CANADIAN STUDIES CENTER
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Henry M. Jackson School
of International Studies

REPORT: Columbia River Treaty Field Course, June 2018

Sponsored by The Pacific Northwest Canadian Studies Consortium; the Canadian Studies Center, Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington; Indigenous Studies, Department of Community, Culture and Global Studies, University of British Columbia Okanagan

prepared by Program Chairs, Dr. M. McEachern and E. Finke, and Dr. N. Fabbi, Managing Director, Canadian Studies Center, July 2018

The Columbia River flows from its headwaters in the Canadian Rockies, through British Columbia and Washington State and empties into the Pacific Ocean near Astoria, Oregon. The Columbia River is over 1,200 miles long—the longest river in the Pacific Northwest—with a drainage basin the size of France. The Columbia has provided transportation, salmon, meeting places and sacred sites to people in the region for over ten thousand years. In the early 20th century, all this began to change. In 1909, Canada and the United States signed the International Boundary Waters Treaty; in 1933, construction began on the Grand Coulee and Bonneville Dams; and in 1964 Canada and the United States ratified the Columbia River Treaty. The treaty's purpose is solely for hydroelectric power generation and flood control. Today, 60 dams control the Columbia River watershed. In the early years of the 21st Century, a movement to include ecosystems values in the management of the Columbia River basin is gaining momentum. In 2001, the ecumenical "Columbia River Pastoral Letter" was delivered to leaders in Canada and the USA. Currently, working in alliance and separately, indigenous groups (Upper Columbia United Tribes and the Okanagan Nation Alliance, e.g.) environmental groups (Center for Environmental Law Policy, e.g.) and academics (University Consortium on Columbia River Governance, e.g.) have advocated for adding ecosystems values to the Columbia River Treaty. From 2014- 2024 either country may give notice to terminate the treaty or renegotiate it. In May of this year Canada and the United States began negotiations to modernize the treaty. Notably absent from the table are indigenous experts and prioritizing ecosystem values. The Columbia River Treaty Field Course is part of the local effort to facilitate a more inclusive and diverse dialogue concerning the modernization of the treaty. Via the touring of various facilities and hearing from local community members including Indigenous

communities and scholars about the impacts of the dams on the regional economies, cultures and ecosystems, this field course seeks to broaden knowledge and understanding of this major Canada-U.S. treaty.

PROGRAM

Monday, June 18: Opening dinner, Keynote, "An International Law Perspective on the Columbia River Treaty," by Dr. Richard Paisley, Executive Director of Global Transboundary International Water Governance Initiative, University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver

Tuesday, June 19: Chief Joseph Fish Hatchery Tour, by Dr. Michael Marchand, Chairman for the Coleville Business Council for Confederated Tribes of the Coleville Reservation

"Chief Joseph Dam: Role in Managing Dams and the Columbia River Treaty," by Carolyn Fitzgerald, representative, Army Corps of Engineers

Tour of Dam, with Sydney Hudson, Park Ranger

Wednesday, June 20: "Kettle Falls Traditional Fishery," by Dr. Melodi Wynne, member, Spokane Tribe

Thursday, June 21: Day-long presentation and field experience at Keenslyside Dam. "Healing the Columbia," by Eileen Delehany Pearkes, author, *A River Captured: The Columbia River Treaty and Catastrophic Change*

Evening: Guided dialogue, by Dr. Mary Tuti Baker, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Political Science, Brown University

Friday, June 22: Drive to Revelstoke, Evening: Guided dialogue by Dr. Baker

Saturday, June 23: Self guided visit to Mica Dam,

Sunday, June 24: Drive Columbia River to Kelowna, British Columbia

Monday, June 25: Salmon Ceremony: Presentation, by Dr. Jeanette Armstrong, Canadian Research Chair and Professor, Indigenous Studies, University of British Columbia, Okanagan (Sylix First Naiton); lunch provided by Nk'mip band at McIntyre Bluff

Afternoon: Focus Group of field course participants at En'owkin Center, Penticton. Led by: Aleks Dulic, Primary Investigator and Miles Thorogood, Technical expert of "The Water Ways Project," (University of British Columbia, Okanagan (UBCO), Department of Anthropology.

