



To: WEI Meeting participants
From: Rahul Ray
Date: September 14, 2020
Re: WEI Process check-in survey results - Revised

On Thursday, July 30, 2020, Rahul Ray, facilitator for the Water Engagement Initiative (WEI), emailed a survey link to all active WEI participants.

The survey included five open-ended questions and provided an opportunity for WEI participants to share their perspectives on the process to date and ways to shape the path ahead. 15 responses were received.

The questions and the responses WEI participants are provided below. They are copied directly from the survey.

One participant provided their comments in a Word document. Their responses were not included in the first version of this document. It has been revised to include those responses.

With respect to the Water Engagement (WEI), what do you think has gone well? 13 responses

- Good attendance by a diverse group of participants. Respectful and mostly seeking to learn and understand.
- Things are in scoping stage it would appear - so I think it is good to hear views of all. Just hearing dialogue at this point.
- There has been very good attention to everyone's concerns. I feel that there is truly an honest dialog occurring from the mediators and Rio. You also are very good at handling all personality types very professionally.
- I have not been at enough meeting to know.
- The provision of and opportunity to participate in a worthy initiative that could enhance efforts to improve the health of the lake created and waterways affected by the construction

of the Kenny Dam including forestry, logging, ranching, farming and commercial practices over the years.

- I think the process design is good. A values based design is necessary to quantify risk, make recommendations and move towards improvements for the watershed.
- Process has engaged players from a broad section of the Nechako community, from Provincial government, First Nations, residents, business owners, local government, and maintained a high level of participation through a fairly lengthy process from most. Very diverse perspectives are not easy to corral, and reaching consensus is not easy at the best of times. New Day Agreement was a good sign that RT is willing to follow through.
- some excellent presentations on sturgeon issues and geology of the river. I would love to see more presentations like these.
- Open and honest discussion of issues form many perspectives.
- A forum to express preceived opinions & wants.
- The organization of meetings, follow-through on action items, informative presentations.
- it is very slow and cumbersome.
- Communication has gone well... I think we have all had plenty of oppportunity to share knowledge and concerns - many of us have learned through the process.

What do we need to improve? 14 responses

- I think we need to cross issues off as they fall off the list and tabulate those where evidence states the obvious
 - Off - high flows that change and cleanse the substrate are not possible when that number required is 1100 - 1200 CFS
 - On - Chinook salmon require temperatures less then 18 degrees C and now 20 degrees C for the STMP
 - Off - Sturgeon are the metric that we measure success as
 - On - Healthy streams have multiple aquatic components and multiple seasons
 - Off - Fencing is the only agricultural need or concern

- On - advanced notice of potential water implications that would negate value in applying fertilizers, pesticides or ? etc etc
- I actually think a lot of people at the table do not understand a four season landscape and what that means to watersheds and streams and rivers. The idea that the river should always have lots of water in it is not natural and is unrealistic. Education is required to change this mindset
- Change the TWG to be only the Technically qualified people to provide the answers from the larger group. This will move us along a a much faster clip with less emotion and personal opinions. This would be my first priority.....
- Better articulation of the decision process and timeline to evaluate options against performance criteria - Perhaps use of info graphics, demonstration of a working example or similar could help.
- Keep discussions within scope - begin to ID action items and associated timelines. More science base follow up - I hear of impacts around the watershed that may be anecdotal or perspective without data or enquiry of what data is available - some misleading or inaccurate information being presented as well.
- The real frame of reference for change needs to be put forth, for example some believe that the river is going to go back to its old flow or close to it. This I know will never happen, the range of potential flow change should be outlined so that some individuals are not misled.
- not sure
- Introduce the use of a GANT Chart to provide reference point on where we started in conversation on this initiative, where we are at and what and where we want to go in this initiative. This will demonstrate to those participating that their input has been valued and that we are making progress in our discussions. At the moment many participants feel we have not moved the needle.
- The pace has been slower than desired, however I recognize it is complex, there is a lot of local passion, and these processes take time.
- Not sure. It's a huge question! People are getting frustrated with the perceived lack of progress, though I think it was always going to be a long one. It's akin to conducting a post-mortem environmental impact assessment but still not having the answers to the questions about the impact.

