



To: WEI Meeting participants

From: Rahul Ray and Jason Collier

Date: December 3, 2019

Re: Rio Tinto WEI Table Meeting Summary - Meeting 6: Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Meeting 6 of the Rio Tinto Water Engagement Initiative (WEI) was held at the Sandman Signature Hotel in Prince George, British Columbia, on November 20, 2019. The meeting was from 10:00 am to 4:00 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 and Trinda Elwert from Avison Management Services provided additional support.

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 is a WEI participant.

Table 1 lists the participants present at the meeting and the organizations they represent.

Table 1. November 20, 2019 - WEI Table Meeting 6 Participants

Individual	Organization	Email
Colin Brauner	UBC	
Arthur Halleran	Nak'azdli First Nation	
Rick Brignall	Public Participant	rbrignallpg@gmail.com
Gina Layte-Liston	City of Prince George	Gina.LayteListon@princegeorge.ca
Ray Klingspohn	Public participant	
Cyndi Lauze (morning only)	District of Vanderhoof	
Phillip Krauskopf	FLNRORD	Phillip.Krauskopf@gov.bc.ca
Dan Sneep	Department of Fisheries and Oceans	Daniel.Sneep@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
Dustin Snyder	Spruce City Wildlife Association	dustinsnyderscwa@gmail.com
Henry Klassen	Public participant	
Gerd Erasmus	Public participant	gerderasmus@gmail.com
Craig Smith	Public participant	craigsmith.ca@gmail.com
Carrie Smith	MLA John Rustad	Carrie.Smith@leg.bc.ca
Jennifer Howell	District of Fort St. James	JHowell@fortstjames.ca
John Alderliesten	Public participant	j5674961@telus.net
Wayne Salewski	Public participant	
Charlie Rensby	Village of Burns Lake	crensby@burnslake.ca
Paula Tait	Northern Health	
June Wood	Public Participant	info@nechako-retreat.ca
Denis Wood	Public Participant	info@nechako-retreat.ca
Lyla Brophy	Nechako Regional Cattlemen's Association	lbrophy37@gmail.com
Jim Brophy	Nechako Regional Cattlemen's Association	
Kim Menounos	Fraser Basin Council	kmenounos@fraserbasin.bc.ca
Gary Blackwell	Public participant/Southside	wistaria@telus.net
Julie Blackwell	Public participant/Southside	wistaria@telus.net
Clint Lambert	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako	Clint.Lambert@rdbn.bc.ca
Jerry Petersen	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako	Jerry.Petersen@rdbn.bc.ca
Andrew Czornohalan	Rio Tinto	Andrew.Czornohalan@riotinto.com

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

- Rahul opened the meeting by welcoming participants and reviewing the proposed agenda. No objections to the proposed agenda were made.
- Rahul asked participants if it was acceptable to post participant's email addresses in the meeting summary which will be posted on the *Get Involved Nechako* website. A participant wanted to know what the purpose was of sharing email addresses. Rahul responded that it was as a communication tool, so that WEI Table participants can share information between themselves, and so residents can get in touch with participants to share their interests or information. One participant chose to not have their email addresses made public.
- Rahul would like to post pictures of WEI field trips or meetings on the website and asked participants for their permission to do so. Those in agreement signed release forms, which were collected at the meeting.
- A participant wanted to know what the distinction is between being a "participant" in the WEI process, versus being an "observer". Clarification was requested about the role the District of Vanderhoof and the Province are playing in the WEI. Dan Sneep (DFO) provided some context from experience with BC Hydro's Water Use Plans that "observers" take part in the process, but do not vote on decisions being made.
- Rahul said he would clarify the District of Vanderhoof's position with Mayor Gerry Thiessen (who was not present at the meeting).
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to confirm District of Vanderhoof's status in the WEI with Mayor Thiessen.**
- Phillip Krauskopf (FLNRORD) confirmed that the Province is and always has been a participant in the process.
- Rahul reviewed the status of Action Items identified during previous Table meetings, and expanded on those that were complete or pending.
- In regard to an Action Item to look into salmon presence at Mick Creek (a tributary to Greer Creek which flows into the Nechako), Jayson presented the results of his review and the species of salmon recorded at the creek. A participant commented that they thought that salmon could not get up the creek because of a barrier, and that perhaps their presence was only at the mouth of the creek. Jayson said he wasn't sure how far up the salmon go and that results were based on one observation point. It was discussed that a site visit may be worthwhile, but it would depend on the context and interests of the Table.
- **ACTION ITEM: Technical Working Group to follow up on fish distribution at Mick Creek.**
- Jayson presented information on DFO Guidance regarding ramping rates for different times of the year, and said that in some circumstances, rapid ramping rates can cause fish stranding when water levels recede too quickly and fish do not have time to respond. DFO commented that the guidelines are a starting point and that some proponents monitor impacts to fish for various ramping rates, and the rates can be adjusted

depending on the outcomes of the monitoring. Rahul said that the WEI will provide the process to discuss Rio Tinto ramping rates.