Evening: Guided dialogue by Dr. Baker

Tuesday, June 26: University of British Columbia Okanagan, Arts Room 218 – Workshop, Adding Ecosystem Functions to The Columbia River Treaty

9:00-9:30—Introductions

9:30-9:45—"The UBC Okanagan Water Ways Project," by Aleks Dulic, Primary Investiator, UBCO Department of Antrhopology. and Miles Thorogood, Technical Expert, UBCO Department of Anthropology

9:45-10:00—"Adding Ecosystem Functions to the Columbia River Treaty: An Overview of Obstacles and Progress to Date," by John Wagner, Field Course co-grantee, Department of Community, Culture and Global Studies, UBCO

10:00-10:30—"Okanagan Habitat Restoration Initiatives in Wetland and Riparian Zones," by Lael Parrott, Primary Investigator, School of Arts and Sciences, UBCO, Water Ways Research in the Okanagan and Columbia," by Marlowe Sam, Instructor, Indigenous Studies, UBCO. and Jeannette Armstrong, Director, Indigenous Studies, UBCO

11:15-11:30—Discussion

11:30-12:30—Film: *United by Water*, produced by Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT), with John Sirois, Committee Coordinator,

12:30-2:00—Lunch, free time, informal discussions

2:00-2:15—"The UBC Okanagan One Water Research Network Initiative," by Marni Turek, Director of the One Water Research Initiative, UBCO,

2:15-2:45—"Water Ethics and the Columbia River Treaty: A Sylix Perspective" Jeanette Armstrong, Director, UBCO Indigenous Studies

2:45-3:00—Discussion

3:00-3:15—Tea Break

3:15-3:30—"One River, Ethics Matters: A proposal for UBC Okanagan to Host the 2021 Water Ethics Conference," by John Wagner

3:30-4:00—Concluding discussion, video and audio recording of participants' reflections and observations

FIELD COURSE PARTICIPANTS

Program Leads

Morna McEachern, Program Manager, Pacific Northwest Canadian Studies Consortium, University of Washington

Eric Finke, Mediation and Facilitation for Environmental and Natural Resources, Bellingham, Washington

Mary Tuti Baker, Indigenous (Kanaka 'oiwi) Scholar and Resource Person: Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Political Science, Brown University

Participants

Stan de Mello, Co-Director, Office of Field Education, School of Social Work, University of Washington

Samuel Johnson, Executive Director, Columbia Maritime Museum, Astoria, Oregon

Karen Katigbak, MSW, School of Social Work, Portland State University

Iris Lippert, MS candidate, Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Washington
Michael Mugambe, MSW candidate, School of Social Work, University of Washington
Tyler Nodine, MS candidate, Environmental Planning, University of California, Berkeley University of California, Berkeley
Stan Thayne, Visiting Assistant Professor, Departments of Anthropology and Religion Whitman College

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Solving Complex Problems

What would be the best solution with the existence of the permanent giant dams, the treaties, powerful governments, and the powerless tribes? This is one of the questions that kept bothering me as we traversed the Columbia River basin; listening to the emotional stories and academic presentations from the different speakers about the Columbia River Treaty and its effects to the First Nations people. As a result of the treaty, the indigenous tribes lost their lands, water bodies and the salmon, to which they are spiritually and immensely connected. The eco-system was damaged, archeological heritage destroyed and some tribes falsely declared extinct. Considering all this; without a mutual will of acceptance, reparations, and inclusiveness in the negotiations, how can a solution be achieved?

What makes the entire situation more complex is that; the nature of oppression and generational trauma the First Nations people have experienced has made them attain more positions or demands in this quest for decolonization and sovereignity. Through several conversations with my peers, the speakers and the stories we listened to from the community members I learned that some of the demands include, tribal sovereignty and water sovereignty, restoration of the ecosystem and its inhabitants, participation in the treaty discussions and the

restoration of Salmon among others. These together with others I have not mentioned how a general solution can be navigated and achieved. Remember we are not talking about one tribe or Nation, we are talking about tens of them with different demands. Thus, making me wonder how these two entities will listen and act to the demands of all the tribes.

The same learning experience also helped me notice how power can be used to oppress the powerless people. The indigenous people of Canada and the United States are the bonafide owners and occupants of the water bodies and lands in question, however, the people who signed the agreement--the politicians and the parties who implement the treaty left out the most important party; the people who are affected by the treaty. This also triggered reflections about my people and how the politicians with power have always oppressed and intentionally tried to destroy the Baganda tribe since 1966. Our land has always been stolen by the government and the politicians with power, several oppressive legislations have been passed and different pathways established to destroy the Buganda Kingdom establishment.

