



THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY

Past, Present, and Future

The United States and Canada began negotiations to modernize the Columbia River Treaty regime in May 2018.

The Columbia River's drainage basin is roughly the size of Texas and includes parts of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, and British Columbia. The Treaty's hydropower operations and management of flood risk provide substantial benefits to millions of people on both sides of the border. The Treaty also has facilitated additional benefits such as supporting irrigation, municipal water use, industrial use, navigation, and recreation. Treaty-related agreements also allow for flow augmentation for ecosystem benefits.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Signed in 1961, the Columbia River Treaty calls for two "entities" to be designated to implement arrangements under the Treaty — a U.S. Entity and

a Canadian Entity. The U.S. Entity, designated by the President, consists of the Administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration (chair) and the Northwestern Division Engineer (member) of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Canadian Entity, appointed by the Canadian Federal Cabinet, is the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (B.C. Hydro).

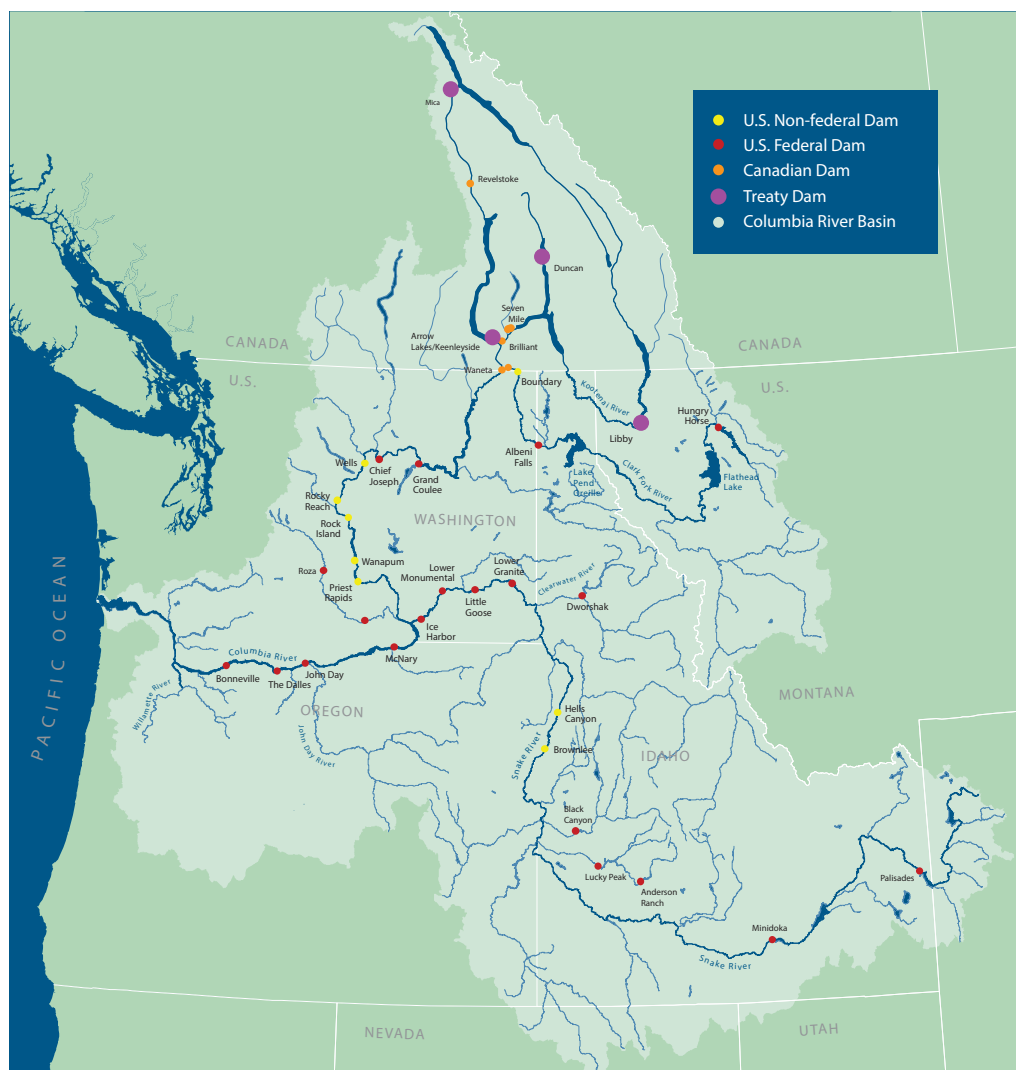
The year 2024 is a significant date for the Treaty, as the current flood risk management provisions change to a less-defined approach. In addition, it is the earliest date at which the Treaty can be terminated, provided that either Canada or the United States provides ten years' written notice.

The U.S. Entity forwarded its recommendation concerning the future of the Columbia River Treaty with Canada to the U.S. Department of State on December 13, 2013. Known as the “Regional Recommendation,” the U.S. Entity developed this recommendation in collaboration and consultation with the region through an extensive, multi-year Columbia River Treaty Review. The constructive involvement of the region’s states, federally recognized tribes, and hundreds of stakeholders helped the U.S. Entity reach this important milestone. With the conclusion of the Regional Recommendation process, the U.S. government conducted a review concerning the post-2024 future of the Treaty.

PRESSING FORWARD

The U.S. Department of State is now leading the effort to negotiate with Canada to modernize the Treaty regime. Our key objectives include continued, careful management of flood risk; ensuring a reliable and economical power supply; and improving the ecosystem in a modernized Treaty regime.

As part of this effort, the U.S. Department of State will hold public town halls to provide updates on the modernization process.



Our discussions with Canada are focused on water flowing across the border, namely from the Canadian Treaty projects—Keenleyside (also known as Arrow), Duncan and Mica dams—and from Libby Dam in the United States. These projects together are collectively known as the “Treaty Projects.”

PUBLIC INQUIRIES

Should you wish to submit feedback on the Treaty modernization effort and receive announcements regarding upcoming town halls, please send us an email at ColumbiaRiverTreaty@state.gov.

PRESS INQUIRIES

For requests for interviews or on-the-record comments, please email WHAPress@state.gov.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the U.S. Department of State’s website at www.state.gov/p/wha/ci/ca/topics/c78892.htm

