



To: WEI Meeting Participants

From: Rahul Ray and Jason Collier

Date: June 25, 2020

Re: Rio Tinto WEI Table Meeting 11 (Videoconference) Summary, Wednesday, June 10, 2020

A videoconference for the Rio Tinto Water Engagement Initiative (WEI) was held on June 10, 2020, from 9:00 am to 11:30 am. The videoconference was held instead of an in-person Main Table meeting to promote social distancing in response to COVID-19, while making progress on aspects of the WEI.

This document is a summary of the videoconference and not word-for-word “meeting minutes”. The information presented highlights the topics raised, key discussions, conclusions, and identified action items.

The facilitators were Rahul Ray (RR) and Jason Collier (JC) from EDI. They prepared this meeting summary. Jayson Kurtz (JK) from Ecofish Research participated as the Technical Working Group (TWG) coordinator.

Danielle De Kay, Rio Tinto Communities and Communications Advisor participated in the videoconference. Andrew Czornohalan (AC), Operations Director - Power and Services, Kitimat and Kemano participated as a WEI Table member.

A draft agenda was included in the invitation, and outlined the anticipated meeting outcomes.

- Finalization of WEI Main Table letter outlining interest in collaborating with the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative (NWSRI).
- Direction related to flooding in the Vanderhoof region.
- Understanding the process to draft, review, and advance topic-specific WEI recommendations.

Table 1 lists the participants that were involved in the videoconference and the organizations they represent.

Table 1. June 10, 2020 - WEI Videoconference Participants

Individual	Organization
John Alderliesten	Public participant
Garry Blackwell	Public participant/Southside representative
Lyla Brophy	Nechako Regional Cattlemen's Association
Christina Ciesielski	Carrier Sekani Tribal Council - Fisheries
David Creighton	Northern Health
Andrew Czornohalan	Rio Tinto
Stephen Dery	UNBC
Gerd Erasmus	Public participant
James Jacklin	FLNRORD
Deborah Jones-Middleton	Protective Services - Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Henry Klassen	Public participant
Donna Klingspohn	Public participant
Ray Klingspohn	Public participant
Phillip Krauskopf	FLNRORD
Cyndi Lauze	District of Vanderhoof
Gina Layte-Listen	City of Prince George
Kevin Moutray	District of Vanderhoof
Mark Parker	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Jerry Petersen	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Ray Pillipow	FLNRORD
Tim Plesko	Public participant/Southside representative
Wayne Salewski	Public participant / NEWSS
Dan Sneep	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Paula Tait	Northern Health
Gerry Thiessen	District of Vanderhoof

The following provides a summary of the topics discussed during the videoconference.

- Rahul opened the call by welcoming participants and reviewing the draft agenda. No changes were made.
- Discussion centered on the Main Table’s previous discussion to prioritize sturgeon interests, with some participants suggesting that addressing sturgeon issues (e.g. through changes in flows, restoring spawning habitat, etc.) would address many other interests. A comment was made that it now appears the Main Table is abandoning efforts on sturgeon, and instead are focusing on other interests, such as flooding in Vanderhoof. Rahul commented that the WEI is not forgetting about sturgeon, but rather, the Main Table has decided to collaborate with the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative (NWSRI) because they have spent the last 15 years conducting research and are the leading experts in sturgeon recovery.
- Participant comment that it is now understood, through presentations given by the NWRSI and Northwest Hydraulic Consultants (NHC), that it is not clear how to change flows to address the sturgeon situation. The Main Table letter outlining their interests in collaborating with the NWSRI will be discussed and finalized today.
- Jayson commented that there are many interests that have been brought to the table, which also need to be addressed. The Structured Decision Making (SDM) process is designed to evaluate the effects of flow changes on all interests. The Main Table heard from the specialists on the sturgeon matter and that the connection between flows and sturgeon recovery is presently not well understood. As a result, a solution has not been identified. The approach being taken by the WEI is to collaborate with the NWSRI – but this does not mean that the WEI is abandoning their efforts on sturgeon. It means that the WEI will support the NWSRI as much as possible and revisit the sturgeon issue when more research information is available and make changes through adaptive management.
- Rahul reviewed progress on the Meeting 10 Action Items:
 - The investigation into the impacts of backflow from the Nechako River on Fraser Lake is ongoing. This issue will be addressed when Performance Measures are defined to evaluate the impact.
 - Researching ways of retaining woody debris in the Nechako system is on the TWG list, and will be revisited when needed. The presentation given by NHC suggested the river’s form is not dramatically influenced by woody debris.
 - Draft letter to the NWSRI had been drafted and sent to the Main Table for review. Some comments were made by participants on the letter, which will be finalized after discussion today.
- Rahul summarized the key elements of the NWSRI letter and presented the comments heard from the Main Table. The discussion focused on changes the Main Table would like to see, namely that “strategic

