COLUMBIA River Treaty

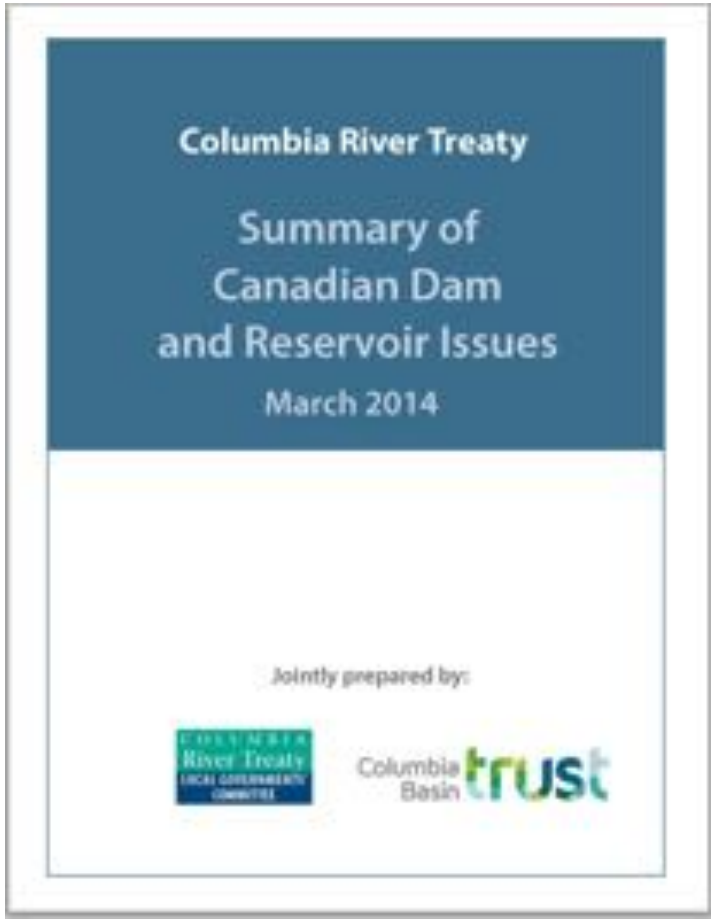
BC Columbia Basin Local Governments' Interests Focus on Recreation

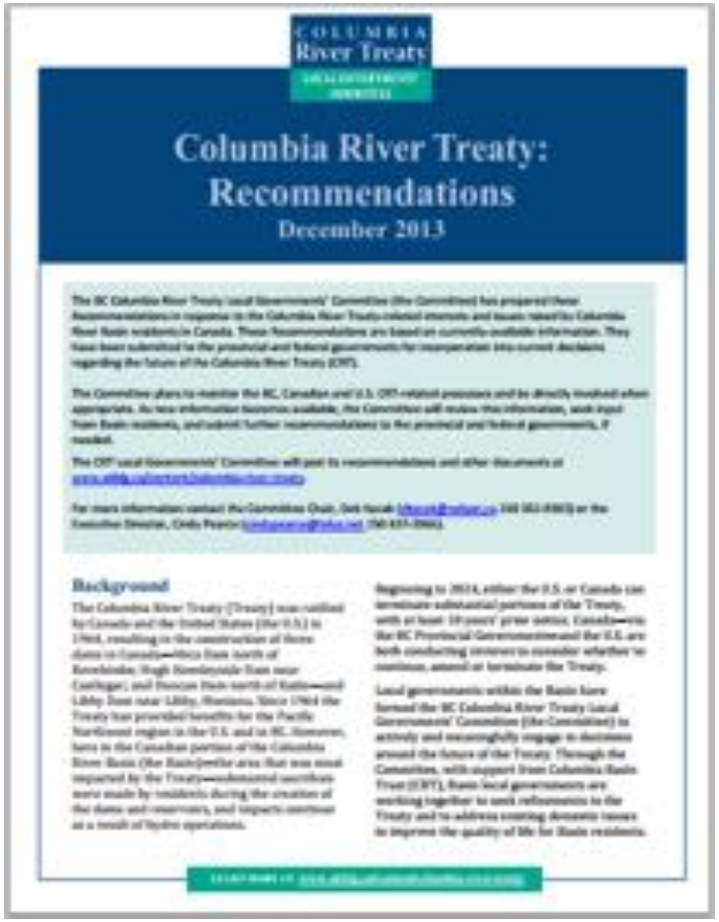
Future of Our Salmon Conference
October, 2016

