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BASINLink

Issue 41

April 2012

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April 19 to 21: [Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments Convention and AGM](#) (Trail)

April 23 to 27: [Affordable Rental Housing Initiative Information Sessions](#) (various Basin locations)

April 27 to 28: [Success by 6 Early Years Conference](#) (Castlegar)

May 2: [Enterprising Non-Profits Workshop](#) (Nakusp)

May 3 to 6: [CONNECT: Youth Action Summit](#) (Kimberley)

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New Affordable Housing Initiative for Columbia Basin

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

As a result of federal and provincial investments, a new program, the Affordable Rental Housing initiative (ARHi), will soon be available in the Columbia Basin region for households in need. Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) has also partnered with the Province in this initiative to deliver essential affordable rental housing.

Through the Canada-British Columbia Agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing 2011-2014, the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia are providing a combined investment of \$5 million over three years to support new affordable rental housing projects in communities across the Columbia Basin. Through a separate funding agreement with the Province, CBT is contributing a further \$5 million to this initiative.

"Our government is committed to developing and implementing local solutions to local housing challenges," said the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages and Minister Responsible for British Columbia on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). "Through this new program, seniors and families of Columbia Basin will have access to affordable rental housing that meets their needs."

"This is a wonderful announcement for our region," said Bill Bennett, MLA for Kootenay East. "Columbia Basin Trust is such an important player in all of our communities and it is gratifying to see the Province working so well and so collaboratively with CBT on such an important issue."

Details on how to apply for the Affordable Rental Housing initiative and request for proposals for the procurement of potential affordable rental housing projects will be available in Spring 2012.

"Our partnership with the provincial government represents a unique opportunity for CBT to help address a priority issue for a number of Basin communities," said Garry Merkel, CBT board chair. "We're excited this partnership can help communities make affordable rental housing projects a reality."

The Canada-British Columbia Agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing 2011-2014, signed in July 2011, confirms the remaining three years of B.C.'s five-year allocation of the Government of Canada's 2008 commitment of more than \$1.9 billion to improve and build new affordable housing and help the homeless. This means a further \$90 million in federal funding for British Columbians in housing need. With matching provincial contributions of \$90 million, a total combined investment of \$180 million helps to support affordable housing programs for B.C. residents.

The Government of Canada, through CMHC, will invest more than \$2 billion in housing this year. Of this amount, \$1.7 billion will be spent in support of almost 615,000 households living in existing social housing. In British Columbia, this represents some 71,000 households. These investments are improving the quality of life for low-income Canadians and households living in existing social housing, including individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness, seniors, persons with disabilities, recent immigrants and Aboriginal people.

To find out more about how the Government of Canada and CMHC are working to build stronger homes and communities for all Canadians, call CMHC at 1 800 668-2642 or visit: www.cmhc.ca.

Over the last decade, the Province has invested \$2.8 billion to provide affordable housing for low-income individuals, seniors and families. This year, more than 95,000 B.C. households will benefit from provincial social housing programs and services. To learn more about provincial programs and services to address homelessness, visit: www.bchousing.org.

One of CBT's strategic priorities is to assist Columbia Basin communities in effectively dealing with affordable housing issues and to support new housing initiatives. CBT has helped communities plan affordable housing projects, provided capital grants to projects and shares information on affordable housing issues.

CBT delivers economic, social and environmental benefits to the residents of the Columbia Basin. To learn more about CBT programs and initiatives, call 1 800 505-8998 or visit: www.cbt.org.



Basin Residents Learn About Columbia River Treaty

Tuesday, April 10, 2012

Summaries of information sessions online now; more sessions coming this spring

More than 1,600 Basin residents took part in Columbia River Treaty (CRT) information sessions in 2011 and 2012, and their input is helping shape the next round that will get underway this spring.

From June 2011 to February 2012, CBT, in partnership with the CRT Local Governments' Committee (LG Committee), hosted public information sessions in 14 communities, plus three online sessions. In addition, three information sessions were held for First Nations and a conference for young leaders has taken place.

In general, Basin residents said they want more information on several topics, including: the benefits and negative impacts of the current CRT; issues related to compensation; the feasibility of bringing salmon back to the upper Columbia River; climate change and how it may influence the CRT in the future; and scenarios for the future of the CRT. They also want to learn more about how the current CRT operates, including flood control and downstream power benefits, as well as roles and responsibilities of key players, including the federal and provincial governments.

Documents summarizing the 2011 sessions are online at www.cbt.org/crt. Summaries from 2012 will be available soon. In addition, videos that capture ideas from residents are online and are a great way to share ideas across the Columbia Basin. CBT has also posted a series of pre- and post-dam images, along with maps showing sections of the Columbia River system in Canada. These new items are in addition to existing videos, fact sheets, virtual flyovers, a library and other resources online at www.cbt.org/crt.

"The Local Governments' Committee, with support from CBT, is committed to going back to Basin residents this spring with answers to their questions, and to providing opportunities for residents to continue to build their knowledge and understanding of the CRT," said Deb Kozak, Chair LG Committee and Councillor, City of Nelson.

Consultation on the CRT is a provincial responsibility and the Province has committed to consulting with residents. CBT will continue to work with local governments to educate residents.