Nevertheless, what excited me was that the affected people of both countries are trying their best to speak out and advocate for themselves. My philosophy on conflict has always been that the conflicting parties are the bonafide owners of the conflict. I also believe that these conflicting parties are still the bonafide owners of the solution to their conflict. If they do not own up the conflict, they will never forge a solution.

Tyler Nodine

Columbia River Treaty Field Course 2018 Reflections

In attending the Columbia River Treaty Field Course I hoped to learn about the current treaty renegotiations and the people, environment, and cultures affected by the agreement. I am especially interested in designing a thesis topic revolving around the environmental impacts of the Columbia River dam operations outlined in the treaty and possible alternatives for future river management.

Physically traveling to the stops along our journey, seeing the scale of the basin, feeling the water of the Columbia and listening to the people who live along the river gave me a perspective on the treaty issues that can be achieved no other way. What surprised me though, was how much I learned beyond the technical or direct implications of the CRT. I was exposed to indigenous culture and new viewpoints, the process of of decolonization, social and environmental injustice, and my personal privilege and positionality. This learning was due in part to the people who we visited on our trip, but also to the diverse and knowledgeable members of our own group. Discussions of the days learning while in the van and on the road was a personal highlight.

Early on our trip, we were invited and challenged to become accomplices with the Tribes and First Nations on Columbia Basin topics. This became a central theme of the trip and challenged me to consider my own role and responsibility on CRT issues. It challenged me to think more broadly about the paradigm under which the CRT was designed and what and ideal future paradigm might look like. At first a paradigm shift of this magnitude seemed overwhelming and with a scientific background I felt I did not have the proper tools to be impactful. At first the stories we heard made the treaty issues seem more complicated and larger than I initially thought. I struggled to see how we could shift to a paradigm that prioritizes cultural and environmental values over economic gain. However, through the course of our trip, I learned that listening to stories and asking questions of those who live along the river provides invaluable perspective over time and inspiring themes emerged. This culminated with Dr. Jeannette Armstrong´s presentation on water ethics. Dr. Armstrong´s talk helped me understand that a key component to seeing the changes I´d like in this treaty and in any issues is our ability to agree on ethics. I agree with indigenous views on water ethics and believe in a future where they are made central to our decision making.

This fall I begin a Masters in Environmental Planning at UC Berkeley. In keeping with my initial intent for this course I have some exciting thesis topics to explore relating to salmon reintroductions above Columbia River dams and the environmental impacts of controversial flow management of the Kootenai River´s Libby dam. Whichever research topic I choose or future work I pursue I will carry the perspectives I have gained from this course. I will listen to those with stories to share, consider the the historical contexts that shape our current issues, and ask myself how I can contribute to a better future for our rivers and the people would live along them.

Karen Katigbak, Reflection

We, as social workers, often think of scope of work as a river. We have all heard about the micro, mezzo, and macro practice. Micro practice as direct work with people. Going upstream to mezzo and further upstream to macro practice. The field course made evident to me the pre-work needed for our practice. This paper will describe my personal reflections from the Columbia River Treaty Field Course and how this will inform my practice as a social worker. The Columbia River Treaty Course helped me think about pre-work and action steps needed for our practice. In my reflections, the course has shown me the importance of removing the internalized dams within ourselves to flow freely and wildly again. First by recognition of our privilege and power. Second, by opening ourselves up to different fields, cultures, and ways of thinking. Third, asking how to facilitate healing and finally how we can move as an accomplice for oppressed communities.

First, we need to recognize our privilege and power. I learned this recognition process needs to be ongoing. I realized this when I learned that Portland, Oregon, the city I grew up and live in is a flood plain that is protected in part because of the dams. My communities' wellbeing seems to be valued more than the indigenous communities and the ecological systems that are affected by the dams. Additionally, the former town of Vanport, which was located in my county, was flooded and displaced. The townspeople were predominantly African American. This is a history I didn't learn in school. Now that I am beginning to work in my community again, I recognized that it is up to me to learn the facets to my history and bring it to light. Second, the practice of opening myself up to different fields, cultures, and ways of thinking. As a social worker, I think it is easy to burrow in and focus on the many challenges and crisis we work with everyday. Crisis can consume my thought process, but it is just as important to step back and take some intentional time to see the whole picture.