partnership” wording should be used instead of “collaboration”, as it speaks to a stronger connection, and that the “public” reference of the WEI was too broad and should be replaced by “public members of the WEI”. There was some discussion on the timelines for “short, medium, and long term” timelines, but it was agreed that the wording should remain broad to capture all timelines.

- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to update wording and send letter to the NWSRI.**
- Rahul reiterated the proposed WEI pathway. The Main Table has identified interests that will lead to recommendations. Four main “components” or categories have been identified: (1) Operational water flow improvements, (2) non-flow improvements, (3) communication improvements, and (4) links to related initiatives.
- Jayson provided an overview of the Structured Decision Making Process, including establishing Objectives and Performance Measures (PMs) for flow-related improvements. Jayson elaborated on what they are and why they matter, where they fit in the WEI process, where the WEI is currently at in the process, and what is left to do. Jayson provided some examples of Objectives and PMs for communication improvements, sturgeon recruitment, and livestock fences.
- A participant commented that forward-looking projections now made in Flow Facts are a welcome improvement. The improvements were made through the WEI process. Another comment was made that opportunities in forward-looking communications (i.e. in weeks) to farms and ranchers would be valuable planning purposes, for instance to plan for opportune times to fertilize (which can help reduce fertilizers getting into the system).
- It was agreed that communications improvements do not need to go through the SDM process and can be implemented right away through the WEI. Rahul commented that the WEI is committed to address all interests (not just flow related).
- Discussion centered on the Southside (i.e. reservoir), and known interests and communication needs. Some improvements can be made regarding communications, as there have been some challenges getting information to some stakeholders on the reservoir. Rahul mentioned that the WEI was planning on conducting an information-gathering initiative with Southsiders, led by Danielle, to gather additional details on the various interests. Sadly, the COVID pandemic has put the process temporarily on hold.
- Rahul gave an overview of the document that will ultimately present the recommendations put forward by the Main Table to improve operations in the Nechako region. For now, the document will be referred to as “the Plan”, until the Main Table decides on an appropriate name for it. Andrew commented that it is reasonable if the Plan’s name is linked to Rio Tinto operations, but that it should be related to the work the WEI Table has done.
- Rahul proposed the Plan could have three main sections: (1) background information, such as current Rio Tinto operations, WEI context and purpose, environmental context, etc.; (2) Recommendations for water-

flow, non-flow, and communication improvements; and (3) Adaptive Management, which is the post implementation approach to monitor implementation success, integrate new information into the WEI process, and continue to make adjustments to recommendations, as needed.

