to do with the long-term reliability and flexibility of the hydropower system. Stakeholders wanted to make sure that neither of these would be compromised if the Treaty were to be terminated or modified, and were eager to determine if the current system might actually be enhanced through a modified Treaty.
- 13) **Balance and Trade-Offs.** While stakeholders were pleased to review this first stage of analysis, a number also mentioned that the evaluation of alternatives should not be performed in a vacuum. They wanted to make sure the analysis would include an evaluation of the trade-offs and balance between ecosystem, power, and flood risk management, so that each is compared with the others in some fashion.

Questions Specific to Session Locations

Not surprisingly, each of the geographic locations prompted some questions that are of particular concern in each area. The meeting in the Portland area had the highest overall attendance, of all of the sessions, with full representation of flood risk managers, as well as power supply and ecosystem function interests. In Spokane numerous questions were raised about Treaty impacts on both Lake Roosevelt and Lake Koocanusa behind Libby Dam, and water supply issues were another area of concern. A number of participants in Kalispell were also concerned about Libby Dam operations and longer-term water supply issues. Among those attending in Boise were participants concerned about power and irrigation issues, as well as a number of individuals eager to see more data related to the lower Snake River ecosystem.

Those concerned about the reservoirs wondered about refill, as well as the ecosystem impacts of varying reservoir levels on fish, wildlife, and cultural resources. Those in the Libby area expressed strong concerns about the dust and other impacts during times of significant reservoir drawdowns, and highlighted the importance of the reservoir to the economy of the area.

Comments on the CRT Review Process

A number of participants took the time to thank the presenters and facilitators for these sessions, noting that they were a highly valuable way to both share information and receive feedback. A couple of attendees suggested that evening meetings also be held for the general public because most people work during the day and cannot attend sessions scheduled during that time. Many of those attending indicated a strong willingness to continue to be actively engaged in the CRT Review, and as they have in previous listening sessions, they urged continued *full transparency and openness* with stakeholders throughout the CRT Review process.

A few attendees had questions about the Sovereign Review Team, wondering where and how local officials could influence the process. Stakeholders are welcome to contact their Sovereign Review Team representatives at any time to ask questions and share their perspectives.

Next Steps

This report will be posted on the CRT Review website: www.crt2014-2024review.gov The alternatives that will be analyzed in Iteration 2 will also be posted on the website in late August-early September 2012. At that time, a chart that describes how stakeholder comments will be addressed in Iterations 2 and 3 will also be posted. As information becomes available, stakeholders will be alerted to new website postings, and listening sessions will also be held after Iteration 2 results have been generated.

Written Comments Received

Portland

Thank you for holding today's session. It would have been helpful at the individual breakout sessions if the presenters had given a broad overview of the particular topic as the question and answer format, while informative, was inevitably disjointed.

Question: Will irrigation and water supply elements for irrigation be factored into the models for ecosystem function and will projected water supply needs as impacted by climate change and population growth be projected?

How will/or will the US entities assess the inevitably qualitative benefits of restoring ecosystem function against the more easily quantifiable objectives of flood control and power generation? What plans for new storage/levees are being considered in flood control modeling? How will the five key goals for ecosystem objectives be prioritized?

--Suzanne Skinner, Center for Environmental Law & Policy

Thank you very much for a very informative program
I will prepare some detailed comments and email them to you.
If possible could you send me:

1. Models being used in iteration 2 as well as validation results for each.
2. List of organizations attending the sessions.
3. List of people on Sovereign Technical Teams.

--Paul Robillard, World Water Watch

At roughly \$200m to \$300m loss to the United States by continuing the treaty, the case for not continuing business as usual looks overwhelming. Iteration 2 might add more granularity, but is there any analysis that would change that basic result?

It looks like a 6 out of 70 (years) chance of paying \$34m is the worst case scenario for paying for called upon flood control. Is it correct that this is not necessarily linked to power revenues or costs? Indeed isn't it true that in other areas of the country, flood control is a taxpayer (rather than ratepayer) obligation?

