

American Water Resources Association
2009 ANNUAL WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE
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Seattle, WA

Tuesday, Nov. 10

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

SESSION 28: Panel - Columbia River Treaty - From Here to Where?

Moderator – Gerald Sehlke

AWRA President, Idaho National Laboratory, Idaho Falls, ID

The Columbia River Treaty between the USA and Canada was signed in 1961 and ratified in 1964. The treaty has been considered a model of U.S.-Canadian cooperation for 45 years. However, some policymakers, academics and others say the agreement lacks the flexibility to deal with emerging issues such as critical environmental impacts or climate change issues and, therefore, it needs to be reviewed and possibly renegotiated and rewritten to remain relevant to today's circumstances. The possibility of a renegotiated treaty is stirring great interest and some consternation on both sides of the border. Although the Columbia River Treaty doesn't have an expiration date, either country can terminate some or all of its provisions after September 2024 with a 10-year minimum notice. Therefore, if either the U.S. or Canada wants terminate the treaty or make substantive changes in 2024, they must give notice as early as 2014. Gerald Sehlke, President of AWRA, will moderate this important discussion and experts representing various Columbia River Treaty interests will provide their perspectives on the future of the Columbia River Treaty and what the major points of negotiations may be and what impacts potential changes may have on future energy and water operations and resources in the Columbia River Basin.