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**To:** WEI Meeting Participants

**From:** Brodie Smith, Jason Collier, and Rahul Ray

**Date:** December 18, 2020

**Re:** Rio Tinto WEI Table Meeting 15 (Videoconference) Summary, December 9, 2020

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A videoconference for the Rio Tinto Water Engagement Initiative (WEI) was held on December 9, 2020, from 10:00 am to 12:05 pm. 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. Brodie Smith, also from EDI, took notes during the workshop and prepared this meeting summary. Jayson Kurtz (JK) from Ecofish Research participated as the Technical Working Group (TWG) coordinator.

Andrew Czornohalan (AC), Operations Director - Power and Services, Kitimat and Kemano participated as a WEI Table member. Justus Benckhuysen, Rio Tinto Nechako Operations Coordinator, participated in the videoconference as technical support.

A draft agenda was included in the invitation, and outlined the anticipated meeting topics:

- Action item review
- Technical Working Group (TWG) update
- Water Release Facility (WRF) update
- Review communication improvement recommendations
- Southside Working Group update
- Main Table guidance on a WEI process update document
- Next Main Table meeting dates
- Proposed next meeting topics

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

Table 1. December 9, 2020 - WEI Videoconference Participants

<b>Individual</b>	<b>Organization</b>
John Alderliesten	Public participant
David Creighton	Northern Health
Andrew Czornohalan	Rio Tinto
Stephen Dery	UNBC
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
Jason Llewellyn	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Kim Menounos	Fraser Basin Council
Kevin Moutray	District of Vanderhoof
Mark Parker	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Jerry Petersen	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
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
Andy Lecuyer	Rio Tinto
Jennifer Howell	District of Fort St. James
Liane Olson	Rio Tinto
Cyndi Lauze	District of Vanderhoof
Ray Pillipow	FLNRORD

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

- RR opened the call by welcoming participants and reviewing the draft agenda. An update on current reservoir elevations was added to the agenda.
- RR reviewed action items from Meeting 14:
  - RR was to post the '87 and '97 Agreements on the Get Involved Nechako website. **Update:** These agreements were already on the Get Involved Nechako website.
  - RR to adjust the way the conceptual schedule is presented to make it more reader friendly. **Update:** Reformatted conceptual schedule sent to WEI participants as part of the WEI Main Table 15 reading package on Wednesday, December 2, 2020. The schedule is in Microsoft Excel for easier viewing.
  - AC to provide another update on a potential Tahtsa Narrows dredge when information gathering efforts are complete. **Update:** AC will provide an update when additional information is compiled.
  - RR to work with Lyla to develop water flow change communication recommendations. **Update:** Some communication recommendations will be presented, discussed, and potentially approved during Meeting 15. More discussion is needed to address the issues raised by Lyla.
- JK provided an update on the Technical Working Group (TWG). The update included a review of the TWG objectives, meeting frequency, and the three phases of the TWG (brainstorming, technical work, and review/recommendations). Active technical summaries are underway for fish in the river, fisheries and aquatics in reservoir, and other topics. The TWG has been looking at reservoir productivity, water quality, water temperature, caribou and floatplane access. JK provided a figure showing the work completed on determining float plane access/ Nechako River depths. The TWG is anticipating additional technical work will be needed for salmon, river fish, reservoir fish, flooding, erosion, and wildlife. The TWG is supporting the Southside Working Group by looking into water quality, erosion and effects of large woody debris, navigation and water intake systems.
- Participants asked JK about the difference between Dolly Varden and Bull Trout. JK responded that they are two different species, and generally Bull Trout live in interior rivers, and Dolly Varden live in coastal river systems. Bull Trout are found in the Nechako.
- RR introduced the communications improvement recommendations. The intent was to outline improvements to communications related to Rio Tinto operations. The Communication Working Group (CWG) was formed and has had two meetings. RR reviewed the overall guidance for communications improvements: “With the improvements directed through the Water Engagement Initiative (WEI), Table

participants expect communication between Rio Tinto and interested parties to be: more collaborative: designed as an interactive partnership, timely: where the information provided is useful for planning purposes and provides relevant information of upcoming changes, and inclusive: including local knowledge that exists in communities.” RR presented the CWG recommendations to the Main Table for review, revision and confirmation.