The ecosystem alternatives for modeling sound complex and open-ended. Staff sounds like they are going to get mired down rather than work toward a terminate/no terminate decision.

--No Name Attached

No need to do breakout sessions – just do all the topics in the main room with everyone together.

--No Name Attached

Spokane

I am anxious to see your iteration 2 studies on the secondary local & regional factors. Water supply to agriculture and local municipalities are critical to Eastern Washington's economic status. Also navigation & transportation along the lower Columbia River is of major importance to commodity trade regionally. Any discussion regarding levees & lower Columbia flood management structures has the potential of impacting regional economics.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate & I look forward to future discussions.

--Kara Rowe, WA Wheat Growers

In considering USA interests in the treaty, and any possible needs for changes (whether due to, say, climate change altering water supplies, or due to population & use/demand growth), what role should be given to conservation and efficiency improvements in power generation & consumption & in water use/needs? We in this region, likely will need ever more efficient practices. The 1964 Treaty aimed to provide inexpensive power & affordable water management, so long term costs & efficiencies have always been important in the Treaty regime. I reckon that even more efforts will be needed, & the Treaty would probably be a proper vehicle for steadily pushing more conservation, more efficiencies of consumption.

Will the treaty review process have a stage in which state and local elected officials will be asked to learn about and advise on the Treaty matters? I am not sure of the value of this, mind you, but local knowledge, interest might be improved.

Ecosystem-based functions, as a Treaty/Columbia River Basin-wide value which should be incorporated into the Treaty values set (w/energy, flood control, transport, irrigation). Where does the region want its ecosystems-based functions to be in, say, 60 years hence? Just as the original purposes were achieved these past 60 years, it should be reasonable to say that the next 60 years should include new ecosystem-based functions.

--Michael Treleaven, Gonzaga University, Politics Dept.

Kalispell

Well done. Would like to see more of the listening session outcomes (points of general discussion, questions & answers) published on web & maintained there.

--David Shively, University of Montana

I commend the US Entity for undertaking this huge exercise in watershed democracy. Thank you for your dedication and professionalism.

--Paul Lammers, Revett Minerals, Inc.

Listening Session Attendees

Portland, June 27, 2012

Rick Adams, PNUCC

John Audley, RNP

Amy Avila, Province of BC

Mark Bagdovitz, USFWS

John F. Beau, Me

Scott Brattebo, Public Generating Pool

Ruth Burris, Portland General Electric

Paul Cloutier, USACE

Bob Cordie, Corps

Scott Corwin, PPC

Kathie Dello, Oregon State University/OCCRI

Nicholas Dodge, Corps of Engineers/BPA

Amy Echols

Joseph Furia, The Freshwater Trust

Ginger Gillin, GEI Consultants Inc.

Tuuli Hakala, BPA

Brent Hall, CTUIR

Fred Hentte, NW Energy Coalition

Shari Hildreth, Congr. Herrera Bentler

Marc Iiegel, Sen. Jeff Merkley

Tom Iverson, CBFWA

Liz Klumpp, BPA

Birgit Kochler, BPA

Kathryn Kostow, ODFW

Rick Kruger, ODFW

Nic Lane, BPA

Mitch Lies, Capital Press

Gilly Lyone, Save a Wild Salmon

Allison MacEwan, Self employer

Deb Marrcott, Columbia Estuary Partnership

Dena Marshall, Decisions Decisions

Sarah McNary, BPA

Kate Miller, Trout Unlimited

David Moskowitz, Confluence Consulting NW

Ed Mount, Benton, Franklin, GH PUDs

Tom Myrum, WA State Water Reservoir Association

Ruby Niederer

Kimberly Pincheira, Sen. Maria Cantwell

Paul Robillard, World Water Watch

Kevin Schribner, Salmon-Safe

Gina Schroeder, Fed Caucus

Suzanne Skinner, Center for Environmental Law & Policy

April Snell, OR Water Resources Congress (OWRC)

