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The Columbia River Treaty Past, Present and Future: A Panel Discussion
Lynne Lewis, Moderator
Richard Kyle Paisley, E.C. Brickleyer Jr., Lynne Lewis, Kate Stoeckl,
Glen Hearn

Stretching 1952 kilometres, the Columbia River is the fourth largest river in North America and the Columbia River basin covers 640 000 square kilometres of territory in Canada and the US. In 1964, after many decades of negotiation the Treaty Relating to Cooperative Development of the Water Resources of the Columbia River Basin ('Columbia River Treaty') came into effect. The Columbia River Treaty explicitly recognised that the construction and operation of three treaty projects in Canada would increase both the useable energy and dependable capacity of power plants in the US, as well as provide irrigation and flood control benefits in the US, all of which would not be possible at the same cost without the three treaty projects. In return for building the three Columbia River Treaty projects in Canada, the Treaty specifically entitled Canada to a lump sum payment for various "downstream benefits" including flood control benefits as well as payment for one half of the additional power generated by power plants in the US that resulted from storage across the border in Canada.

Whether Canada or the United States got the best deal from the Columbia River Treaty has been the subject of great debate in both countries. Moreover, this debate is likely to continue and grow more heated over the next decade as in the year 2014 both Canada and the United States have the option of giving 10 years notice to terminate key portions of the Treaty.

This panel will deal with the Columbia River Treaty past, present and future including identifying issues regarding the possible future renegotiation of the Treaty from the perspective of both Canada and the United States.

Panel participants are:

Richard Kyle Paisley, Director of the Dr. Andrew R. Thompson Natural Resources Law Program at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Dr. Paisley has written extensively on international water law issues and has had the privilege of working in many major international drainage basins throughout the world including the Columbia.

Bo Brickleyer is the President of the ARC Group an environmental non governmental organization headquartered in Washington state and has worked on environmental and water issues throughout the world.

Kate Stoeckel is a graduate student completing her LL.M at the University of British Columbia working on issues involving the future of the Columbia River and the Columbia River Treaty.

Glen Hearn is a graduate student completing his PH.D. at the University of British Columbia working on issues involving decision analysis and the future of the Columbia River Treaty.

Lynne Lewis is Associate Professor of Economics at Bates College, Lewiston, Maine. She has written on transboundary water resources and agreements governing water allocation.

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