- RR introduced **Communication Recommendation 1: Flow Facts** – WEI Main Table members to support the information currently included in Flow Facts and support the additional improvements identified in the recommendation.
- JB noted that he had a request for Rio Tinto to notify river residents sooner about spillway changes, and to communicate the potential for spillway changes more clearly. AC agreed that it was a good idea to announce the potential for gate changes for the week, and then confirm gate changes the day of. This will allow river residents to prepare and make appropriate decisions regarding gate changes.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to review when and how spillway information is provided.**
- Participants discussed the distribution of the Flow Facts information, including how people can sign up for the weekly emails. JB noted that there is an email distribution list, and email updates are sent out once a week, either on Thursday or Friday, and the website is regularly updated. It was discussed that more awareness is needed about how to sign up for the email distribution. JB stated that Rio Tinto is already working through the Facebook group to increase awareness.
- The WEI Main Table participants confirmed Communication Recommendation 1: Flow Facts.
- RR introduced **Communication Recommendation 2: Flood Emergency Planning** – Rio Tinto representatives to initiate scoping efforts, conceptual design, and engagement regarding the FEP.
- Participants discussed the levels of flooding (flooding versus high water), communications, and the roles of Rio Tinto, Emergency Management British Columbia (EMBC) and other government agencies in flood emergency planning. It was noted that local governments are responsible for emergency response, not EMBC. Rio Tinto needs to engage with local governments on this issue as much as with EMBC. Participants noted that Rio Tinto can inform residents in advance of rising levels so that residents can be prepared rather than deal with the effects of the high-water levels after they have occurred. It was noted that better communication and advanced notification of flooding are key for success.
- A participant asked how the initial flooding of the reservoir and the associated disturbance of vegetation affected pH levels, how changes in pH level might affect fish, and how can changing pH levels be mitigated. JK stated that the TWG would look into the questions and would follow up with the participant.
- **ACTION ITEM: The TWG will investigate the effects of reservoir flooding on water pH, and the potential for effects on fish populations.**

- The WEI Main Table participants confirmed Communication Recommendation 2: Flood Emergency Planning.
- RR introduced **Communication Recommendation 3: Team member awareness and communication efficiency** – Rio Tinto to expand the list of municipal, regional district, and Indigenous communities to meet with on a defined basis to discuss Rio Tinto operations and relevant personnel, and to make information about their representative broadly available.
- AC confirmed that Rio Tinto is happy to work on this. The data should be compiled into one source. AC and JB confirmed that Rio Tinto is meeting regularly with Prince George and Vanderhoof. They will look into which other communities would benefit from similar meetings with Rio Tinto.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to compile contact information into one source.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to determine if other communities would benefit from regular meetings with Rio Tinto.**
- The WEI Main Table participants confirmed Communication Recommendation 3: Team member awareness and communication efficiency.
- RR introduced **Communication Recommendation 4: Maintain “Get Involved Nechako” website** – Rio Tinto to actively maintain the Get Involved Nechako website as an informational tool throughout and after the completion of the WEI.
- AC asked for more detail on what would be involved. JB noted that he tracks the use of the website, and, while sometimes sporadic, it is still getting a lot of use (approximately 40 to 50 people a week); the WEI, Operations and Flow Facts sections in particular. Participants requested additional weather information to be added, including average precipitation for future dates. AC noted that a link to Environment Canada data could be added, and Rio Tinto would be keen to include more of this kind of data.
- **ACTION ITEM: RR to provide AC with more information what is involved in Communication Recommendation 4.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to add link to additional average precipitation data to the Get Involve Nechako website.**
- The WEI Main Table participants confirmed Communication Recommendation 4: Maintain “Get Involved Nechako” website.
- RR introduced additional communication improvements – Agricultural communication challenges. AC and JB have communicated with Lyla. More detail and feedback still needed on each recommendation. JB and AC will follow up with Lyla.

