



---

**To:** WEI Meeting participants  
**From:** Rahul Ray and Jason Collier  
**Date:** October 23, 2019  
**Re:** Rio Tinto WEI Table Meeting Summary - Meeting 5: Tuesday, October 8, 2019

---

The Table meeting of the Rio Tinto Water Engagement Initiative (WEI) was held at Scott's Grille in Vanderhoof, British Columbia, on October 8, 2019. The meeting was from 10:00 am to 3:20 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), Rio Tinto Communities and Communications Advisor, and Justus Benckhuysen (JB) Rio Tinto Nechako Operations Coordinator, were also present as process support. Andrew Czornohalan (AC), Operations Director - Power & Services, Kitimat & Kemano was a WEI participant.

Table 1. October 8, 2019 - WEI Table Meeting 5 Participants

<b>Individual</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Mike Robertson	Southside representative / Cheslatta Carrier Nation
Christina Ciesielski	Carrier Sekani Tribal Council - Fisheries
Arthur Halleran	Nak'azdli First Nation
Sydney Raison	City of Prince George
Kevin Moutray	District of Vanderhoof
Cyndi Lauze	District of Vanderhoof
Stephen Dery	UNBC
Phillip Krauskopf	FLNRORD
Maureen Ritter	Canada Cryogenetics
James Jacklin	FLNRORD
Dustin Snyder	Spruce City Wildlife Association
Andrea Sterling	Contractor for Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Mike Henry	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Guy Scharf	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Elisabeth Doery	Nechako Lodge & Aviation
Henry Klassen	Public participant
Gerd Erasmus	Public participant
Craig Smith	Public participant
Jennifer Howell	District of Fort St. James
Wayne Salewski	Public participant
June Wood	Public Participant
Denis Wood	Public Participant
Lyla Brophy	Nechako Regional Cattlemen's Association
Kim Menounos	Fraser Basin Council
Linda Sjodin	Public Participant
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

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

- June Wood read an article to the WEI Table. She read the “Obituary” of the Nechako, which appeared on the front page of the October 11, 1952 issue of the *Nechako Chronicle*.
- Linda Sjodin gave ceremonial gifts to several WEI Team members.
- Maureen Ritter provided an overview of the work being done by Canada Cryogenetics. Chinook and sockeye salmon sperm, frozen 20 years ago, were recently used to fertilize eggs (approximately 2500-3000 eggs), which were provided to the Spruce City Wildlife Associations’ (SCWA) hatchery. Department of Fisheries and Oceans standards have been followed.
- A participant wanted to know DFO is not supporting the efforts of the SCWA. Maureen responded that she wasn’t entirely sure, but that the DFO are exploring these types of initiatives, given the recent emergency at Big Bar. Maureen is meeting with DFO in December 2019.
- RR reviewed the agenda and asked if any changes were needed. No changes to the agenda were made. RR mentioned that he will be actively following the agenda for efficiency.
- RR reviewed the proposed Meeting Ground Rules that will be followed during Table meetings. They include:
  - Be respectful
  - Listen actively and be attentive
  - Try to understand other participant’s perspectives, even if you disagree with them
  - Be collaborative
  - Focus on the future
  - Stay on topic and be concise
  - Give others a chance to speak (some participants may be shy—but have valuable things to say)
  - Turn off your electronics (use breaks to respond to emails or make phone calls)
  - Speak about your interests
  - Respect the facilitator’s requests

There were no objections or revisions. They are accepted.

- An overview was provided on the UNBC webinar, which focused on “Integrated Watershed Research in the Nechako.” Link: <https://www.unbc.ca/events/52141/nresi-colloquium-integrated-watershed-research-nechako-drs-stephen-dery-phil-owens-ellen-peticrew-margot-parkes-unbc>