Cindy Pearce, Executive Director,
BC CRT Local Governments' Committee

With support from Columbia Basin Trust

Committee Reports





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Initial Dam Impacts in BC

- 300,000 acres of fertile valley bottom land and ecosystems flooded – ~4x the size of Lake Roosevelt Reservoir
- 2,300 people displaced
- 12 communities inundated
- Aboriginal cultural sites flooded
- Valley bottom roads lost

Burton prior to Hugh Keenleyside Dam, 1962

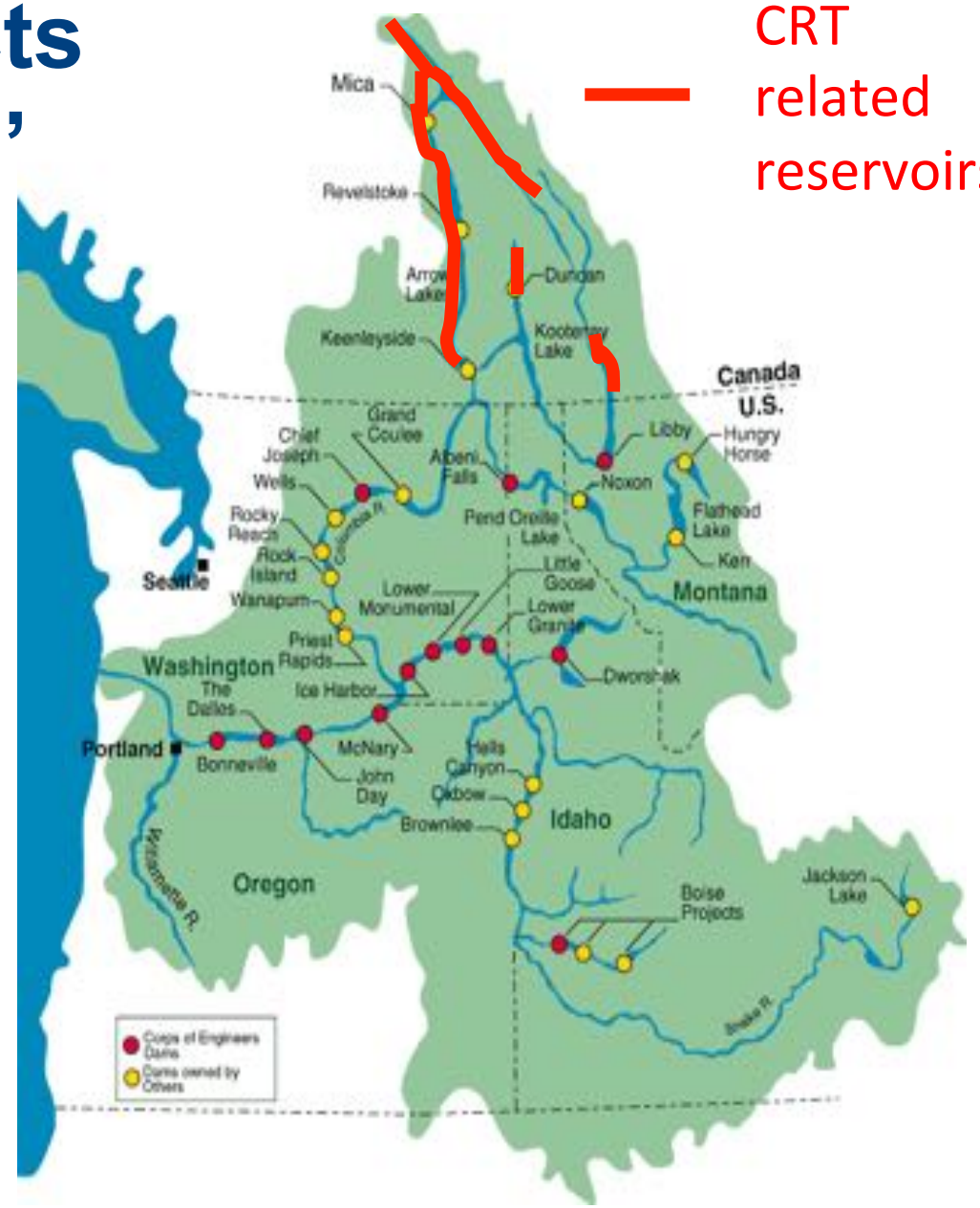
Burton after Hugh Keenleyside Dam, 2001

COLUMBIA River Treaty

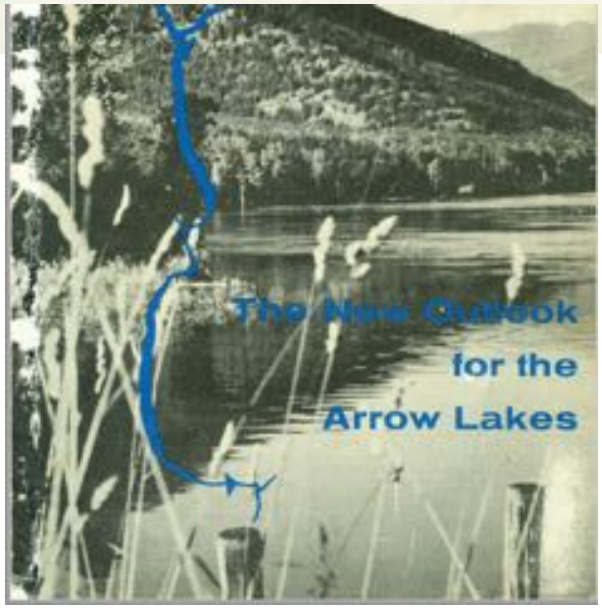
Ongoing Impacts from 'Industrial' Reservoirs

- 435 miles of reservoirs in BC (Lake Roosevelt is 150 miles)

- Average annual fluctuations:
  Mica – 155 ft.
  Duncan – 100 ft.
  Koocanusa – 80 ft.
  (same as Lake Roosevelt)
  Arrow – 40 ft.



Good parks, beaches and campsites could be developed at several spots at the new high water level. These features, together with attractions like the various hot springs, will result in the Region being able to provide many recreation attractions both for its own inhabitants and for tourists.



June, 1965

Nakusp on the Arrow Lakes Reservoir

40+ feet of spring/dry year operations drawdown

Nakusp Beach Time – August, 2016

In most years in the past, these logs float in over 10 feet of water to mark out the kids' swimming area

Boundary logs

Arrow Lakes Reservoir

Summer 2016 at Nakusp

May 2012 near Burton

Kinbasket Reservoir

40 kilometres/ 25 miles of mudlflats on Valemount's doorstep during spring drawdown