- Trinda provided an overview of the Get Involved Nechako website, i.e. where to find documents, upcoming events, and feedback tools. Trinda also provided an introduction on how to register on the website to use the WEI participant communication Forum. This will be a secure tool that can be used by participants to discuss various interests online. Trinda will approve access when participants subscribe. The chats would not be reserved by a select group, but would rather be viewable to every participant. Participants will not be notified (for instance, by email) every time someone posts a note, in order to keep participant's email from being bombarded. A participant commented that these types of initiatives are useful, but reminded folks that issues/interests need to be brought to the Table, as well. Another participant commented that the Table can give it a try, see how it works, and make changes if needed later on. Further detail will be provided.
- Andrew provided some additional context to the comment he made about “trading water” with BC Hydro. When inflows to the reservoir are low (e.g. 2017/18), Rio Tinto assesses the situation and determines the appropriate approach to keep water in the reservoir and maintain flows in the Nechako. Two main approaches can be taken: (1) curtail operations, or (2) curtail energy provision to BC Hydro. Rio Tinto has a clause in their Agreement with BC Hydro, which is an “equi-change” (a non-commercial mitigation), which allows Rio Tinto to import energy from the grid (as opposed to using water from the reservoir to produce energy), which effectively “stores or keeps” water in the reservoir. This water is then used to generate energy at Kemano under more favorable reservoir conditions to return it to BC Hydro.
- In regard to an update of the Tahtsa Narrows, Andrew is seeking to understand the situation better (i.e. the potential gains and risks of dredging) through his team, and if there is potential to gain water in the reservoir. A participant was not satisfied with Andrew's answer and said that Rio Tinto must have some good information on the project and wanted to know what kind of timeline was needed, as it is an important project to understand as the implications can be substantial. Andrew elaborated that he understands that it is an important interest, but does not have a full comprehension of the implications of the project. He has seen some data. He would like to understand the pros and cons better in order to have a more meaningful conversation with the Table, and it may take a few months to assess if the project is worth pursuing, as it is not an immediate concern for Rio Tinto at this time. A southside participant mentioned that dredging Tahtsa Narrows is not wanted by the Southside. The impacts to fish and fish habitat would be significant, as well as to the health of the whole system.
- Information presentations were given to the Table via conference calls and screen sharing (Webex). The presentations were related to climate change, specific research being conducted in the Nechako watershed, and modeling. The presentations were provided by Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium and UBC.
- The presentations will be posted on the Get Involved Nechako website. Jayson summarized the key points of the presentations:

- there is good information available and research being done, which the WEI will be able to access,
 - hydrological modeling is being conducted to look at flows and temperature changes,
 - Rio Tinto has a good model in place looking at the river and the reservoir,
 - temperatures are increasing in the region.
 - the Summer Temperature Management Program (STMP) flows may require more water to keep temperatures in the river cool in the long run, and
 - the scenario involving a spillway at Kenney Dam is being looked at.
- Colin Brauner from UBC was present at the meeting and gave a presentation on research his team is conducting on salmon and salmon lifecycles with respect to thermal tolerance. The presentation is available on the Get Involved Nechako website.
 - A participant wanted to know if there were studies have been conducted regarding effects on fish from the implementation of cooling flows. Colin was not sure and Jayson will follow-up on the matter. A participant commented that, if the preferred temperature for sockeye is 17°C, why aren't the STMP flows set at that temperature instead of 20°C, and that this option deserves to be a part of the conversation as a management option. The answer wasn't clear and Dan Sneep (DFO) said he will look into how/why the temperature was set at 20°C. A participant mentioned that McDonald conducted some studies on the STMP, but it was clarified that the studies relate to populations, which appear to be dropping. A participant wanted to know if studies have been conducted on overwintering temperatures, as anchor ice can have significant impacts to spawning habitat (e.g. 10% success rate during anchor ice conditions versus 90% under normal circumstances). Colin acknowledged that that is an important consideration, but his team is focused on effects under higher temperatures.
 - **ACTION ITEM: Jayson to investigate if studies were done assessing the effects of implementing the cooling flows (i.e. STMP).**
 - **ACTION ITEM: Dan Sneep to investigate why the STMP was set at 20°C.**
 - A participant wanted to know if studies were completed on how many fish made it up to the Nechako during the Big Bar slide. Colin mentioned that approximately 60%-70% of late season salmon were estimated to have made it through the slide area, but wasn't sure how many made it to the Nechako. Jayson confirmed that studies are being done to determine the percentage that make it to spawning runs, but have not been finalized yet. A participant commented that approximately 5% to 20% of populations made it to the upper Fraser.