- Mike Robertson provided an update on the progress of Kenney Dam water release facility project, which has been named “NeToo”, meaning “Our Water”. The Management Committee overseeing the Nechako Environmental Enhancement Fund have previously proposed the option of building a water release facility at Kenney Dam. The pre-feasibility study should be completed shortly. It is expected that the pre-feasibility study will likely confirm the need for a more detailed feasibility study to assess impacts, which will take approximately 10 months to prepare. The Cheslatta Nation are having an internal community meeting on November 23 to discuss the project. The Cheslatta Nation is still open to having partners on the project.
- RR reviewed the anticipated outcomes of the meeting and went over the process for posting meeting summaries following participants review. All final versions are posted on the Get Involved Nechako website at <https://www.getinvolvednechako.ca/>
- RR provided progress updates on Action Items identified during previous meetings.
- FLNRORD provided an overview of their communication structures (Action Item 1) to share WEI updates with senior governmental representatives.
  - A participant wanted to know how land management fits within the WEI and government agenda. James responded that the Province is assessing land use planning and discussions are ongoing on how it relates to the WEI and what the land use planning process should look like. Topics at the WEI Table are evolving and status updates are being brought forward to provincial executives, in order to identify ways of addressing issues. The WEI is viewed as important by the Province.
  - A participant made a comment that they find it strange information is only being brought back to the executives. Why aren't the Provincial and Federal Governments coming to help us with the river? It appears they are waiting for us to fix the river, as when we have volunteer groups leading the charge to augment the salmon stocks.
  - RR mentioned that the WEI was initiated by Rio Tinto and not started by government. However, the provincial and federal governments are participating in the WEI.
  - Henry Klassen mentioned that this was the reason he presented his list of questions to the WEI Table that need to be answered (see past meeting summaries for the list).
  - A participant commented that there has been more than 30 years of frustration, but it is our obligation to strengthen our voice. The provincial and federal governments will be here in the same way as before, and the WEI will evolve and help us.
- The Communication Working Group was formed (Action Item 4) and a fist meeting was scheduled. Unfortunately, WEI participants were not able to join on that day. The meeting will be rescheduled.

- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to reschedule Communication Working Group meeting.**
- The UNBC Natural Resources and Environmental Studies Institute Colloquium Series live link (Action Item 5) was not working when some participants logged-on. The link to the presentation given is: <https://www.unbc.ca/nres-institute/colloquium-webcasts>
- A base map was prepared for the meeting (Action Item 7). It was agreed that it will be useful to understand the complexity of the system. JK mentioned that the Table should decide what level of detail they would like to see, as there are numerous ways of presenting the information.
- JK provided an update on the first Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting held on October 3. Nine participants attended and it was a good start to the TWG. The TWG discussed the purpose and objectives of the TWG, and reviewed the information requests made by the Table. Two information presentations will be developed for the next Table meeting: (1) climate change and (2) the bibliography tool of existing information.
- A participant suggested that it would be useful to have a presentation on the past, present and future power production/distribution (i.e. how is it managed).
- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to develop a presentation on Rio Tinto's power production/distribution.**
- JK provided an information presentation on what a hydrograph is. JB provided an information presentation on the Nechako's hydrograph and context behind its management (JB made it clear that Rio Tinto is not advocating for the hydrograph that was presented, and that the WEI will provide opportunities to refine it). Both presentations are posted on the Get Involved Nechako Website.
  - A participant wanted to know how climate change will affect the Nechako's hydrograph. JK responded that there is currently 60 years of hydrological data for the Nechako. We can use models to run various scenarios with actual data, and also run climate change models to generate estimates.
  - A participant wanted to know how Rio Tinto is managing operations given the 2019 trend (very low inflow year) and what the contingencies are. AC responded that it has been a challenging situation. Rio Tinto stopped exports to BC Hydro in April/May as a first step, and looked at options to curtail production and "exchange" water with BC Hydro and bring in energy off BC Hydro's grid. Six out of eight generators are producing power now (one is on standby, while the other is in maintenance).
  - A participant mentioned that there used to be salmon (maybe coho or red salmon) spawning in Mick Creek, but no salmon have been recently observed. They commented that this may be linked to the change in flows and levels causing accessibility issues.

