



Kinbasket Reservoir behind Mica Dam.

## Columbia Basin Trust and the Columbia River Treaty

Canada and the United States were facing two major challenges in the Columbia Basin after WWII. In addition to an increased population, the “untamed” Columbia River was causing periodic and sometimes devastating flooding. Simultaneously, an upswing in the economy increased the need for energy sources.

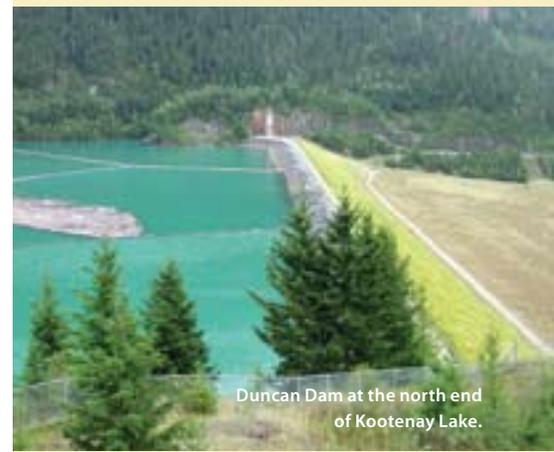
In order to meet these challenges, the two countries ratified the Columbia River Treaty (CRT) in 1964, the purpose of which is to coordinate flood control and optimize hydroelectric energy production in the Columbia River Basin on both sides of the border.

Under the CRT, Canada agreed to build three storage dams: Hugh Keenleyside, Duncan and Mica. A fourth dam—Libby—was built in the United States. In return for the storage of water, Canada is entitled to one half of the additional power generated at the American power plants on the Columbia River. The Province of BC owns this Canadian Entitlement of downstream power benefits, of which it sold the first 30 years’ worth to a group of United States utilities for \$254 million US. This sales agreement began to expire in 1998 and the Province is now receiving the Canadian Entitlement (\$200 - \$300 million US/year).

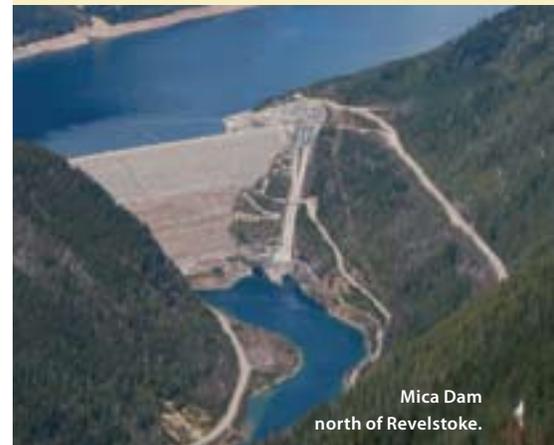
The CRT has no official expiry date, but has a minimum length of 60 years, which is met in September 2024. It is possible that one or both countries may wish to renegotiate parts or all of the CRT or terminate the CRT. Either Canada or the United States may terminate the CRT any time on or after September 16, 2024, with a minimum 10 years’ written advance notice (2014). By mutual agreement, both sides can amend certain terms of the CRT at any time.

Because the original process in which decisions were made to enact the CRT by the provincial and federal governments did not allow for adequate consultation with Basin residents in Canada, and as a result of the impacts the CRT had on their lives and life in the Basin, CBT was created to benefit the areas most adversely affected by the CRT. With an endowment fund received from the Province and its resulting benefits, CBT supports communities through its Delivery of Benefits programs.

*CBT’s primary role with respect to the CRT is to act as an information resource for Basin residents and local governments. CBT is also working with provincial and federal government agencies to provide advice on meaningful consultation with Basin residents related to the CRT.*



Duncan Dam at the north end of Kootenay Lake.



Mica Dam north of Revelstoke.

View of Columbia River from Mount Seven near Golden.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is CBT's role in the future of the CRT?

- Acting as a facilitator and convener on behalf of Basin residents.
- Building Basin residents' understanding and awareness around the CRT.
- Assisting Basin residents to organize themselves around providing input on CRT-related issues.
- Helping to create processes and opportunities to engage Basin residents in a meaningful way.

### Will CBT have a place at the CRT table?

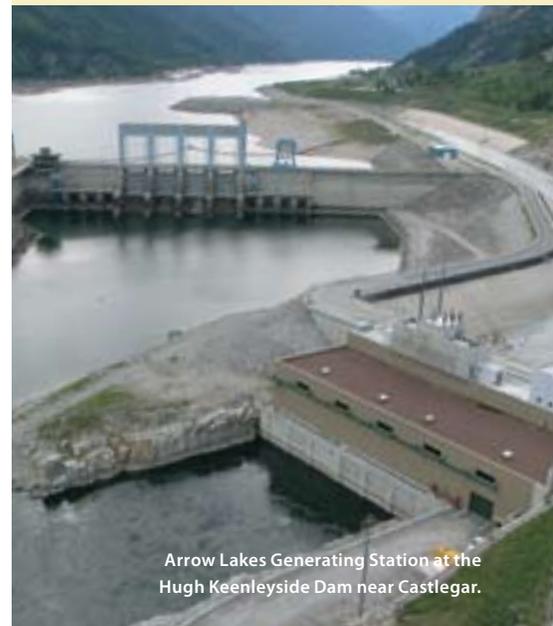
- At this time no decision has been made by either country to terminate, renegotiate or modify the terms of the current CRT. Given the importance of CRT issues, both countries are completing ongoing studies.
- At this time, there is no reason to expect CBT or any other parties outside government would be directly negotiating the CRT.
- CBT's role is to ensure Basin residents are consulted in a meaningful way and their views are part of any decision-making process.
- Termination of the CRT is under federal government jurisdiction, but under a BC and Canada agreement, the federal government in Canada must have the "concurrence" of the Province to terminate the CRT.

### What is CBT currently doing around the CRT?

- CBT is working with local governments, non-governmental organizations and residents to help build their understanding and awareness of the CRT.
- CBT is preparing resources, education tools and engagement opportunities for Basin residents and local governments.
- CBT is building capacity amongst Basin residents around local and regional water management issues.
- CBT is facilitating a greater understanding between United States residents and Basin residents regarding one another's views and values around water.
- CBT is working with Canadian federal, provincial, local and First Nations' governments to ensure there is a coordinated and collaborative approach to sharing information on transboundary water issues.

### What can I do?

- Learn more about the history of the CRT and build your understanding and awareness of how your community and region was affected by the CRT.
- Prepare to engage in positive and productive dialogue on the future of the CRT.
- Work with CBT to provide direction on how it can effectively fulfill its role with residents concerning the CRT.
- Visit [www.cbt.org/crt](http://www.cbt.org/crt) for resources prepared by CBT on the CRT.



Arrow Lakes Generating Station at the Hugh Keenleyside Dam near Castlegar.



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