UCBEC Presentation at PNWER – Spokane, WA – July 25, 2018

Greg Utzig - Nelson, BC ï been living and working as an ecologist in the basin for over 40 years

I am here representing the Upper Columbia Basin Environmental Collaborative ï a group of local, regional, provincial and international environmental organizations with programs in the Columbia Basin.

As an ecologist, I had the opportunity to be an author of a 2011 summary of the environmental costs of dam construction resulting from the implementation of the Columbia River Treaty in Canada ï called simply the Dam Impacts Report ï available online.

That report summarizes the destructive environmental legacy of this treaty in British Columbia ï it speaks to the lack of consideration of environmental impacts before dam construction, and the ongoing environmental losses continuing today ï losses that include extensive areas of wetlands and riparian forest, as well as many miles of productive river and stream habitat.

These are in addition to the **annual** losses of over a million salmon and steelhead not crossing the border due to the Grand Coulee dam

In contrast to many of the other speakers here today ï we are **NOT** asking to take more from the river, be it salmon, irrigation water, cheap electicity, more flood protection, or revenue from selling water storage.

BUT rather, we are asking for a renewed treaty that considers **what we can give back to the river ecosystems –**

to replace fluctuating reservoirs**,** barren wastelands and dust storms with productive floodplain forests and productive aquatic habitat.

We want to see **Ecosystem Function** added as a third primary purpose of the treaty, and for the restoration of healthy ecosystems to be a consideration in **all** management decisions on the Columbia River System

To us this means **NOT** committing all the storage capacity in the Canadian reservoirs for economic gain or a specific purpose, but reducing human demands for such storage.

I also recently had the privilege to participate in the Mid-Arrow study which has examined various alternatives for balancing flood control, electicity production and improving environmental conditions in the Arrow Reservoir ï also available online.

It is clear that we donôt have all the answers today ï I canôt say exactly what reservoir management regime will ultimately create the optimal mix of benefits.

However, by renewing the treaty with built in flexibility, we believe that through **experimentation** and **Active Adaptive Management,** we can begin to better understand what changes will result in improved ecosystem function, while also building resiliency to climate change.

In closing ï the Collaborativeôs members are asking for negotiations to refrain from thinking of Columbia River water as a commodity to be bought and sold, but to consider the river as a living ecosystem, to not inflict further injury to the system, but provide opportunities for renewal and recovery.

Dam Impacts Report
www.sgrc.selkirk.ca/bioatlas/pdf/FWCP-CB_Impacts_Summary.pdf

Mid-Arrow Report
https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/6/2017/07/Mid-Arrow-Report_REV3.0_MEM-Review_Apr_13_17.pdf
https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/6/2017/07/Mid-Arrow-Scen3_draft_4-24-17.pdf