



To: WEI Meeting participants

From: Rahul Ray and Jason Collier

Date: September 25, 2019

Re: Final Rio Tinto WEI Table Meeting Summary - Meeting 4: Wednesday, September 11, 2019

The fourth Table meeting of the Rio Tinto Water Engagement Initiative (WEI) was held on September 11, 2019 at the College of New Caledonia in Burns Lake, British Columbia. The session ran from 10:00 am to 3:45 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.

Danielle De Kay (DD) and Lianne Olson (LO), Rio Tinto Communities and Communications Advisors, and Trinda Elwert (TE) from Avison Management Services Ltd. 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. September 11, 2019 - WEI Table Meeting 4 Participants

Individual	Organization
Mike Robertson	Southside representative / Cheslatta Carrier Nation
Christina Ciesielski	Carrier Sekani Tribal Council - Fisheries
Gina Layte-Listen	City of Prince George
Clara Jack	Nakazdli Natural Resources
Kevin Moutray	District of Vanderhoof
Gerry Thiessen	District of Vanderhoof
Cyndi Lauze	District of Vanderhoof
Phillip Krauskopf	Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development
Ray Klingspohn	Public participant
Donna Klingspohn	Public participant
Henry Klassen	Public participant
Gerd Erasmus	Public participant
Craig Smith	Public participant
John Alderliesten	Public participant
Wayne Salewski	Public participant
June Wood	Public Participant
Denis Wood	Public Participant
Lyla Brophy	Nechako Regional Cattlemen's Association
Jim Brophy	Nechako Regional Cattlemen's Association
Linda Sjodin	Public Participant
Clint Lambert	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Jason Llewellyn	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Mark Parker	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Jerry Petersen	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Andrew Czornohalan	Rio Tinto
Tim Plesko	Southside representative
Charlie Rensby	Village of Burns Lake

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

- RR reviewed the agenda and asked if any changes were needed. No changes to the agenda were made.
- Participants provided comments on the previous day's field trip to the Southside, which they found to be a valuable experience. Some participants were surprised by the level of erosion occurring at the Reservoir and noticeable at the Skins Lake spillway, which led to a greater understanding of the issue, and the need to try and rectify the problem. A participant commented that they were surprised by the "little" amount of water being released at the Skins Lake spillway, which looked like a creek. They also commented on the conflicting interests evident, as more water (for fish, etc.) can lead to flooding and erosion. A comment was made that the field trip helped to provide context of what happens when an "artificial" system replaces a natural one, and how it changes lives for those living in those areas.
- Mike Robertson provided context of the field trip through a presentation and discussed: historical and present day fish presence; historical and existing trail systems of the area; Cheslatta Nation context and impacts (e.g. inundated grave sites when flows exceed 300 m³/sec); historical flows and present day siltation in the Cheslatta/Murray Lake system, which a spillway at Kenney Dam could remedy. Participant noted that Dave Blackwell mentioned there was wild horses on the southside when he was small. Mike replied that the Cheslatta were horse people and had to let some of their horses go when moved from the village, as they only took what they could carry with them. The Cheslatta had to buy cattle from Houston, BC with money provided by the federal government. A participant mentioned that some of the wild horses were located west of Wisteria and survived until the 1980s. A participant asked Mike if there was a comprehensive inventory of fish species for the Southside? Mike replied that some information is available, but a comprehensive inventory has never been completed.
- RR thanked the hosts of the field trip: Tim Plesko, Gary Blackwell, and Mike Robertson for a successful and insightful experience.
- RR reviewed some of the WEI Guiding Principles, which were discussed and refined at the second WEI Meeting in July 2019, and approved at the third WEI Meeting in August 2019. The review included the mandate and purpose (section 2.1), regulatory context (Section 2.4), process scope (Section 3.2) and Technical Working Group (Section 4.8). RR also presented the milestones that have been completed to date.
- RR reviewed the Structured Decision Making (SDM) process that will be undertaken during the WEI to identify and evaluate options, in order to make choices in complex decision situations. The SDM process was successful process during the execution of BC Hydro's Water Use Plans.
- Mike Robertson and AC provided an update on the work being done for a water release facility (WRF) at Kenney Dam, which has been proposed many times in the past by Southside residents, Cheslatta Nation, and others. The Cheslatta are working with Rio Tinto on a Framework Agreement for the project, which is a platform for dialogue between the two parties to find a way forward. A pre-feasibility study is currently being conducted, which will be followed by a feasibility study. The studies will include looking at base flows

