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**To:** WEI Meeting Participants  
**From:** Rahul Ray and Jason Collier  
**Date:** October 1, 2020  
**Re:** Rio Tinto WEI Table Meeting 13 (Videoconference) Summary, September 16, 2020

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A videoconference for the Rio Tinto Water Engagement Initiative (WEI) was held on September 16, 2020, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, with an hour break from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm for lunch. 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. There was no meeting held in August to allow for a summer break.

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:

- Understanding of participant perspectives on the WEI process to date
- Receive progress update on characterization of WEI-specific issues, interests, objectives, and performance measures
- Refine three draft objectives and performance measures for WEI Table-identified issues
- Explore water temperature management improvements
- Review and revise conceptual process schedule

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

Table 1. September 16, 2020 - WEI Videoconference Participants

<b>Individual</b>	<b>Organization</b>
John Alderliesten	Public participant
Garry Blackwell	Public participant/Southside representative
Julie Blackwell	Public participant/Southside representative
Lyla Brophy	Nechako Regional Cattlemen's Association
David Creighton	Northern Health
Andrew Czornohalan	Rio Tinto
Kevin Dobbin	Rio Tinto
Stephen Dery	UNBC
Gerd Erasmus	Public participant
Arthur Halleran	Nak'azdli First Nation – Natural Resources
Curtis Helgesen	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Mike Henry	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Sophia Iliopulos	BC Assembly of First Nations
Sirah Ul Islam	UNBC
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
Clint Lambert	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Gina Layte-Listen	City of Prince George
David Levy	Nechako Fisheries Conservation Program
Jason Llewellyn	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Adam MacDonald	UNBC
Kim Menounos	Fraser Basin Council
Kevin Moutray	District of Vanderhoof
Mark Parker	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Jerry Petersen	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Tim Plesko	Public participant/Southside representative
Charlie Rensby	Village of Burns Lake
Mike Robertson	Southside representative / Cheslatta Carrier Nation
Wayne Salewski	Public participant / NEWSS
Dan Sneep	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Gerry Thiessen	District of Vanderhoof
Dennis Wood	Public participant
June Wood	Public participant

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

- Rahul opened the call by welcoming participants and reviewing the draft agenda. Discussions on current Reservoir levels, as well as a recap of the WEI Guiding Principles, was added to the agenda.
- Rahul provide a reminder of the WEI Ground Rules and asked participants if they had questions or comments. Andrew stated that these are tough conversations to have; the issues are not simple and are contentious; if the tasks were easy, they would have been done already. Rio Tinto is encouraging open communication and recognizes that it is a difficult process. Andrew is concerned about recent communications (i.e. emails), not being aligned with WEI values causing division amongst participants. Andrew asked participants to reflect on why they are participating in the WEI. He believes we can work together to find a mutual understanding between industry, First Nations, government, and communities on how to improve the situation, but the core is built on understanding and trust. Andrew understands that people have been shaped by past circumstances leading to a positions-based outlook. We are all committed to see things improve, which is the common thread between us and we need understanding and respect in order to move forward.
- A participant commented that sometimes it appears as no one is listening and it is a waste of time. For instance, the interest of dredging Tahtsa narrows was been brought forward several times and nothing has happened in relation to this interest. Rahul commented that all interests are been documented and that we will be talking about Southside interests today on how the WEI will be moving forward to address these interests.
- **ACTION ITEM: Add a discussion of dredging Tahtsa Narrows to an upcoming agenda.**
- Rahul commented that we are in this together and he understands it is a tough initiative. It is understood that there is a lot of history, but the WEI is a forward-looking initiative. We are aiming to improve the future, not fix the past.
- A participant commented that there has been long standing generational issue with deceit and dishonesty, and is participating with caution. They expect concrete action out of the initiative, and if no action is taken, then it echoes the past and will only serve to enflame the mistrust even more. However, we are finally on the offense once again and we will not solve these complex issues overnight, but we need some victories now so that we can carry on. Showing results, timelines and goals with objectives would be useful.
- Andrew commented that he has heard people’s concerns loud and clear, and he knows that the initiative is not moving as quickly as initially planned. When this initiative began, it was under the assumptions that we would be routinely meeting face to face. We have had to move towards videoconferences due to the COVID pandemic, which has slowed progress. We are trying to find ways to improve communications and find efficiencies, and suggestions are welcomed.