- A participant commented that if sockeye is extirpated from the Nechako, how do we go about managing the system? Do we manage the water as if they were there or abandon STMP flows altogether? Another participant commented that if the hydrograph stays the same the next couple of decades, what can we do now to help the system?
- Jayson commented that these are all good points. There is much we don't know about the system (e.g. what happens in the ocean) and a lot of the factors at play, which makes it challenging. And, how do we measure success, as there is no silver bullet, and we rely on indicators. The trend is that climate change is increase temperatures, and tolerance for these increases appears okay for sturgeon, but not for sockeye. A participant commented that survival does not mean healthy, and that not all fish species/populations have the same survival requirements.
- A participant wanted to know if studies have been done on the impacts of Trumpeter Swans feeding in spawning habitat areas. A participant mentioned that the swans eat mostly vegetation/roots, but it is possible that they are not limited to this diet.
- **ACTION ITEM: Jayson to investigate if studies have been done on the effects of Trumpeter Swans on spawning habitat.**
- A participant commented that the WEI Table is here to learn about the issues and that these types of presentations (i.e. in person) are good and recommended.
- A participant commented that at the start of the WEI, the timeline was determined to take approximately 18 months. The process is now at 6 months and it appears that the Table has not achieved all that we set out to accomplish at this time. Andrew commented that 18 months was an approximation on the average timelines these types of processes could take and was a reasonable timeline based on the experience of BC Hydro Water Use Plans (WUPs). The Nechako system and the issues are complex, but it appears that we are on track compared to WUPs. Dan Sneep (DFO) commented that in his experience, the first few meetings are to get an understanding of the process and the issues, and that the process tends to speed up afterwards.
- A participant commented that they had doubts at the beginning of the process and remain cautious after recently reading about the Rio Tinto/Saik'uz and Stellat'en First Nations court case, where it was mentioned that Rio Tinto have and will continue to operate within legal parameters. Based on the article, the participant didn't see that Rio Tinto was open to change. Andrew commented that the court case is a legal process that began in 2011 and has 200 days of court proceedings remaining, which could take 6 to 9 months to complete. Rio Tinto has launched the WEI and are at the Table because they want to improve their operations.
- Jayson provided an update on advancements of the Technical Working Group (TWG). A conference call was held on November 14, where TWG participants discussed their roles and approaches to meeting Table

requests, among other items, based on an unbiased professional approach. Another meeting will be scheduled shortly and the TWG will prioritize to respond what the Table is asking for.

- Jayson provided a status update on the development of a Nechako Information Bibliography. Four data sets are being compiled from NEEF, NFCP, NWC, and NWSRI, which accounts for 531 entries on a variety of topics. Jayson is looking at ways of making the information useful to the Table (e.g. having hard copies). A participant wanted to know about the scrutiny being applied to the information. Jayson replied that the information comes from professional, reputable sources. Participant wanted to know where funding comes from for the research (i.e. is there bias in the findings?). Jayson replied that funding comes from various sources depending on the research. Sources include government, private and industry, and also that professional standards are applied to remove bias in the research.
- A participant mentioned that they have seen “professionals” come into areas and ruin the environment. The participant considered themselves a professional, as they have been living on the Southside their entire life. Rahul and Jayson commented that they both agree that local knowledge is key and vital to making change.
- Rahul provide an update on advancements made by the Communication Working Group, which was initiated to address communication issues within the region. Representatives from the City of Prince George and the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako were part of a conference call that discussed communication protocols, whom should be contacted with Rio Tinto for information, collaborations, and Emergency Operations Command processes.
- A participant commented that the Table needs to chip away at the issues to make changes, as was done in '87 and '97, and recommended that the Table develop a desired list of changes and present questions on how make the changes, so that the issues become clear. Participant commented that head-butting is useful at the start of these processes so that issues do become clear. It is important to respect all interests and to try and see each other’s points of view. The WEI may take longer than 18 months, but we need to see it through. It is also important to have solid data so that governments can make the right decisions.
- Flooding issues were discussed by the Table, and Jason made live tracked changes to the Draft Objective List that was distributed to participants. Changes that were made were viewable on the screen. The discussion was led by Jayson. Gina presented some issues surrounding flooding in the City of Prince George, i.e. impacts of ice jams, locations of concern, factors causing ice jams, consequences of flooding, armoring of the river. Further information is to be provided by The City of Prince George, FLNRORD, and Rio Tinto on specific details relating to flooding, which the TWG will amalgamate.
- Flooding in the District of Vanderhoof (DOV) was not discussed and will postponed until the DOV is in attendance, however Rahul will invite the DOV to provide information relating to flooding in Vanderhoof.