During this course, I got the opportunity to learn from people from all different backgrounds and did a multi-pronged approach to problem solving. Third, how can we facilitate healing in different communities. When Dr. Jeanette Armstrong invited our group to the salmon ceremony, we got to experience a community preserving and maintaining their culture for future generations and connecting with their ancestors and the land. After the trauma of colonialism and specifically the dams, I see the maintenance of these ceremonies as healing. Additionally, John Sirois brought the movie United By Water; a movie of canoe building for indigenous communities along the columbia and their river journey. The preservation of these ceremonies and practices connects people and preserves their culture. Finally, how can we move as an accomplice for oppressed communities. Dr. Melodi described the difference in being and ally versus an accomplice. As an accomplice, you put your physical body in the spaces needed for oppressed communities and are present when needed for all of the difficult moments.

These communities that have be wrought by colonialism, know how to heal their own communities and resist. We as accomplices can bring our skills to support their efforts. As a social worker, I feel urged to embody the whole river. I want to move beyond thinking just in micro, mezzo, and macro practice but travel though all of them and bringing by physical presence when asked for oppressed communities.

Reflection on the Columbia River Treaty Field Course.

What affect will this field course have on my work?

I am a Kanaka ʻOiwi (Native Hawaiian) scholar. My work focuses on political discourse of Indigenous peoples, and I recently completed a dissertation about the embodiment of aloha aina (love of the land), a Kanaka Oiwi political discourse, in an urban community in Honolulu, Hawai'i. I participated in the Field Course as a resource person on Indigenous protocols, decolonization theory and listening and narrative as a research practice.

This field course was a journey up ntx^{w}itk^{w} (Columbia River) and into the territory of the Okanagan Nation Alliance. On this journey we created a transient community of ten people with various interests in the river. As a group we participated in the protocol of introducing ourselves to the river, the land, the man-made structures, and the people that we met on our journey and then we listened to their stories. In the two vans that took us from place to place and around the table at our shared meals we collectively processed our encounters of the river. We pondered the variety of relationships between people and the river. We engaged with Indigenous people working to restore the salmon runs on the river — acts of spiritual, cultural, economic and political resurgence. We engaged with bureaucrats whose job it is to manage the river as a resource for corporate industrial interests in the US and Canada. We engaged with a public scholar whose love of the river has produced a prodigious amount of research on the environmental damage that industrial uses on the river has done to the eco-system. We engaged with dams, climbing into the bowels of turbines and standing at the top of massive earthen structures.

By the end of the course we had become the Two Van Band of the Big Salmon River (also known as the Columbia).

This fall I begin a two year postdoc at Brown University. I will be a Mellon Fellow in Indigenous and Environmental Theory. The embodied experience of the Columbia River and the people living on it will contribute to my work on Indigenous resurgence in the Pacific and the American continent. I will also be looking at the intersection of Indigenous resurgence with environmental activism. On the field course I renewed friendships with members of the Okanagan Nation alliance who are using their traditional knowledge of the river and modern technology to create a future where salmon once again run from their territorial waters to the ocean and back again. This is an example of Indigenous resurgence I can use in my teaching and writing. On this course I also encountered environmentalists and Indigenous people who worked together as allies with a common goal and environmentalists who were not able to make productive alliances with Indigenous peoples. The course also exposed me to the intransigence of government representatives who are renegotiating the Columbia River treaty. All of these experiences enrich the work I anticipate accomplishing on the postdoc at Brown University and into the future.

Columbia River Treaty Field Course report

Stan Thayne

Whitman College

The Columbia River Treaty is an important topic in courses I teach at Whitman College in the fields of Indigenous Studies, Environmental Studies, Politics, and Anthropology. This field course, then, was directly relevant to my teaching and scholarly interests. I had a very basic understanding of the treaty prior to this field course, but by the end of the first day I came to realize just how superficial my understanding had been. It is an incredibly complex subject, which became very apparent with each stop we made and each person we talked to. The directors of the field course—Morna McEachern, Eric Finke, and Mary Tuti Baker—put together an excellent series of readings, stops, visits, and guest speakers which presented us with many sides of a complicated and multi-faceted subject. It was particularly useful and of interest to me because nearly every stop addressed the interests and concerns of Indigenous peoples and the impacts the treaty and dams have on them, particularly on the topic of salmon migration, among other issues. Indigenous peoples have fishing rights established through treaties that predate the Columbia River Treaty, rights that are significantly impaired by dams on the Columbia River. Yet, First Nations and American Indian peoples are currently excluded from direct representation at the Columbia River Treaty negotiations. This was a theme that was central to many of our discussions and the focus of our potential advocacy. For the purposes of the course, we set out to learn as much as possible so that we can provide an informed voice when the opportunity for advocacy arises.