- Jason gave an overview of the Draft Execution Plan that will be developed to outline a process that can be used to amalgamate WEI information for the Main Table to review and ultimately finalize. Jason provided an example of how the process would work. The Draft Execution Plan will be provided to the Main Table for review before the next meeting.
- **ACTION ITEM: Jason to provide the Draft Execution Plan to the Main Table for review.**
- Jayson discussed how, in terms of identifying the next steps in the WEI process, a List of Interests will be distributed to the Main Table. The list will contain all the interests brought forward to date, as well as the “status” of each particular interests, showing how far along the Main Table has come in order to address the interests, as well as the information gaps.
- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to provide List of Interests to Main Table to inform decisions on next steps in the WEI process.**
- Reservoir interests were discussed. It was mentioned that the WEI will need to identify what is and what is not attainable to address reservoir interests. For instance, erosion occurs throughout the reservoir, and ending all erosional process is not attainable, however, being able to address erosion in certain specific areas is. Other examples of interests include the use of private versus public land, drinking water, navigation, communication, and dredging in the narrows. The WEI is working to explore the pathways to address these issues.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to put dredging the narrows on list of interests to discuss.**
- It was mentioned that a cost benefit analysis should be conducted, as improvements will change flows (i.e. Kemano power generation), which may affect Rio Tinto revenue. Rahul confirmed that costs implications will be part of the analysis, which will be conducted when alternate flows have been identified, through the establishment of objectives and Performance Measures.
- Discussions centered around the issue(s) of flooding in Vanderhoof. It has been identified as one of the WEI interests that can be moved forward to identify Objectives and Performance Measures. Jayson led the discussion on how the Main Table would like to move this interest forwards, in terms of identifying the objectives, defining Performance Measures, and what information we still need (e.g. elevation of residential thresholds, confirmation of stage-discharge relationship).
- It was discussed that the DOV has a report showing the relationship of elevations between flooding and houses, which could be updated and shared with the public. It was also mentioned that there are sandy “green spaces” that exists where flooding could occur. Objectives would include allowing for flooding to

occur in these areas, while safeguarding the community. Mechanisms should be looked at to purchase these areas so that developments do not encroach in them, and explore opportunities for flood mitigation. It was mentioned that the WEI will need to address ongoing changes in stage discharge because of changes in river bottom (due to sedimentation deposits). Jayson commented that these changes can be addressed when defining PMs. There will be a trade-off analysis of flooding homes versus flooding green space, while incorporating flood mitigation. It was commented that this is a great example of what constitutes the need for a trade-off analysis. The SDM process will allow the Main Table to understand the interactions so that solutions can be developed. It also offers an opportunity for Rio Tinto, the DOV and the Province to work together to incorporate the science, and allow flexibility in operations to ultimately address the interests.

- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to work with the DOV to update the flooding report.**
- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to look at the STMP flows and report back to the Main Table.**
- Jayson provided information on Rio Tinto’s current operations related to flooding. Discussions followed on the maximum of 100 m³/s in the Nechako River at Vanderhoof during freeze up (to reduce ice jam formation and subsequent flooding), how that threshold was established, the validity of the science, and its implications on river health. It was agreed that the science should be looked at and discussed, and if needed, the threshold should be reevaluated. Jayson mentioned that the WEI can look at the implications of establishing lower and higher flows, through the establishment of PMs and compare them against other interests, such as fish health. Jayson also elaborated that the flows do not need to be static and that triggers (e.g. temperature) can be used to determine when a certain flows need to be established. It was mentioned that this is another example where the current state of Rio Tinto operations can be improved and offers the potential of balancing this interest (i.e. ice jam formation) with river health.
- It was confirmed once again that the WEI process is treating each identified interest as important, and all interests will be evaluated. The SDM process will balance the many interests through a trade-off analysis. However, the first step is to confirm objectives and performance measures, as applicable, so that the analysis can be conducted. There is also the mechanism of adaptive management, which allows the WEI to revisit and address interests (such as sturgeon) when more information is available.
- The Main Table decided that there will **not be meeting held in August**. Main Table meetings will resume in September. The next meetings are scheduled below:
 - TWG Meeting – **Wednesday, June 24, 2020**
 - Main Table Meeting – **Wednesday, July 8, 2020**

ACTION ITEMS

- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to update wording and send letter to the NWSRI.**

- **ACTION ITEM: Jason to provide the Draft Execution Plan to the Main Table for review.**
- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to provide List of Interests to Main Table to inform decisions on next steps in the WEI process.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to put dredging the narrows on list of interests to discuss.**
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