



To: WEI Meeting participants

From: Rahul Ray and Jason Collier

Date: August 29, 2019

Re: Rio Tinto WEI Table Meeting Summary - Meeting 3: Thursday, August 22, 2019

The third Table meeting of the Rio Tinto Water Engagement Initiative (WEI) was held on August 22, 2019 at Scott's Grille in Vanderhoof, British Columbia. The session ran from 10:00 am to 3:40 pm.

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

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

Justus Benckhuysen (JB), Rio Tinto Nechako Operations Coordinator, and Danielle De Kay (DD), Rio Tinto Communities and Communications Advisor, were also present as process support. Andrew Czornohalan (AC), Rio Tinto Acting General Manager was a participant at the Table.

Table 1 provides a list of the participants present at the meeting and the organizations they represent.

Table 1. August 22, 2019 - WEI Table Meeting 3 Participants

Individual	Organization
Mike Robertson	Cheslatta Carrier Nation
Ted Jack	Cheslatta Carrier Nation
Gina Layte-Listen	City of Prince George
Mike Henry	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Dan Sneep	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Jennifer Howell	District of Fort St. James
Kevin Moutray	District of Vanderhoof
Gerry Thiessen	District of Vanderhoof
Spencer Siemens	District of Vanderhoof
Cyndi Lauze	District of Vanderhoof
Sara Nussle	Fraser Basin Council
James Jacklin	Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development
Phillip Krauskopf	Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development
Carrie Smith	MLA John Rustad's office
Henry Klassen	Public participant
Gerd Erasmus	Public participant
Craig Smith	Public participant
John Alderliesten	Public participant
Wayne Salewski	Public participant
June Wood	Public Participant
Lyla Brophy	Nechako Regional Cattlemen's Association
Paula Tait	Northern Health
Clint Lambert	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Jason Llewellyn	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Andrew Czornohalan	Rio Tinto
Tim Plesko	Southside representative
Stephen Dery	UNBC
Arthur Halleran	Nak'azdli First Nation – Natural Resources
Emma Burak	Public Participant

The following provides a summary of the topics discussed at the meeting.

- The WEI project team introduced themselves and provided details on their respective roles in the WEI Process. Participants introduced themselves, providing background on the organization they represent, if needed.
- RR reviewed the agenda and asked if any changes were needed. No changes to the agenda were made.
- Expected outcomes of the meeting included:
 - increased understanding of the Nechako Reservoir regulatory context and existing water flow schedule, and
 - further development of a comprehensive list of issues and interests related to current Rio Tinto Operations in the Nechako region.
- The Province provided an update on the Big Bar slide, specifically the fish passage barrier in the Fraser River, approximately 80 km north of Lillooet. Details were provided on some of the options that were considered to address the emergency situation. Current efforts involve transporting salmon over the barrier via netting and helicopter transport. Approximately 2,000 to 3,000 fish are being transported over the barrier daily. Instream works are being conducted with some Chinook making it over the barrier naturally. Future options include using trucks, installing fish ladders, and continuing with the instream works. Although some of the salmon are being tagged, it is not clear how many fish continue upstream and are successfully making it to upper reaches. It will take some time to gather information on the success rate.
- Discussion followed on the communications approach that was taken during the Big Bar emergency, with regards to a reduction of flows in the Nechako River. The thought was that a reduction of flows in the Nechako River would reduce flows and the velocity of water at the Big Bar slide to enable fish passage. It was soon determined that with subsequent elevated water temperatures in the Nechako River—due to the reduction of the Summer Temperature Management Program (STMP) flows—the risk to resident fish was too high and flows were returned to the STMP flow.
- Some residents along the Nechako River have expressed their displeasure with the lack of communication/notification/engagement received from the Province and Rio Tinto. Both the Province and Rio Tinto agreed that communications could have been managed better and apologized for the lack of communication during the emergency.
- District of Vanderhoof representatives asked if any information, such as a risk/benefit analysis, was collected that can be shared to explain on the decisions that were made during the emergency. The Province stated that scientists were analyzing the situation as it unfolded and provided recommendations to help the situation, and would look into this further.

- Rahul said that the WEI is a valuable vehicle where issues such as this can be discussed and communication protocols developed to implement a better communication process should another emergency occur.
- A participant mentioned that people need to understand the intent of the revised communications approach. More specifically, there is a need to provide opportunities for engagement rather than just information.
- A comment was made that in future situations, engagement by the Province and Rio Tinto with local residents/organization—who possess local knowledge of the area—prior to decisions being made, could have informed the decision-making process to allow for better outcomes. The District of Vanderhoof expressed that they would like to be engaged with, not communicated to.
- A participant suggested that with the lack of salmon in Nechako system in previous years, and the large effort (in man hours) required by the Spruce City Wildlife Association to find broodstock for their hatchery, that perhaps some salmon could be brought to the Nechako. It was also suggested that consideration should be made to extend the STMP to account for the delay the salmon will experience in reaching upper reaches of the river.
- Jayson Kurtz, the WEI Technical Working Group (TWG) coordinator, provided a presentation on the regulatory context of how Rio Tinto manages flows into the Nechako River. Details were provided on the Nechako Fisheries Conservation Program, the Annual Water Allowance, the STMP, conservation goals, and monitoring results. The presentation is available in the WEI Library on the Get Involved Nechako website: <https://www.getinvolvednechako.ca/wei>
- A participant wanted to know what the regulatory process was during the 2012 Water License renewal.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to provide information on the 2012 Water License renewal process.**
- A participant wanted to know how the temperature was determined in establishing target temperatures for the STMP.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to gather background information about how temperature targets for the STMP were established and are managed.**
- It was mentioned that STMP flows take approximately 5 days to reach Finmore (upstream of the Stuart River) through the Cheslatta-Murray River system. STMP flows, if released through a spillway at Kenney Dam would take approximately 3 days to reach Finmore.
- It was mentioned that changing flows have caused siltation issues. Andrew stated that Rio Tinto has looked at the issue and are trying to find ways of improving the situation.