One of the most beneficial aspects of the course was the experiential learning it provided by actually visiting sites on the river. Experiencing the river itself was far more productive for understanding how the treaty impacts the river and people along it than an abstract conversation on a college or university campus. Travelling up the river, with a group of committed scholars and professionals, stopping at strategic sites and talking with people connected to the river, was extremely valuable. I particularly appreciated the opportunities to hear the voices and perspectives of Indigenous peoples from the Colville Confederated Tribes, Spokane, and Okanagan First Nations. Their perspectives are particularly germane to my own teaching and scholarly interests, and for understanding the Columbia River Treaty. We concluded the entire experience with a day-long conference at the University of British Columbia – Okanagan, which allowed us to wrap up much of what we learned in conversation with experts and Indigenous scholars whose work focuses on these issues. It was an excellent way to draw out themes and conclusions from all that we had experienced.

The field course was particularly productive and beneficial for me because of its relevance to courses I teach at Whitman College. This fall I will be teaching a course titled “Indigenous Studies,” and I plan to spend multiple days in the course talking about treaties and the exercise of treaty rights, with a particular focus on the Columbia River Basin. Topics discussed in the course and places visited will greatly inform this class. In the spring I am teaching classes titled “Indigenous Ecologies” and “Religion

and Native America," both of which will also be greatly enriched by information I learned during the course of this field course. Salmon and the river are central to the ecology and epistemologies, often described as spirituality, of Indigenous communities. Visiting these sites and talking to Native representatives was a really great learning experience that I will draw upon in teaching.

I also made several important contacts during the field course. I talked to the curator of a traveling exhibit titled "Social Life of Water" about potentially bringing the exhibit to Whitman College and to the nearby Tamastslikt Cultural Institute, located on the Umatilla Indian Reservation, which has collaborated with the college on exhibits in the past. I also made preliminary arrangements with one of the producers of a film that was screened at one of our stops to see if they would be interested in screening the film at Whitman College this fall in conjunction with my course. These two events will greatly enrich courses I am teaching this upcoming academic year and will also reach and benefit the wider campus community and general community in Walla Walla, Pendleton, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Overall, the field course was an excellent opportunity that I greatly benefited from and appreciated being a part of. It was composed of a superb group of people that I learned a great deal from and really enjoyed traveling with. I made connections within the group that I know I will continue to value and draw from throughout my career. In this way, the field course was the beginning of an ongoing experience of the Big River with a group of friends committed to learning to live with the river in the best ways possible.

Many thanks to Morna McEachern, Eric Finke, and Mary Tuti Baker for their great efforts in organizing and executing the field course, and to the Pacific Northwest Canadian Studies Consortium and the University of British Columbia Okanagan for making it possible.

COLUMBIA RIVER MARITIME MUSEUM
ASTORIA

August 18, 2018

Report on June 2018 Field Course on the Columbia River Treaty Modernization

This year, over a ten day period, the Field Course explored the upper reaches of the Columbia River from the Chief Joseph Dam in Washington to Mica Creek in British Columbia.

The goal was to familiarize the participants with the issues surrounding the Columbia River Treaty and how the treaty impacts the residents of the Upper Columbia River. The trip was very well-planned and executed. The long drives were spent in discussions about the Columbia, the CRT, and about our meetings with tribal representatives, dam operators, and others along the way.

Nearly all of my adult life has been spent in the Pacific Northwest with considerable focus on the Columbia River and the Columbia River Basin. My work with The Nature Conservancy, the Oregon Board of Forestry, and, for the last ten years, as the Executive Director of the Columbia River Maritime Museum has sharpened my interest in the entire river, from its source to the Pacific Ocean. While I am familiar with the northern most reaches of the Columbia River in the United States, I was not familiar with the river and its culture in Canada. This course provided me the opportunity to see an area that was unknown to me and, from what I have since learned, to most of those who live and work in the lower part of the Columbia River.

