

Memorandum



To: WEI participants
From: Rahul Ray and Jason Collier
Date: March 22, 2019
EDI Project No: 18P0173
Re: Wistaria WEI Information Session – March 12, 2019

An information session for Rio Tinto's Water Engagement Initiative (WEI) was held on March 12, 2019 at Wistaria Hall in Wistaria, BC. Community members were invited to this session, which ran from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

The organizers and presenters included:

Rio Tinto: Andrew Czornohalan (AC), Justus Benckhuysen (JB), and Danielle De Kay (DD)

EDI: Rahul Ray (RR) and Jason Collier (JC)

Ecofish: Jayson Kurtz (JK)

Approximately 20 community members were in attendance.

The following provides a summary of the main discussion points.

- During the introductions, some community members commented that what is needed in the community is cell phone service.
- Following the introductions, a community member wanted to know whom to connect with if they had questions in the future. AC replied that people can reach out to JB or DD for Rio Tinto related questions or to RR for WEI questions. AC is also available when needed.
- During the segment led by JK with respect to his experience with Water Use Plans, a community member wanted to know if, in the instance when professional opinion is needed due to a lack of scientific data, would those determinations be made public. JK replied that Ecofish will help compile the data, ensure it is scientifically defensible and in cases where professional opinion is needed, the rationale and determination will be made public.
- A community member wanted to know what assurances they have that Rio Tinto will be committed to implement results of the process. It has been approximately 70 years since Rio Tinto started their operations and there have been many challenges along the way. It would be good to have some certainty



that the results are going to be implemented. AC replied that Rio Tinto has had discussions with BC Hydro with respect to their Water Use Plans. Although the situation is different in that Rio Tinto is conducting the process voluntarily, AC believes that there are tangible outcomes that can occur from the WEI process. Rio Tinto is committed to the process and the outcomes. AC is also familiar with the past, but there is a willingness by Rio Tinto to make things work.

- Comment that making progress and implementing changes early in the process will help show Rio Tinto's commitment. The fact that Rio Tinto is conducting the WEI and are present at this information session also helps to show commitment.
- A community member asked AC what would happen if he was not here. Would the WEI and Rio Tinto continue the process? The WEI is not being conducted by AC alone. He has a team to support the process in BC and has support from Rio Tinto. The process would continue without his presence. RR stated that there are many interests to consider as part of the process and that having a strong contingent of participants would make the process stronger.
- In terms of barriers to participation, it was stated that many people do not have internet, making it difficult to communicate. At this point, using the postal service would be the best method to communicate WEI information to community members.
- A community member wanted to know where the main table discussion would be held. RR responded that he plans on rotating the venue locations. Having the main table in different location will help to understand communities in the Nechako and their interests.
- It was stated that the South Side has different interest from downstream communities. It would be helpful and show commitment if Rio Tinto conducted a survey and documented the issues of the community. AC responded that this was a good idea and a Rio Tinto contact would be identified.
- **Action Item: Rio Tinto to provide contact and conduct community survey to identify issues.**
- Erosion seems to be higher when the reservoir is closer to 2800 ft elevation, and wind appears to be a contributing factor. There was mention of siltation issues occurring in the lake and its effects on drinking water. In response, some members have had to dig-up their water lines and relocate them.
- Another interest includes recreation, and having access to boat launches for those not living on the lake, as well as having areas for boat storage.
- Fish are of interest to the community. Changes to spawning areas in creeks have been noticed during the last 20 years, and Kokanne are no longer found in certain creeks. It also appears that fish are getting smaller.



- For local ranchers, driftwood along the lake is an issue. When the driftwood accumulates, cattle can not get access to the lake. There have been reports of moose drowning.
- A community member asked if Rio Tinto had insight into the operations of Huckleberry mine and its impacts on the reservoir. AC responded that they have looked into the safety of their dam and that the mine has their own sampling program in accordance with the permit. AC said Rio Tinto could take a closer look at their water quality program.
- **Action Item: Rio Tinto to look into Huckleberry mine Water Quality program.**
- There were questions in terms of scheduling the main table sessions. JB said that the schedule can be flexible to accommodate participants needs and would not be a barrier to participate. What Rio Tinto would like is to have participants who are interested in participating, as the WEI is not just about water, but also includes other interests, such as vegetation clearing, and contracting.
- AC said that the WEI is not a cookie-cutter approach. There many ways that the WEI process can be accessible and successful.
- Two community members (Tim Plesko and Gary Blackwell) expressed interest in joining the main table.

Action Items

- **Action Item: Rio Tinto to provide contact and conduct community survey to identify issues.**
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