"CBT's primary role with respect to the CRT is to act as an information resource for Basin residents and local governments," said Neil Muth, CBT President and CEO, adding that CBT does not make decisions with respect to the CRT. "We are pleased to work in partnership with the Local Governments' Committee and support their efforts to ensure this region and its residents are actively engaged in CRT-related issues."

The CRT is an international agreement between Canada and the United States to coordinate flood control and optimize hydroelectric power generation on both sides of the border. Under the 1964 treaty, three dams were constructed in Canada, including Duncan, Hugh Keenleyside and Mica. A fourth dam, Libby, was constructed in Montana. Its reservoir, Koocanusa, extends 67 kilometres into Canada.

The CRT has no official expiry date, but has a minimum length of 60 years, which is met in September 2024. Either Canada or the United States can terminate many of the provisions of the agreement effective any time after September 2024, provided written notice is filed at least 10 years in advance (2014). While no decision has been made by either Canada or the United States on the future of the current treaty, given the importance of the issues, and the approaching date of 2014, both countries are now conducting studies and exploring future options for the CRT.

Details about the spring information sessions will be available soon. In the meantime, CBT will continue to post new information online at www.cbt.org/crt, and Basin residents are encouraged to visit the CRT web pages and subscribe to CRT email updates.



Literacy Issues Addressed Through Partnership Renewal

Monday, April 02, 2012

CBT supports CBAL with \$1.32 million commitment

CBT is helping Basin communities continue to address literacy issues by renewing its partnership with the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL). CBT is committing \$1.32 million over three years, or \$440,000 per year. This is an increase of 10 per cent over the previous partnership agreement of \$400,000 per year, and is a response to increased demands for CBAL's programs.

"CBT wants to support communities in setting and addressing their own literacy priorities," said Neil Muth, CBT President and CEO. "Given CBAL's demonstrated track record and the increased demand for the services it provides, we're excited we can both renew our partnership and increase our support."

CBAL works by assisting communities as they tackle their individual literacy needs. Results include programs and resources focused on topics like reading, writing, early language learning, English as a second language and computer literacy. Over 7,000 people accessed CBAL programs in 2010/11.

"Our renewed partnership with CBT is a key factor in helping us meet increasing community demands for our programs, ensuring communities can access a range of literacy support services based on their own priorities," said Ali Wassing, CBAL Executive Director.

CBAL was the first group in the province to formally use the community development approach to literacy planning. This approach means that CBAL works with local volunteers to identify a community's literacy needs and what supports could be offered to meet those needs. CBAL also partners with local and regional organizations like colleges, school districts and libraries, spotting gaps and ensuring there is no overlap in services.

CBT has partnered with CBAL since CBAL's inception in 2001. The partnership renewal brings CBT's total contribution to the organization to over \$4 million.

CBAL is a non-profit charitable organization that supports literacy development in the communities of the Columbia Basin and Boundary region of southeastern British Columbia. For more information, visit www.cbal.org or call 1.800.342.4244.



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CBT renewed its partnership with Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) with \$1.32 million over the next three years. CBT Board member Am Naqvi congratulated CBAL and the literacy coordinators and community volunteers for their commitment and positive impact in advancing literacy development in the Columbia Basin. The announcement was made during International Adult Learner's Week at a CBAL workshop in Nelson on March 30, 2012. In photo left to right: Am Naqvi, CBT Board member; Christy Louise Luke, CBAL Board member; Ali Wassing, CBAL Executive Director; Neil Muth, CBT President and CEO; and Wendy Tagami, CBAL Board member.



Fernie Students to Paint the Town for Fish

Thursday, April 12, 2012

Know Your Watershed student action project raises awareness of fish habitat

Grade eight students from Fernie Secondary School (FSS) will "Paint the Town for Fish" this May, an outcome of their participation in Columbia Basin Trust's (CBT's) Know Your Watershed program.

Tessa Holmes, class spokesperson, recently introduced the project to Fernie City Council.

"We want to paint the storm drains around Fernie to remind residents that only rain should go down them," Holmes said. "Pollution off streets, driveways and homes is carried in stormwater, which goes directly into the Elk River and can harm fish."

CBT has provided \$1,000 to support the two classes participating in the project.

"We're pleased to see youth actively working on a project about water," said Kindy Gosal, CBT Director, Water and Environment. "Congratulations to the students, their teacher and the environmental educators for initiating this project in Fernie."

"Class posters will be used for public education at the school and throughout the community during April and May," said Mike Tomney, FSS Grade Eight Science Teacher.

Know Your Watershed is a CBT water stewardship education program aimed at grade eight science classes. This hands-on education initiative helps students understand where their water comes from, how it is used and where their water goes after it is used.

The students are looking for adult volunteers interested in supervising painting teams on the blitz in May when students are painting the town for fish. If you can help, please contact Lee-Anne Walker, Know Your Watershed Environmental Educator, at 1.250.423.3322 or knowyourwatershed@gmail.com.



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Students from Fernie Secondary School display their Paint the Town for Fish posters at Fernie City Council. From left to right: Kaitlynn Chahley, Kayla Nord, Jessica Hutchinson, Tessa Holmes, Linnea Uphill, Amanda Ross, Sophia Sanchez and Jodi Thompson.