- A participant mentioned that beaver lodges can be washed out if the water comes up too fast on the Nechako. A participant wondered if appropriate ramping rates are being implemented, and would like more information on protocols/guidelines for appropriate ramping rates. There was mention of the consequences in the Cheslatta system associated with the ramping rates. JK mentioned that DFO guidelines are to ramp up or down at approximately 5-10 cm/hour, whereas in the Cheslatta system, ramping rates can be around 2 m/hour.
  - It was mentioned that ice jams can be caused by rapid ramping rates. It was also clarified that ice jams are not necessarily caused by controlled flows, and that they can be caused in natural systems. A local community was in fact washed out when a “natural” ice jam formed on the Nechako.
  - There was some discussion on sturgeon and if they are part of the Nechako Fisheries Conservation Program (NFCP) mandate. JB clarified that sturgeon were not considered when the NFCP was set up, so did not fall under the NFCP mandate, but that DFO are part of the NFCP Steering Committee.
  - Question was asked if there was public input into the NFCP. JB confirmed that the public are not part of it, but that there is a request forthcoming to include First Nations, the public and others as part of the program.
  - Henry commented that the issues he has raised previously (documented in meeting summaries) should help to address the sturgeon issue.
  - JK commented that the WEI can suggest revisions to the NFCP mandate, but need to focus on what is best for the river and sturgeon now.
- 
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to post hydrograph presentations on Get Involved Nechako website.**
  - **ACTION ITEM: JK to look into salmon presence at Mick Creek.**
  - **ACTION ITEM: TWG to present information on protocols/guidance on ramping rates**
  - A participant wondered if, because the WEI is a voluntary group, do we have an accurate representation of interested parties or are there gaps. RR responded that the WEI has made and continues to make outreach efforts to include as many First Nations and organizations as possible.
  - Another participant mentioned that the WEI has lots of organizations at the table, and for a scope as large as the WEI, you can't wait until everyone is onboard or you will never start the process.
  - JK stated that the Water Use Plans never had everyone at the table, but the broad representation in them captured the interests. RR commented that outreach efforts will continue.

- RR provided a review of the Structured Decision Making process (a backgrounder was sent to participants on October 3) that will be used during the WEI. The Table is now at the Objective setting phase. RR continued with an overview of what Objectives are and the components of effective ones. With Evaluation Criteria, they form the structure to develop various flow scenarios. RR provided examples of objectives from various Water Use Plans.
- Objective setting exercise: To help with the setting objectives process, RR compiled the interests heard from the Table and drafted preliminary “straw dog” objectives for the Table to discuss, revise, refine, or scrap.
- JK commented that it is a good idea to start setting broad objectives, be as inclusive as possible, then move into setting sub-objectives. Objectives were shown on the power point at the meeting and the Table decided if changes were needed or not.
- **A separate document is being prepared showing the changes made to the objectives by the table and the discussions that ensued. This will be circulated to the table for further input and discussion. RR mentioned that participants will have time to review and comment on the material before the next meeting.**
- A participant mentioned it would be good to have an information presentation on the topic of dredging Tahtsa narrows, which would include the reasons why, as well as the pros and cons.
- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to prepare information presentation on the topic of dredging Tahtsa Narrows.**
- The next WEI Table meeting (Meeting 6) will be held in Prince George at UNBC on November 20, 2019. RR to send details to participants. No meeting to be held in December. Meeting 7 to be held on January 15, 2020 in Fraser Lake. Meeting 8 to be held on February 13, 2020 at a location to be determined.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to send out details for Meeting 6 to participants**
- Linda provided a proposed itinerary for a field trip to be held on the Nechako next summer, which would include visits to the Kenney Dam, Nechako Lodge, Irvine place, Cheslatta falls and lunch at June and Denis’ place!

## Action Items

- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to reschedule Communication Working Group meeting**
- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to develop a presentation on Rio Tinto’s power production/distribution**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to post hydrograph presentations on Get Involved Nechako website**
- **ACTION ITEM: JK to look into salmon presence at Mick Creek.**
- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to present information on protocols/guidance on ramping rates**

- **ACTION ITEM: TWG to prepare information presentation on the topic of dredging Tahtsa Narrows.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to send out details for Meeting 6 to participants**