One of the most surprising things for me was how much I learned from other participants. As a trained geologist and ecologist, I have had little contact with anthropologists and social scientists. It was enlightening to see how these professionals viewed the Columbia River and how its management impacted the people of the Columbia River Basin.

The reading list provided before the trip was extensive and most useful for the tours, meetings, and lectures. These were all very interesting and presented the Columbia River and the Columbia River Treaty issues in a serious and thorough manner. The history of the dams, their construction, and the politics that surround the river was presented in discussions with dam operators, local historians, and representatives of various indigenous people. I suggest that it would be good to include meetings with representatives of the power, agriculture, and other industries in the next tour to help the participants more fully understand the various uses of the Columbia River.

I was impressed with the indigenous people who spoke to our group. They clearly understand the problems of the Columbia River Treaty as it relates to them, and while they have every reason to be bitter, they seem to have largely channeled their energy into exploring and promoting ways to make things better. This is especially true in their efforts to preserve and reintroduce salmon into the upper reaches of the Columbia beyond the Grand Cooley Dam.

In talking with them it was interesting to experience a communication style that is less rapid but more thoughtful than I am used to. Would that we all could focus more on what was being said and think more before speaking. This said, I was struck by the obvious distance between the cultures of the indigenous and non-indigenous people. The difference in values (spiritual and otherwise) and in communication styles would make coming up with mutually acceptable solutions to problems difficult.

The mission of the Columbia River Maritime Museum is to collect, preserve, and interpret the maritime culture of the Columbia River, its tributaries, and the waters of the North Pacific. In general however, the Museum's exhibits focus only on the Lower Columbia River and, with a few exceptions, ignore upriver areas. Upon my return to the Museum after the trip I surveyed our exhibits and was embarrassed to see that our interpretation of the Columbia River stops at Richland, says almost nothing about the dams, and largely ignores the Columbia River Basin, which is an area larger than France.

I was surprised that people I met in Revelstoke and Castlegar did not know where Astoria was. But until this trip I knew nothing about Mica Creek, Revelstoke or Castlegar. I realized that the Columbia is really thought of as five different parts, each in isolation from the other: the far Upper Columbia in Canada, the Upper Columbia in the U.S., the Columbia in Washington from the Chief Joseph Dam to its confluence with the Snake River, the Columbia from Pendleton to the Dalles, and the Lower Columbia from Bonneville to the Pacific. While the Museum cannot deal effectively with the entire river, we can, and should at a minimum, provide information on each of these areas.

The Columbia River Maritime Museum is now planning to substantially increase its interpretation of the Columbia River in two areas relevant to the field course:

- In the next few years we intend to expand our treatment of indigenous peoples, establishing a permanent gallery at the Museum focused on the indigenous people associated with the Columbia River from its headwaters to the Pacific Ocean and along the coast from Canada to Northern California.
- The museum is also planning to create a major exhibit, with a traveling component, that looks at the role the Columbia River plays in the economy of the Pacific Northwest and the nation. This will focus on shipping, the grain trade, and the use of the river's waters for agriculture, power production, flood control, and salmon production.

Both of these exhibits will allow the Museum to extend its interpretation of the Columbia River upstream, to talk about the indigenous people and their culture, and to look at the cultural and economic history of entire Columbia River Basin.

What I have learned in this course, and especially from the people I have met, will be of great help in creating these and other exhibits that will more completely tell the story of the Columbia River and its people.

In closing I can say without reservation that this trip exceeded my expectations in many ways. The perspectives it presented have significantly influenced both my professional and personal life. I hope that this program will continue to be offered.

Samuel E. Johnson, Ph.D
Executive Director

Reflections from the 2018 Columbia River Treaty Modernization Field Course

-- Eric Finke

Reflections

I was struck by several things during this field trip. The first is the sheer immensity of the river and its drainage basin. The Columbia is over 1200 miles long, and it drains a basin only slightly smaller than the State of Texas, the second largest state in the US. The second is the steep, rugged grandeur and stunning beauty of the valleys in which it flows as it makes its way through the mountains of British Columbia and the State of Washington. The third is the immensity of the undertaking in physical, engineering, and human terms to have constructed even the very first three dams under the treaty. And the fourth is the amount of damage that construction heaped upon the terrain as the dam builders stripped the river valleys of all growth below the high water line for hundreds of miles; upon the salmon and other river life as the captured waters flooded spawning, feeding, and nesting grounds; and upon the indigenous and non-indigenous residents already living in those valleys as they were either forced to relocate or, in the case of one Canadian indigenous group, rendered "extinct" in order to make way for the dams.