- Andrew mentioned that the Table needs to consider all aspects of flooding (e.g. social and recreational), not just the economic aspects. A participant wanted to know if the benefits of flooding are going to be considered (e.g. for wildlife, ecosystem). Jayson replied that they will be addressed at a later date.
- **ACTION ITEM: City of Prince George (Gina), FLNRORD (Phillip), and Rio Tinto (Justus) to provide information on the specifics of flooding (where, how, why), for the TWG to amalgamate.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to invite the DOV to provide information relating to flooding in Vanderhoof.**
- A participant wanted to know how we get input from the Table when the TWG coordinator is doing most of the talking. Jayson replied that he is only leading the discussion at this time, so that the Table can see how the process works to flesh out the objectives for a particular issue. The WEI started with flooding, as it is probable that the participants will have most of the information/knowledge to advance this interest.
- Discussions centered around how the Table can be more productive. A participant suggested that the Table can break out into smaller focus groups for particular interests, as some people may only be interested in certain interests. Dan (DFO) commented that he has seen this approach taken in other processes successfully. Other participants cautioned that changes in one area (e.g. reservoir) can affect other areas (e.g. downstream), and it is important that everyone understands the interests and proposed changes, so they can be balanced. It was also mentioned that it is important to keep cohesion in the Table. One approach could be that smaller focus groups are formed to discuss a particular interest and the results are shared with the Table, to ensure there is a common understand among participants. Rahul commented that this approach could work. Jayson said that, if the Table agrees, he can describe the process for small focus groups to work on a particular interest and work towards developing Performance Measures. Discussion centered around the possibility of having an outline of the topics to be discussed in small focus groups beforehand, as well as the timeslots, so that participants can come prepared to the meetings. A suggestion was made that the interests can also be discussed in chat rooms on the website.
- **ACTION ITEM: Jayson to develop a description of the process small focus groups can use to work on developing Performance Measures for interests.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to develop outline of topics and provide to Table for review.**
- Northern Health discussed some of their initiatives and interests, which include improving emergency response in case of flooding, as well as the communication pathways (e.g. emergency operation center). Northern Health is currently conducting a community engagement process, which they plan on revisiting every 5-10 years. Northern Health is part of the Air Quality Round Table, that works on developing priorities, plans and goals for air quality in the region. They are looking into the Environmental Assessment process to get information through the reporting process.
- Rahul read a statement that was prepared by Linda Sjodin that presented her purpose and rationale for participating in the WEI process.

- The next Table meeting will be held January 15, 2020 in Fraser Lake. Rahul to provide details to the Table.
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to provide details of the next meeting in Fraser Lake scheduled for January 15, 2020.**
- The meeting ended at 3:57 pm.

Action Items

- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to confirm District of Vanderhoof's status in the WEI with Mayor Thiessen.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Technical Working Group to follow up on fish distribution at Mick Creek.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Jayson to investigate if studies were done assessing the effects of implementing the cooling flows (i.e. STMP).**
- **ACTION ITEM: Dan Sneep to investigate why the STMP was set at 20°C.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Jayson to investigate if studies have been done on the effects of Trumpeter Swans on spawning habitat.**
- **ACTION ITEM: City of Prince George (Gina), FLNRORD (Phillip), and Rio Tinto (Justus) to provide information on the specifics of flooding (where, how, why), for the TWG to amalgamate.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to invite the DOV to provide information relating to flooding in Vanderhoof.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Jayson to develop a description of the process small focus groups can use to work on developing Performance Measures for interests.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to develop outline of topics and provide to Table for review.**
- **ACTION ITEM: Rahul to provide details of the next meeting in Fraser Lake scheduled for January 15, 2020.**