- Others commented that they want to continue with the initiative, and see the value in doing so. Tough questions will be asked, however, and that is the point of the WEI: to find answers to the tough questions.
- There was agreement that participants are to follow the WEI Guiding Principles.
- A participant commented on why they wrote a letter to the Premier. It was based on the need to address government policy, which is why this situation was allowed to happen. They felt the WEI is focused on the improvement of Rio Tinto's operations, but does not address the larger issue of governmental policy or the health of the river. The WEI will address the symptoms, not the problems.
- The Province commented that the issues are complex and made some suggestions based on previous experiences with these types of values-based initiatives. Having a visual representation or tools (e.g. Gantt chart) and reviewing it at the beginning of every meeting, to show where the initiative is at (and where it is going), and showing progress would be helpful. It feels as though progress has been slow, but that there is in fact forward momentum. Rahul confirmed that an overview conceptual schedule has been developed and will be reviewed during this meeting.
- Rahul provided an overview of the comments and feedback received from the survey that was sent to participants to comment of the WEI process. Rahul sent the unedited comments to the Main Table in the pre-read package.
- The Action Items for Meeting 12 were not reviewed due to time constraints. However, status of each Actions Items is included with the presentation, which will be posted on the Get Involved Nechako website.
- Jayson Kurtz provided a summary of the Strategic Decision Making (SDM) process, so that everyone has a shared understanding.
- Each interest has been compiled by the TWG and a straw-dog path forward has been developed for each interest. The list of approximately 100 interests will be sent to the Main Table for review to ensure the details are correctly captured, and to determine if any other information can be added.
- **ACTION ITEM: Provide Main Table with list of compiled interests for feedback and input.**
- Jayson Kurtz provided 5 examples of straw-dogs that were developed to address WEI participant interests by showing the path towards developing Performance Measures and Objectives: (1) Flooding in Vanderhoof, (2) Fish Access into Tributaries, (3) Fish Entrainment, (4) Climate Change, and (5) Chinook Salmon. Each of these examples shows the various levels of information that is available to address the issues. For example, plenty of information is available relative to the flooding in Vanderhoof interest, whereas the information relating to the fish access into tributaries interest is currently limited.
- Comments related to (1) Flooding in Vanderhoof interests included that a substantial amount of work has been done and this interest can be addressed (i.e. finalize the PMs and Objectives) through offline

discussions. It was agreed that the topic will be addresses offline and the results will be brought back to the Main Table. Question was asked on why development has occurred in floodplains to begin with and why would it now be someone else’s problem to deal with. It was commented that decisions in the past were based on the available information and best science at the time, which subsequently changed over time with increased understanding. For instance, it used to be that developments could be constructed in the 50 year floodplain, whereas now it is the 200 year floodplain. And even now, post-2007, the approach has changed again due to the present circumstances.

- **ACTION ITEMS: Conduct offline discussions to finalize PMs and Objectives related to flooding in Vanderhoof.**
- Comments related to (2) Fish Access into Tributaries included the need to specifically define the issue (conditions, locations, circumstances, timing, relation to operation, etc.) in order to develop a path forward.
- Information related to (3) Fish Entrainment shows that this is not an issue at the Kemano Tunnel entrance. The assessment conducted for the T2 project showed the same results. A participant commented that they do not believe it is not a problem, as it has been reported by tunnel caretakers that they notice fish going into the tunnel. Jayson Kurtz commented that the information available was based on a desktop study and lessons learned from other spillways. There may be opportunity to get the data in person, but that there may be other reasons why fish are not a plentiful (e.g. habitat, food availability, predation, Skins Lake spillway), and the WEI will look at these interests, as well. It was mentioned that, when participants were on the Southside field trip last year, there was fish entrainment that occurred in the Skins Lake spillway during the upgrades.
- Comments related to (4) Climate Change included the need to make important linkages from climate change to other interests and values. For example, droughts and snowpack can affect fish and flooding. An integrating lens will be needed to incorporate climate change into adaptive management. Andrew commented that Rio Tinto is trying to understand the impacts of climate change, and are working with UNBC, UBC, and a Quebec University to conduct research. Focus is currently on precipitation (rain and snow) implications. Rio Tinto is closely linked to Stephen Dery (UNBC and WEI participant) for these efforts. A participant wanted to know if legal agreements (e.g. STMP) are still valid with climate change implications. Andrew replied that the WEI will be able to provide clear recommendations and Rio Tinto can work with DFO and the Water Comptroller to address different scenarios (i.e. adaptive management) and determine if a License change is needed. For this year, Rio Tinto was able to work with the legal parameters. DFO commented that they are willing and hoping to work towards solutions based on the WEI recommendations. Jayson Kurtz confirmed that climate change implications will be used to inform considerations of other interests.
- Related to (5) Chinook Salmon, a participant wanted to know if this was a DFO responsibility, and it may be that the Main Table is not qualified to address the issue. DFO confirmed that they are a part of the WEI, and that the WEI process and the TWG is able to address this interest and present the information to the Main

Table in an understanding way. Jayson Kurtz commented that the TWG will not do all the work, and that specialists will be brought in when needed. The TWG will sort the data and present it to the Main Table. A participant wanted to know if young chinook were being used for the temperature related interests. Jayson Kurtz confirmed that adults were used, but that the interest can be developed for juveniles. He mentioned that currently the chinook interest is broken out into several sub-interests, such as habitat, temperatures, life stages, migration, and others.