- Mike Robertson provided an update on the Water Release Facility (WRF) investigations. Field projects have been completed for the year and data has been analyzed. Baseline work included water, fish, soil surveys/sampling from Kenny Dam downstream to Cheslatta. Geotechnical work has also been completed around the dam and downstream of the dam – no fatal flaws have been discovered in the competency of the rock. The feasibility study included direct involvement from Cheslatta and monitors from Saik'uz First Nations. Rio Tinto and Cheslatta are working to develop the field program for 2021 and will continue with data collection.
- Participants asked if a federal or provincial environmental review will be required for the WRF. Mike Robertson noted that the current baseline work is in preparation for a future assessment. AC noted that the project is still in the pre-feasibility stage. There is a lot of existing data already, which will need to be updated with current conditions.
- JC provided an update on the Southside Working Group (SWG). The update included a review of the SWG timeline. The Southside Workshop was held on November 18, 2020. The goals of the workshop were to discuss, revise, and confirm the information presented in the Draft *Southside Report*, and to discuss, revise and confirm the non-flow related recommendations and to identify pathways to address the identified interests. Non-flow related recommendations that were identified included: erosion, driftwood, livestock, water pumps/intakes, water quality, navigation, recreation, wildlife, funding, wildfire, communications and power, and adaptive management. The next steps for the SWG include finalizing the Draft *Southside Report*, presenting the report to the Main Table, and follow through on the Action Items.
- WEI Main Table representatives who are also part of the Southside Working Group noted that the Southside Working Group workshop was very successful and productive. It was a good start to addressing non-flow related issues.
- AC provided an updated on current reservoir elevations. The warm period over the last 10 days has moved the reservoir away from freeze up. Rainfall on the west side of the reservoir has kept the elevations flatlined. Expecting dropping temperatures and dry conditions in the near future, which brings the reservoir closer to freeze up. Rio Tinto is closely monitoring the reservoir and the Nechako River for freeze up. When freeze up does occur, the spill rate will increase to 70 – 85 CMS. The current snowpack is around average and is fluctuating week to week with the freeze thaw temperature fluctuations. The current models show that there is no increased chance of flooding for the downstream communities; the models are being closely monitored. The smelter has had some challenges recently, including a landslide between Kitimat and Terrace that took out the CN railway route. All incoming/outgoing materials are now moving via barges and trucks. Kemano generation has not been impacted. Once freeze up occurs, flow rates will become more certain.
- There was a discussion on the effectiveness of the modeling. AC explained that they are always working to improve the models, in particular to better understand the influences of ground saturation. Participants mentioned that they understood the difficulties of changing weather patterns and the increased variability

in weather patterns over the last few years. A participant noted that it was important to adjust flows to meet the goal of a healthy river, and they suggested healthy river model should be vigorously defended when it came to determining water releases.

- A participant requested more information from Rio Tinto on how much energy is being used by the smelter, and a comparison of the amount energy used by the old smelter compared to the now modernized smelter.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to provide smelter energy usage data to the WEI Main Table.**
- RR introduced the WEI process update – looking to provide a public WEI process update in January. RR reviewed the proposed contents and key themes. Discussion centered around the need and reasons for a public update. Participants agreed that it was important to provide a high-level update to the public.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul will provide a WEI Process Update for the Main Table to review in January.**
- A participant asked about the number and location of water quality monitoring stations between Prince George and the spillway. Stephen Dery responded that water quality monitoring was not part of his research, but he could contact researchers who would know. JB stated that there is one long term monitoring site in Prince George and one near Vanderhoof; there may also be one near Fort Fraser. JK confirmed these and noted that this was part of the work being done by the TWG, and he will provide a list at the next meeting. AC noted there may be value in increasing the number of long-term water quality monitoring sites.
- **ACTION ITEM: The TWG will provide a list of water quality monitoring sites at the next meeting.**
- Rahul proposed the date for the next meeting: February 10, 2021. RR reviewed the proposed February 2021 agenda topics and no changes were made.

## ACTION ITEMS

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- **ACTION ITEM: The TWG will investigate the effects of reservoir flooding on water pH, and the potential for effects on fish populations.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to compile contact information into one source.**
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- **ACTION ITEM:** Rio Tinto to provide smelter energy usage data to the WEI Main Table.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Rahul will provide a WEI Process Update for the Main Table to review in January.
- **ACTION ITEM:** The TWG will provide a list of water quality monitoring sites at the next meeting.