

INFORMATION BULLETIN #1



*Nechako Environmental
Enhancement Fund*

NECHAKO ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT FUND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CONVENED TO RECONSIDER BEST USE OF THE FUND

As part of an agreement between the Province and Alcan (BC/Alcan 1997 Agreement) Rio Tinto Alcan agreed to contribute up to \$50 million to the Nechako Environmental Enhancement Fund (NEEF). The purpose of the fund is to enhance the environment of the Nechako watershed. The decision on the best use of the fund was given to a Management Committee whose structure and mandate is stated in the 1997 Agreement.

In 2001, after a lengthy process of consultation and technical studies, the NEEF Management Committee made a legally binding decision that the fund should be used to build a cold water release facility at Kenney Dam on the Nechako River, but that further studies were required to address outstanding issues. Over a period of almost ten years the Nechako Watershed Council directed a work plan towards understanding those issues. The studies revealed that a cold water release facility at Kenney Dam would not provide the same suite of benefits as originally anticipated. In light of this the Nechako Watershed Council investigated the potential for a simpler, surface water release facility. The cost for such a facility has been estimated at \$260 million.

Mindful of the information now available regarding the potential benefits and costs of a water release facility, the Province and Rio Tinto Alcan have asked the NEEF Management Committee to reconsider previous decisions for use of the fund. Revisiting these decisions will encompass consideration of all options for environmental enhancement including a surface water release facility at Kenney Dam.

The following representatives have been appointed to the NEEF Management Committee: Pieter Bekker for the Province, Justus Benckhuysen for Rio Tinto Alcan and Byron Nutton for Fisheries and Oceans Canada. We will be hosting information sessions and conducting a consultation process in consideration of the question of how best to use the fund, and information bulletins such as this one will be distributed on a regular basis. As well, over the next few weeks a website will be developed which will contain further information regarding this decision making process along with reports related to the Nechako watershed.

Written comments can be submitted to us at: NEEF MC, C/O PO Box 2551, Vanderhoof BC, V0J 3A0 or by email to administrator@neef.ca