- Comment that the STMP is about sockeye salmon, and not about a healthy river. There are 32 streams that flow into the Nechako, which have changed drastically since the STMP was implemented. There is currently an information gap on the state of these streams and research is needed to better understand the system.
- A question was asked if a water release facility (WRF) was constructed at Kenney Dam and was successful in saving flows, who would own the “extra” water? Jayson Kurtz replied that, based on his experience with several BC Hydro Water Use Plans, recommendations on what to do with the extra water were put forward to the Water Comptroller.
- An update was provided by Mike Robertson on the potential for a Water Release Facility at Kenney Dam. A meeting is being held on August 27 to discuss the pre-feasibility study. Rio Tinto continues to work on the project with the First Nations Major Projects Coalition. The process is still in the early stages and is ongoing. The pre-feasibility study would provide information to support a decision on whether the project is feasible.
- Northern Health provided a summary of their interests. Their interests include supporting the environmental, social, cultural and economic goals of local communities. Environmental interests include water quality and quantity (drinking and recreation purposes), soils and sediments, biodiversity, climate change, ecosystem services, and air quality. Social health interests include food security and quality, income and cost of living, connections to the land and water, social connectedness, mental health and well-being, recreation, cultural values, and pressures on community health services. Northern Health is also interested in Emergency Preparedness, which includes communication protocols, the inclusiveness of all stakeholders and the role of Medical Health Officers to protect public health. *(Some content to this description was added by EDI from Northern Health notes)*
- Henry Klassen, former Chair of the Nechako Watershed Council (NWC), provided a conceptual Work Plan for 2019-2020 to address issues in the Nechako. Based on several considerations, the Work Plan focuses on six main issues expressed in the WEI meetings that are similar to those studied by the NWC from 1998 to 2012, as well as questions that will need to be addressed to solve the issues:
 1. Multi-accounts cost-benefit analysis – What is the trade-off of moving 30 m³/sec out of the Water License to downstream Nechako?
 2. Establish flow volume and hydrograph to re-establish a healthy, self-sustaining Nechako River White Sturgeon population – How much water is needed to achieve this?
 3. Concerns with high-water events in Vanderhoof and flooding of homes – how much would it cost to move low-lying homes to higher subdivisions?
 4. Nechako Canyon – Kenney Dam downstream to Cheslatta Falls – what is the estimated cost of the removal of woody debris and beaver dams, and how can it be done.

5. Cheslatta Fan: millions of tons of sand, silt, and gravel were deposited 9 km downstream from Kenney Dam in the Nechako following a Cheslatta/Murray river blowout – how do we deal with silting downstream barrier if a spillway is built at Kenney Dam?
 6. Accumulated silt deposits in the Nechako River over a period of six to seven decades – how to design a hydrograph to “clean” the old silt out of the system without transferring it to other downstream sites?
- A scoping exercise was conducted by WEI Table participants to better understand issues and interests. Three facilitated breakout groups held discussions to continue the identification of issues and interests related to Rio Tinto operations. Groups discussed and refined issues in more detail. Each group reported on their discussion and findings following the exercise. Rahul is compiling the information from the written notes. This information will be presented and discussed at the next WEI Meeting on Wednesday, September 11, 2019.
 - Rahul Ray provided an overview of the status of each Action Item identified by the table, as well as the status on the key steps being taken to advance some “Quick wins”.
 - The question was asked on how to receive Rio Tinto “Flow Facts”? Anyone can view the Flow Facts by clicking on the **Real-time & historical reservoir data** link on the Get Involved Nechako website: <https://www.getinvolvednechako.ca/>
 - Field trip to Southside is being planned for **Tuesday, September 10, 2019**, followed by Meeting 4 in Burns Lake on **Wednesday, September 11, 2019**. Rahul to send details.
 - **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to provide details on the September Field trip and Meeting 4.**
 - Meeting 5 is planned for October 8. Meeting 6 is planned for November 20. Details to be discussed at Meeting 4.

Action Items

- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to provide information on the 2012 Water License renewal process.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rio Tinto to gather background information about how temperature targets for the STMP were established and are managed.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to provide details on the September Field trip and Meeting 4**