My negotiation and conflict resolution training emphasized the importance of 'listening to learn' as opposed to 'listening to respond' as the way to gain empathy and trust and to understand the perspectives of others. This field course built upon that by exposing me directly to the effectiveness of storytelling and listening as the way to understand people of other cultures and their perspectives on the importance of their cultural practices and ways of life.

By coincidence, renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty between Canada and the US began only one month prior to the field course. While the negotiations are still in their infancy and it is difficult at this point to predict how they will be carried out, one characteristic of the negotiations stood out for me as a glaring misunderstanding of how one conducts a successful, interest-based negotiation. That characteristic is that the two nations have to date chosen to include no one but themselves at the negotiating table. If negotiators truly want buy-in for what they've negotiated, the interests of three kinds of parties must be represented – those that are

authorized to sign the final agreement, those that must implement the final agreement, and those that must live with the consequences of the final agreement. If either of those parties are not represented, the agreement does not have complete buy-in, and its implementation will inevitably be frustrated with unplanned costs, schedule delays, outright stoppages, or legal challenges that could potentially cause the renegotiation of some of the agreement's most significant terms. That the interests of indigenous people, ranchers, farmers, fruit growers, irrigators, transportation, fishing, and the basin residents in general are not represented at the negotiating table seems to me to be a gross injustice and an open invitation for frustrated ratification and implementation phases.

How I plan to incorporate what I learned

I'm a mediator and facilitator for environmental and natural resource matters. This field trip re-emphasized for me the importance of active listening as the way build trust and empathy among disputants and to come to understand the perspectives of others, and the importance of having all interests represented at the negotiating table. I'll be redoubling my efforts to assure that I do so completely at all future negotiations I have the privilege to facilitate or mediate.

Good day, thank you for this opportunity to speak. I am Dr. Morna McEachern. I have the not so common privilege of holding dual Canadian and US citizenship. Currently I am the Program Manager for the Pacific Northwest Canadian Studies Consortium, housed at the University of Washington.

The consortium has focused on the Columbia River Treaty for several years and we have organized two field courses, visiting sites and meeting people along the river in Washington and British Columbia. Last month, I led a ten-day trip for 10 people. We visited the Coleville

Tribes' fish hatchery at Chief Joseph Dam, had a phone meeting with the Seattle office of the Army Corps of Engineers, toured the turbines of Chief Joseph Dam, focussed on listening and stories at Kettle Falls with Dr. Melodi Wynne, of the Spokane Tribe, spent a day in discussion with an independent scholar in Castlegar, visited the Keenslyside Dam, drove all the way up to the Mica Dam, and finished in the Okanagan territory at a traditional salmon ceremony and a day of discussion at University of British Columbia, Okanagan.

On my first trip up the river, I had a profound experience of the river as living entity. On last month's trip, I gained new understandings of the relationships between time, ethics and place. In the next few days, we also will engage in an experiential, place-based study tour that will allow for embodied learning about this mighty river. During this time I hope we will appreciate the river's past and present and MOST IMPORTANTLY develop an ethical loyalty to the river's future.

Ethics matter in all our **pursuits**—the Columbia River Treaty is about a specific place and to quote one of our hosts, Dr. Jeanette Armstrong, Syilx elder, "Humans, unlike other life forms, unless they LIVE an ethic that protects continuing regeneration of the life force of a place, become destroyers of that life force."

At present, you are engaged in a very complex negotiation between nation states, with many voices asking to be recognized and accommodated—all for important reasons.

I would like to offer for your consideration that listening to and incorporating the economic, scientific, political, cultural, and spiritual expertise of the people with place-based experience of managing the river for over 10,000 years is **VITAL** to analyzing the present. I urge you to integrate these 10,000 years of indigenous experience along with modern technologies as you negotiate adaptive agreements for a workable, healthy, modern Columbia River Treaty; a treaty that recognizes the future of the river as the life force that it is.

Thank you very much.