Kinbasket Reservoir

Sea of stumps north of Golden during spring drawdown

Kinbasket Reservoir

Annual debris removal –

Debris creates safety hazards for boating

Kinbasket Reservoir

Full pond at Bush Harbour boat ramp – but limited road access

Koocanusa Reservoir

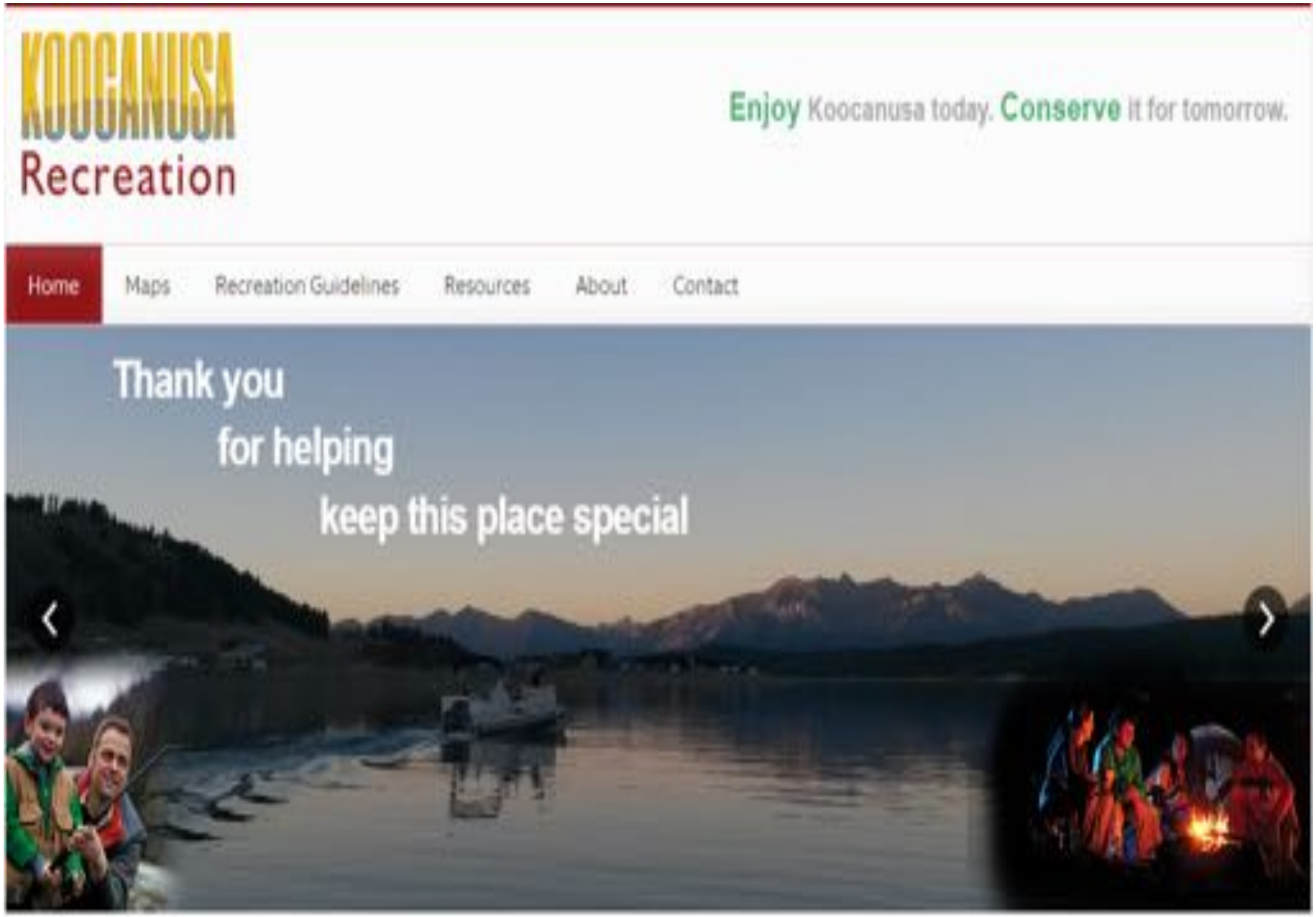
80 feet of spring drawdown
near Baynes Lake community

Koocanusa Reservoir

Kikoman Provincial Park during spring drawdown

Koocanusa Reservoir

Spring dust storm; houseboats high & dry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Recreational Fisheries Impacts

- Salmon runs ended with the Grand Coulee dam
- Disrupted nutrient flows -> annual nutrient fertilization programs
- Entrainment in turbines
- Flooded spawning habitats
- Disconnected tributary access
- Fish stranding

Current decline in kokanee populations

Ongoing Impacts of 'Industrial Reservoirs'

- Limited water access for recreation
- Boating safety risks & property damage from debris
- Air quality issues from dust storms
- Ecosystem, fish and wildlife declines
- Erosion

Quality of life, tourism, forestry, and agriculture limited

Photo Credits – With Thanks

BC Hydro

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Ron Oszust

David Gluns

Brian Sperling

Laura Keil

Korie Marshall

Hans Dummerauf

Touchstone Museum

Columbia River ReConnect Mural

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Trail Memorial Centre - Trail, B.C.

McDonald Creek Provincial Park