- Jayson Kurtz commented on the composition of the TWG, which has been focused on supporting Main Table interests and providing recommendations. Many of the data gaps have been identified. The TWG is proposing to re-focus their efforts on more technical aspects, and wondered if the Main Table was in supportive of this approach. There was general agreement. The Province confirmed that they are committed and ready to provide technical support to the TWG when needed. Jayson commented that the TWG would continue to keep the Main Table informed, that specialists may be brought in, and that participants from the Main Table may be asked to participate depending on the interests being addressed. There would also be an opportunity to form technical “breakout” groups to address specific interests.
- Andrew provided a presentation on current reservoir levels (which was added to the agenda). He commented that, for those interested, a workshop will be conducted to provide more details on reservoir management and allow for more detailed discussions. (**Post meeting update:** The Workshop is scheduled for Friday, September 25 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. An invite was sent to participants on Tuesday, September 22). Andrew’s presentation was recorded (along with the questions and answer period), and was provided to participants.
- David Levy, Chair and Independent Member of the Nechako Fisheries Conservation Program (NFCP), provided a presentation on Chinook and Sockeye Conservation efforts and results for the Nechako River. The presentation was recorded (along with the questions and answers period), and was provided to participants. The presentation is found here:  
<https://www.getinvolvednechako.ca/7037/widgets/27362/documents/39873>
- Jason Collier provided an overview of the information gathering effort conducted on the Southside on August 20 from 1 pm to 7 pm at Wistaria Hall, which included some detail on the topics discussed with those in attendance. Jason also presented the next steps to move Southside interests forward through a Working Group (all recommendations from the Working Group will flow to the Main Table for review). Another information gathering effort is planned for the Southside in October to gather spatially-linked photos and records. A Southside “Information Package” containing all the information compiled to date will be developed, which will contain potential recommendation/options to address non-flow related interests (i.e. communications, physical works, research, adaptive management). Flow related interests will be captured and addressed through the SDM process. A Workshop will be conducted in November so that the Southside Working Group can discuss the Information Package and decide on, and finalize, the preferred recommendations or options that will be used to address the interests. A Southside participant commented that this approach would take too long and that a Southside-led effort [to gather information] would be

more efficient. Rahul confirmed that a discussion will be held offline to plan the next information gathering effort.

- Rahul provided an overview of the Conceptual Schedule that was developed at the Main Table's request to track progress on various aspects of the WEI. Elements included flow-related interests, non-flow Reservoir interests, WEI Plan development, Adaptive Management, and linkages to other initiatives. Rahul will refine the schedule based on this meeting's feedback and provide it to the Main Table.
- **ACTION ITEMS: Rahul to provide the draft Conceptual Schedule to Main Table participants for review and revision.**
- Rahul asked if there were topics that need to be brought forward. A participant commented that sedimentation is a real challenge that is associated with the erosional processes on the Reservoir, which in turn affects the river.
- **ACTION ITEMS: Rahul to add sedimentation interests to the agenda.**
- A participant commented that Henry has brought forward a number of interests that never seems to be discussed. It may be worthwhile discussing them at the Main Table to see if they can be address within the WEI, or determine that they are not applicable or relevant, or determine that newer information is available.
- **ACTION ITEM: Compile Henry's comments and presentations, and discuss at the Main Table.**
- A participant commented that, at some point when it makes sense to do so, it would be worthwhile taking a look at different or alternative hydrographs for the river. Rahul commented that this will happen during the analysis of different flow scenarios.
- Mike commented that he is prepared to give an update of the WRF. And that he agrees with having smaller breakout groups discussing specific interests, in order to be more productive.
- A participant wanted to see hydrographs of what it would look like if flows were diverted from Kemano and used in the river instead. Rahul commented that this could be done during the analysis, as well.
- **ACTION ITEM: Develop hydrographs showing different scenarios where flows are diverted from Kemano and used in the river instead.**
- Rahul reviewed the proposed dates for upcoming WEI meetings. No changes were proposed. It was agreed that videoconferences would continue until it is deemed safe to have face to face meetings.

## ACTION ITEMS

- **ACTION ITEM:** Add a discussion of dredging Tahtsa Narrows to an upcoming agenda.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Provide Main Table with list of compiled interests for feedback and input.
- **ACTION ITEMS:** Conduct offline discussions to finalize PMs and Objectives related to flooding in Vanderhoof.
- **ACTION ITEMS:** Rahul to provide the draft Conceptual Schedule to Main Table participants for review and revision.
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- **ACTION ITEM:** Compile Henry's comments and presentations and discuss at the Main Table.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Develop hydrographs showing different scenarios where flows are diverted from Kemano and used in the river instead.