Mary Lou Socia, EPA
Mike Soliwoda, Clark County Public Works
Brett Swift, American Rivers
Nils Tillstrom, City of Portland
Zabyn Towner, PNGC Power
Katie Walter, Shannon & Wilson
Steve Waste
Bridger Wineman, Enviroissues
Byron Woltersdorf, MCDD
Cindy Wright, Seattle City Light

Spokane, July 9, 2012

Scott Carlton, US Representative Labrador (ID)
Mike Cuffe, Representative, House District 2 – Montana
Bonnie Douglas, League of Women Voters
Andy Dunau, Lake Roosevelt Forum
Lauren Flett, Spokane Tribe Intern
Marc Gauthier, UCUT
Kindy Gosal, Columbia Basin Trust
John Grubich, Okanogan PUD
Brad Hawkins, Douglas PUD
Patrick Higgins, Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs
Eric Johnson, WA Association of Counties
Jackie Johnstone, Spokane Tribe Intern
Casey Kieffer, Spokane Tribe Intern
Paul Lammers, Revett Minerals, Inc.
Stephanie Lepsue, BC Government (energy & mines)
Sam Mace, Save our Wild Salmon (SOS)
Patrick Maher, Avista
Tom Mayo, City of Bonners Ferry
Harvey Morrison, Trout Unlimited
Rachael Osborn, CELP/Sierra Club
Eileen Pearkes
Fred Rettenmond, Inland Power
Kara Rowe, Washington Wheat Growers
Derek Sandison, WA State Department of Ecology
Kennedy Seyler, Spokane Tribe Intern
John Shurts, NW Power & Conservation Council
Michael Treleaven, Gonzaga University, Political Science
Matthew Weaver, Capital Press
Tina Wynecoop, Lakes Indians/Friends of the Little Spokane River

Boise, ID, July 13, 2012

Johnny Anderson, Idaho Power Co.
Cliff Bentz, Oregon House
Kresta Davis-Butts, Idaho Power
Shelley M Davis, Baker Rosholt & Simpson
Bonnie Douglas, LWV.Idaho
Jim Fodrea, HDR Engineering
Venetia Gempler, Reclamation
Will Hart, Idaho Consumer Owned Ut Ass
John Hecht, Self
Gens Johnson, Citizen
Lorri Lee, Reclamation
Troy Lindquist, NOAA/NWS
Mary McGown, IDWR
Dave Murphy, US Bureau of Land Management
Allison O'Brien, US DOI
Kathy Peter, Community Volunteer
Lori Postlethwait, USBR
Heather Ray, USRT
John Redding, BOR/Public Affairs
Jessica Ruehrwein, EnviroIssues
Laurel Sayer, Congressman Mike Simpson
Ingrid Strauss, BC Ministry of Energy & Mines
Tom Stuart, ID Rivers United
Brenda Tominaga, Idaho Water Policy Gr.
Lynn Tominaga, Idaho Irrigation Pumpers
Delwyne Trefz, Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

Kalispell, MT, July 18, 2012

Dave Arbaugh, Arbaugh & Associates
Cindy Benson, Mission Valley Power
Jasen Bronec, Glacier Electric Coop
Kirby Campbell-Rierson, Senator Baucus
Steve Curtiss, Glen Lake Irrigation
Gordon Fyant, Mission Valley Power
Raelene Gold, League of Women Voters, WA
Carlos Heker, Univ. Montana
Mike Hensler, MFWP
Pam Holmquist, Flathead Cty Commissioner
Lee Hulden, Glacier Elec. Coop
Mark Johnson, Flathead Elect Coop
Josh Letcher, Citizen
Brian Lipscomb, CSKT
Brian Marotz, MFWP

Tracy McIntyre, Eureka Rural Dev. Partners
Bruce Measure
Gerald Mueller
James Newman, Glacier Elec. Coop
Alma Pachero, Univ. Montana
Mark Reller, BPA
Lisa Rennie, Tacoma Public Utilities
Dave Shively, Univ. Montana
Lisa Shourds, MVP
Ken Swanda, Libby Dam OPM – Corps of Engineers
Anthony Thompson, UM
Chris Trumpy, Province of BC