



To: WEI Meeting Participants
From: Rahul Ray and Jason Collier
Date: July 28, 2020
Re: Rio Tinto WEI Table Meeting 12 (Videoconference) Summary, Wednesday, July 8, 2020

A videoconference for the Rio Tinto Water Engagement Initiative (WEI) was held on July 8, 2020, from 9:00 am to 11:50 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.

Justus Benckhuysen, Rio Tinto Nechako Operations Coordinator, and 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:

- Draft pathway for Sandy Beach flooding option.
- Confirmed improvements to Flow Facts.
- Update on Southside information gathering.
- Confirmation of draft WEI Plan development process.
- Confirm draft objective and Performance Measure development flow.

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

Table 1. July 8, 2020 - WEI Videoconference Participants

Individual	Organization
John Alderliesten	Public participant
Garry Blackwell	Public participant/Southside representative
Christina Ciesielski	Carrier Sekani Tribal Council - Fisheries
David Creighton	Northern Health
Andrew Czornohalan	Rio Tinto
Stephen Dery	UNBC
Gerd Erasmus	Public participant
Arthur Halleran	Nak'azdli First Nation – Natural Resources
James Jacklin	FLNRORD
Henry Klassen	Public participant
Donna Klingspohn	Public participant
Ray Klingspohn	Public participant
Phillip Krauskopf	FLNRORD
Clint Lambert	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Cyndi Lauze	District of Vanderhoof
Kim Menounos	Fraser Basin Council
Kevin Moutray	District of Vanderhoof
Mark Parker	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Jerry Petersen	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Ray Pillipow	FLNRORD
Lindsay Sackett	Fraser Basin Council
Wayne Salewski	Public participant / NEWSS
Carrie Smith	MLA John Rustad's office
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. Rahul proposed some additions to the agenda that included a discussion on the Reservoir level and a Big Bar slide update.
- A participant wondered who is setting the agenda and why is the Main Table addressing flooding in Vanderhoof at this meeting, when focus should be placed on flow for sturgeon. Rahul confirmed that the Main Table decided to let the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative (NWSRI), as the experts, focus on the sturgeon issues and that the WEI will be collaborating with them moving forward. Flooding in Vanderhoof is one of main interests that needs to be advanced and addressed, and, as most of the information is available, it provides a good example to show the Main Table how the WEI will be addressing flow related interests through the Strategic Decision Making (SDM) process.
- Andrew provided an overview of the Reservoir: freshet and an abundance of rain has resulted in above-average inflows, which has led to an increase in the Reservoir level (2799.5 ft). Inflows have been decreasing in the last couple of days. Summer Temperature Management Program (STMP) will be implemented this coming week, which will increase flows in the river and decrease the Reservoir level. Levels are continuously being monitored. It was mentioned that Rio Tinto should increase communications on management options (e.g. hydro generation, flow releases) and actions when Reservoir levels are nearing capacity.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to investigate approach to provide reservoir management information when Reservoir levels are nearing capacity.**
- A participant mentioned that they submitted some questions online to Rio Tinto through the Flow Facts reply email and did not receive a response. Questions were related to siltation in the river and if flows would be adjusted as the reservoir is nearing capacity. Andrew commented that Rio Tinto will look into why a response was not provided.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to look into why a response was not provided to a participant through Flow Facts.**
- Discussion centered around the reason(s) why the siltation is so high in the river. Potential reasons may include side channels being blown out due to the heavy rain and freshet, or a landslide. A participant wondered if there was a way for Rio Tinto to measure sediment or turbidity in the river through monitoring or modeling. Another participant mentioned that there are also impacts occurring in the Reservoir (not just the river), such as erosion and sedimentation.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto team to look into the potential to monitoring sediment or turbidity in the river.**
- A participant commented that the information coming through Flow Facts was good and wondered if it was possible to have more frequent temperature data during the STMP and if historical Flow Facts data (pre-2016) can be uploaded to the Get Involved Nechako Website.

- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to upload historical Flow Facts data (pre-2016) to the Get Involved Nechako Website.**
- The Province (James Jacklin) provided an update on the Big Bar slide: some salmon are making it upriver. Flow level have increased in the Fraser in the last couple of weeks, making passage more difficult. Operations will resume when flows diminish. It appears there is a bit of delay in migration. Weblinks that were previously sent out by Rahul provide good updated information.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to resend weblinks on Big Bar slide.**
- Discussion centered around funding for the Spruce City Wildlife hatchery and the people who are stepping up to help out. Centerra Gold (Mount Milligan mine) have committed \$40,000 over 4 years to the hatchery. An application for funding through the Canada Fund to Rio Tinto and an application to the BC Salmon Restoration fund have been submitted. DFO volunteers are helping to redesign the facility to increase efficiency.
- It was mentioned that the WEI should put together a recommendation for DFO to take action to help the salmon, which could be reviewed by the Main Table in September. Jayson commented that the first step should be to request an update from DFO on their various initiatives, as there is a lot going on and they have a comprehensive plan to move forward.
- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to request an update (or a presentation) from DFO on their initiatives and to develop a summary for the Main Table.**
- Rahul provided updates on the Meeting 11 Action Items:
 - WEI letter sent to the NWSRI – copy included in the pre-read package. The WEI will ask the NWSRI to put a priority on determining appropriate flows (timing and quantity) for sturgeon. The WEI will use an Adaptive Management approach for when information becomes available.
 - Draft Execution Plan was sent to the Main Table in the pre-read package. (Part of the discussion for this meeting)
 - TWG provided a list of Interests to the Main Table to inform decisions on the next steps in the WEI process. (Part of the discussion for this meeting)
 - Dredging Tahtsa Narrows was added to the necessary information list.
 - Jayson and Rahul met with the DOV (Kevin) to discuss the Sandy Beach flooding concept. (Part of the discussion for this meeting)