- Stopping the domination of meetings by a few individuals making the same points over and over. Everybody has a point of view theirs is no more important than others.
- Clearer identification of specific objectives of project and progress tracking
- Would like to see were topics can be fleshed out more to get past opinions & to Identify true. Agendas and then get past that to make proper future directives
- Finding a way to have everyone's voice heard (equally) in such a large, diverse group
- define a bit clearer the participants, make every meeting meaningful.
- Perhaps part of the problem is people not seeing where the work is going to in the future? Or not seeing the larger picture and that sometimes we need to break smaller pieces off at one time while understanding that the whole is still relevant? Perhaps if folks could see a more detailed timeline with topics woven -in then they could understand all of the pieces that will make the whole and how long the process might take (even if estimation/aspirational)?

Are there areas we need to put more focus? 16 responses

- Being repetitive here but more water is not the complete solution to a healthy river...inputs from the broader landscape and the second and third order watersheds are critical to the health of the Nechako
- I feel we need to keep focus on the "interest" or "goal" and its performance criteria for assessment.
- Where to start - watershed planning that is within scope, ID data gaps, ID watershed status and what data there is to support.
- no not really
- Emergency flooding situations
- Agriculture
- Currently, many of our discussions have been focusing on Rio Tinto and their control of the flow regime originating from the spillway to Prince George with the goal of reversing the population decline of two key species Nechako White Sturgeon & Chinook Salmon. I believe we have been remiss by not including water quality measurements/samples to determine if water health is also being affected by poorly controlled landscape practices which include forestry, logging, ranching, farming and commercial business operations.

- Completion of value flow regime options.
- Perhaps an alternate/concurrent process to develop a long-term defined relationship between RT and the broader community, something they can trust will be in place after the process is complete, and that assures continuity of the engagement effort though of course in a modified or reduced way. Trust was always an issue, and I think people are potentially going to begin to feel skeptical.
- Science, science, and science. The table needs to be educated of where experts see potential for improvement. Also if something proves not to be practical (a 1400 cms flushing flow for example) is should be taken off the table as an option.
- Impacts to indigenous communities as well as mainstream
- Need to look towards more direction where final directives can be sent off the table. In my opinion we spend to much time running down rabbit trails instead of focusing on the big challenges
- Specific actions/outcomes the initiative is looking for - narrowing them down/finding common ground among the group
- the viability of the river
- not sure
- We need to put more focus on improving the over all health of the Nechako River. The current flow volume and flow pattern does not adequately provide for the needs of the fish and other life forms that live in the river. 70% of Nechako water is being diverted and the remaining 30% falls far short of what is required to improve the health of the river. Neither is it a fair sharing of the water.

What are your measures of success for the WEI? 15 responses

- An agreement that includes a living document with adaptive planning steps to answer the unanswered questions with science An annual funding plan by RTA - managed by a regional board with FN at the table that approves programs that enhance the health of the Nechako River and NOT a tool used for press coverage by the company
- A cohesive collaboration of FN, Regulators, Governments (local & provincial), NGOs, community members and stakeholders coming together on a foundation of science to make improvements to the Nechako Reservoir and River Systems.