and various flow options. Objectives of the project would include cultural, social, economic, and environmental aspects. Mike commented that everyone (Cheslatta, Rio Tinto, Province, etc.) needs to be involved to make the project happen. Should a WRF be built at Kenney Dam, there would be a need for a massive environmental restoration. AC commented that the project is worth pursuing, there are plenty of hurdles to overcome, but we have to get started. A question was asked on how long it would take to finish the project? Mike replied that it could take approximately seven years to finish.

- A participant asked whether there is more water in the Reservoir given that so many trees have been killed by the Mountain Pine Beetle or been destroyed by fires. AC replied that Rio Tinto is actually seeing less inflows since the infestations, but the linkage is difficult to confirm.
- RR provided a recap of the Table’s tasks, which is to address as many flow-related issues as possible, but also to find mechanisms to address other issues raised by participants (i.e. engagement, communication, research, etc.)
- JK provided a summary of his experience and the role of the Technical Working Group (TWG) in the WEI, which is, among other things:
 - to provide information and analysis on specific topics to support Table decisions through a clear and transparent process;
 - use the best information available and present the uncertainty associated with the information;
 - bring information to the Table at the appropriate technical level;
 - facilitate professional advice, when needed or requested;
 - review information and reports to ensure professional standards are met;
 - fill knowledge gaps;
 - help the Table define performance measures; and
 - support the table with understanding the technical information
- RR mentioned that people from the Table are encouraged to participate in the TWG. Confirmed participants include: Henry Klassen, Mike Robertson, Phillip Krauskopf, Craig Smith, Kevin Moutray, and Christina Ciesielski. [*note, other participants not present at this meeting have indicated interest in participating in the TWG. Their involvement will be confirmed at a later date.*] Organizations also have the opportunity to provide someone from their organization to participate in the TWG. The Schedule of the TWGs meetings will be decided by the TWG participants. It was stressed that local knowledge is extremely valuable, and can

be integrated into the technical knowledge base. Participants do not need to be technical experts. One of the main goals of the TWG (and the WEI Table) is to try to develop a flow release schedule to balance as many interests as possible. JK commented that although the Nechako River is unique, the interests are similar to Water Use Plans that JK has worked on in the past.

- Discussion centered around the need for a political working group, so that the recommendation of the WEI are implemented and not overlooked and set aside by politicians? RR commented that the provincial government, federal government, some First Nations and local governments are involved in the process, and that the goal is to not have surprises at the end. Senior official in the provincial and federal governments will be kept informed of the WEI progress and discussions to ensure recommendations are implemented. Discussion flowed to the pros and cons of involving politicians in the WEI process, whether by invite to meetings or through correspondence. AC commented that Rio Tinto has met with several Ministers to discuss the WEI and has received letters of support. It was mentioned that a good opportunity exists now to provide updates on the WEI to officials. It was also mentioned that some politicians may try to “spin” things in their favour. The WEI presently has local government participating in the WEI and they are necessary for the process. Politicians may disrupt the process. The Table could wait until a substantial amount of work is completed before involving politicians.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to develop a proposed approach to present the activities of the Table to senior politicians.**
- RR led participants through an exercise to confirm the known issues that were brought forward during the last meeting and compiled. RR displayed a table of the compiled issues on screen, so that participants could discuss what presentation would be useful to the Table to better understand the issues identified. Changes were made in real time by TE. The edited table will be posted on the Get Involved Nechako website once reviewed by WEI participants at the meeting to ensure accuracy. JK commented that the Table needs to be clear on what kind of information they would like to know through the presentations. Presentations would be good for to provide context, but the Table may not need specific detailed information at this point. For instance, a presentation could be given on what a salmon needs, but the information may not be applicable for what the Table wants to know about (for instance, what targets does the Table want to set). Presentations need to be specific to areas of interests, as information could be analyzed indefinitely. Each issue was discussed and participants provided input, information and elaborations on relevant context associated with each issue identified.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to use input provided by participants and develop a list of potential 30-minute presentations.**
- A participant wanted to know if charts or maps of the Reservoir are available for navigation/recreational purposes? It is unclear what is presently available, although there is some bathymetric data available that was available to the Nechako Watershed Council, which exists at UBC.