- STMP was recognized as a Main Table Interest.
- Jayson provided a presentation on the flooding concept of Sandy Beach. This interest was brought forward by the Main Table. As much information is available, the intent was to use this specific interest to show how the SDM process will be used for all flow related interests. Jayson provided an overview of the interest, location, available information and potential Objectives and Performance Measures that can be used in the SDM process. The presentation has been uploaded to the Get Involved Nechako Website.
- Rahul commented that developing Performance Measures is useful when comparing impacts on various interests from change in flows alternatives.
- Andrew commented that the Nautley River factors into decisions being made about changing flows. Having better data always helps to make informed decisions.
- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to determine if data gaps exists with respect to Nautley, so that decision on changing flows can be made with certainty.**
- A comment was made that there is a lot of (provincial and federal) data that does not get shared, and it would be worthwhile if Rio Tinto can help create a central data “centre”. Andrew commented that Rio Tinto currently shares data with Environment Canada and has regular calls with the forecast center. There are opportunities to link pieces together and the WEI can help identify and fill potential gaps (e.g. do manual surveys, monitoring stations, satellite information).
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to explore a central data centre that will provide links to provincial and federal data.**
- Discussion centered on ways to improving the information provided in Rio Tinto’s Flow Facts. Andrew commented that to address potential issues with a full reservoir, Rio Tinto’s hydrology team manages releases in flows in real-time based on reservoir levels. It is important to appreciate that opening the spillway does not mean flooding will occur in Vanderhoof.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to provide presentation on how the system is managed under various conditions during high reservoir levels.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Improvements to Flow Facts to include: Adding Metric System units to the graphs.**
- Discussion centered on how climate change has affected the system and abnormal situations are occurring more frequently compared to the historical data. Andrew commented that Dr. Stephen Dery’s research at UNBC will be used to inform Rio Tinto’s management options and modeling will be updated or adjusted every year. Indeed, Rio Tinto will need to make different decisions now compared to 2010, but will continue the process to understand climate change implications with local communities.

- Jayson commented on of the foundations of the WEI is to understand the system better, to consider different variables (e.g. climate change, Mountain Pine Beetle), in order to evaluate different flow scenarios through the SDM process. Modeling can play with different variables. The Province (James Jacklin) commented that there exists a good technical report of key consideration (e.g. snow, rain, temp, flows, etc.) for climate change for the Nechako region. Jayson commented that available information will be used and incorporated in the modelling.
- Danielle provided an update on the Southside information gathering effort. Danielle has been working with Nancy Plesko to set up a two-day event in Wisteria tentatively for the last week of July. Garry commented that the end of August, after the haying season, would be a better time for residents. Planning for the event is ongoing.
- Jason provided an overview of the Execution Plan that will be used to develop the WEI Plan. Context included the approach, the potential Table of Contents, and the three geographical areas (Nechako River, Reservoir, and Cheslatta/Murray River Lake system). It was confirmed that the recommendations provided will be based on the best science/information available, will show the methods used, the applicable levels of confidence or “rating”, and outline risks and uncertainties – which are all important for transparency. The Province confirmed that they will provide support when needed (e.g. technical expertise) during the development of the WEI Plan, but they are not leading it.
- A comment was made that it would be worthwhile having a Gantt chart of the WEI timeline and tasks, so that participants can see where they are at in the process.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to provide Gantt chart of the WEI process showing timelines and tasks.**
- Jayson provided an overview of the Issues and Interests identified by participants. Jayson sought feedback from the Main Table on a proposed approach to define Performance Measures and Objectives during the summer break for the flow related interests. Table confirmed this approach.
- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to develop draft Performance Measures and Objectives for flow related interests, which will be presented to the Main Table in the Fall.**
- It was mentioned that there are a lot of components that go into making a healthy river. It is a very complex situation and the WEI needs to consider all aspects of the system. There does not appear to be a magic bullet that will fix everything.
- Rahul reviewed the next proposed meeting dates for Main Table approval. (Note that the meeting dates were updated after the meeting based on feedback received). The revised meeting dates are:
 - Main Table meeting Wednesday, September 16, 2020
 - TWG meeting: Wednesday, September 30, 2020
 - Main Table meeting: Wednesday, October 14, 2020

- TWG meeting: Wednesday, October 28, 2020
 - Main Table meeting: Tuesday, November 10, 2020
 - TWG meeting: Wednesday, November 25, 2020
 - Main Table meeting: Wednesday, December 9, 2020
- Rahul reviewed the WEI Main Table Accomplishments to date and thanked everyone for their hard work and dedication.

ACTION ITEMS

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- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto team to look into the potential to monitoring sediment or turbidity in the river.**
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