- Not sure yet - broad scope of issues being discussed that have yet to land on formally established goals and objectives that would drive future engagement, planning and delivery.
- Some actual changes, but mostly a living moving dialog that will continue to invoke changes in the future.
- I am interested in how we deal with emergency flooding situations
- Success will be exposed when we uncover all the negative contributors to the health of the Nechako and efforts are put in place to mitigate by Rio Tinto and other industries located within the watershed. This would include changes to operations and landscape practices that would enhance reversing population declines in the Nechako White Sturgeon and Chinook Salmon.
- completion of the process
- Progress toward defining specific objectives; clear understanding of what RT intends to do; the tone of the responses shifting to more hopeful/positive
- A formal agreement to make sure the system is managed as well as possible (with some teeth to it). This would be a living document that sees the management change to the best science of the day.
- Qualitative measures of outcome satisfaction from majority of members
- What my kids & grandkids will have to live with and not have to try and fix
- Actions on the part of Rio Tinto to mitigate their effect on the watershed. Improved watershed health.
- to come with an understanding of where the river is since the climate has changed and what the implications are for the River and for RTA.
- Forward progress, new information, positive informed change/action, people feeling included in decisions/actions
- This process will only have been successful if the end result is a healthier, more natural, Nechako River. Anything less than this, in our opinion, will mean that the WEI has failed. To achieve the goal of a healthier river will require that all three parties (RioTinto, the Province and Federal government) agree to opening the 1987 and 1997 Agreements, including the final water licence, and establishing a volume and flow pattern that benefits the river and all its life forms as determined by a truly independent body of experts. The construction of a release facility at the Kenney Dam may be helpful in achieving this

goal. A release facility at the dam is absolutely necessary to enable restoration of the Murray/Cheslatta system.

- (We) were hesitant to participate in the WEI, but were assured that flows were on the table. Because of this, we began participating with the hope that something beneficial could be achieved for the river. However, as the process progressed we became less and less hopeful. We are now at the point of wondering whether or not our time is well spent at the meetings because the health of the river does not seem to be part of the agenda.

Are there any other comments you want to provide? 12 responses

- I can see how this process could actually fail and we come to no agreement because of the lack of all First Nations being at the table....and their fore the Province will not have completed a proper G to G consultation. ...and I further believe that there could be an out of court agreement negotiated without any consideration for those at the table.... I see three presentations required:
 - NEEF - who and what are they and how does NEEF understand the needs to take leadership from the WEI and not operate like they know best
 - Nechako Fisheries Conservation Program - operational working under antiquated mandate - who and what they do
 - Tatsha Narrows : what is the companies plans and does the Province support this
- No
- It should be made clear that time at this initiative should not be directed at pass mistakes and things that went wrong. This initiative is basically saying "what we have now is the state of the river now, let us work together to improve it from what it is now. Do not dwell on how good it was before the dam, those days are gone.
- at this point there only seems to be discussion around the fish, which I get, however, this is not an area of concern for me personally or professionally.
- I am learning lots-workings of this committee-interesting speakers and topics.
- Your efforts to develop positive outcomes during each discussion are sincerely appreciated. It is always more difficult to do when you have a large group comprised of individuals from different backgrounds that are very passionate about their specific concerns wanting to protect their livelihood or wildlife interests. In order to achieve success in this initiative,

everyone is required to maintain an open mind about understanding all points of view and learn from this experience.

- There is a lot of passion by local residents. However, there are also many inappropriate comments being made recently (via email) about the process and threats to individual folks (the Northern Health example). this is completely unacceptable and we risk having people disengage from the process because of it. I continuously hear folks reference the 'health of the river', and I'm not sure everybody fully understands why we are doing a values based approach to flow options/scenarios. Our values approach will help us to quantify/qualify components of a healthy river.

- Not an easy job, Rahul! Perhaps a recap presentation on the progress might remind participants how the process has progressed to where we are now.

- you've got the least trusted corporation and a bunch of strong personalities in the same room this is no easy task. Rio Tinto are squandering any trust built up in this process by maintaining a very full reservoir with no room for a big fall storm or high snow pack this winter. The only thing radically transparent right now is corporate greed.

- Need to stay the course and not be pressured into quick solutions that do not fully meet objectives

- I am happy to be part of this process & find great value in it

- time is of the essence.