- **ACTION ITEM: Jayson to collate existing mapping/bathymetric data of the Reservoir through the Technical Working Group.**
- Discussion centered around the communication that has been ongoing through various initiatives being conducted by Rio Tinto. Agreement that communication can be improved upon at various levels (e.g. on the Southside and at the municipal level (e.g. with the City of Prince George, Regional District of Bulkley Nechako, District of Vanderhoof). A team was formed to discuss how to improve communications. The team will be composed of Gina Layte-Listen, Jason Llewellyn, and Gerry Thiessen, who will work with Rio Tinto Communication’s representatives Danielle De Kay and Lianne Olson to find ways of improving communications.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to initiate Communication Working Group.**
- A discussion focused on how the issues of erosion, siltation, and hydrology are related to the health of the river. It was brought forward that a webinar was developed by UNBC on what happens to a river when it is dammed.
- **ACTION ITEM: Jayson to find UNBC webinar and share with the Table.**
- Discussions on flooding centered on how flows can be adjusted to manage flooding risks. Rio Tinto currently manages flows at less than 2% flood risk at the District of Vanderhoof at any given time. However, if the risk is elevated, then there is an opportunity to “liberate” flows, which can be used at a later time. For example, under the current scheme, if the flood risk becomes elevated in the winter, the flows are released to keep the risk below 2%. But, if the risk is elevated under the same conditions, then the same flows could be released in the spring time, during freshet.
- **ACTION ITEM: Jayson to create presentation on how elevated flood risks can liberate flows.**
- Comment was made that a base map needs to be developed for the Table.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to work with WEI team to ensure a base map is prepared for the next meeting.**
- Henry Klassen presented a hand-out to participants, which contained a couple of questions regarding the Nechako White Sturgeon (*presented here verbatim*):
 - These are questions that requires a clear answer from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Ministry of Forest, Land, Natural Resources and Rural Development (FLNRORD)
 - Whereas: It is well documented that the Nechako White Sturgeon is not successfully spawning in the Nechako River, and
 - Whereas: The Nechako White Sturgeon is listed as a species at risk under the Species at Risk Act., and

- Whereas: the cause of the failure of successful spawning is (a) silted-in gravel spawning beds, and (b) inadequate flow volumes, and (3) radical, unseasonal flows hydrograph, and
 - Whereas: All of the above accumulatively represents the desecration of the Nechako White Sturgeon's habitat.
 - Question 1 – Why are the federal government (i.e. DFO) and the Province government (i.e. FLNRORD) not all over this crisis to prevent the Nechako White Sturgeon from becoming extinct?
 - Question 2 – What exactly is the barrier within the federal and provincial government that we have to overcome to mobilize the appropriate action to restore the Nechako White Sturgeon habitat in the mainstream Nechako River, in order to ensure a robust, healthy population of resident Sturgeon?
- AC presented a summary the impacts of suspending the Summer Temperature Management Program on conditions in the Nechako River and Fraser River with respect to the Big Bar land slide incident. The letter is available on the Get Involved Nechako website.
 - Meeting 5 is scheduled for October 8 in Vanderhoof. Meeting 6 will be held on November 20 in Prince George.
 - **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to send out details of the next meetings to the Table.**

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