

# Nechako Environmental Enhancement Fund Phase 3 –Confirmation Meetings

May 31, 2012

# Outline

- **Opening Remarks**
- **Introductions**
- **Brief Review of NEEF Activities (Nov 2011 – present)**
- **Summary of Input Received, Preliminary Assessment and Preliminary Conclusions**
  - Water Release Facility at Kenney Dam
  - Cheslatta Watershed Restoration
  - White Sturgeon Recovery
  - Tributary watershed restoration and stewardship
  - Legacy Fund
  - Integrated Watershed Research
- **Questions and Discussion**
- **Closing Remarks**

# NEEF – Review of Activities

- **Phase 1 – INFORMATION (Dec 11<sup>th</sup> -Feb 15<sup>th</sup> )**
  - Information Meetings – Cheslatta Carrier Nation, District of Vanderhoof, Nechako Watershed Council, Ootsa Lake Residents)
  - Open House – Vanderhoof
  - Information Bulletins #1 and #2
- **Phase 2 – CONSULTATION (Jan 25<sup>th</sup> – Mar 31<sup>st</sup>)**
  - Meetings – FFSBC , NEWSS , NWC,NWSRI , NFCP, RTA
  - Public Meeting /Workshop – Vanderhoof
  - Information Bulletins #3 and #4
- **Phase 3 – CONFIRMATION (Feb 29<sup>th</sup> – Jun 1<sup>st</sup> )**
  - Technical Meetings – April 25<sup>th</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Meetings– Cheslatta Carrier Nation (2X), NWC , NWSRI, NEWSS
  - Information Bulletin #5
  - Public Meeting – Vanderhoof

# NEEF – Next Steps

- **Final Report June 30<sup>th</sup>**
- **NEEF Future**

# Water Release Facility – What we heard!

- **A WRF at Kenny Dam would:**
  - Allow for rehabilitation of Cheslatta watershed
  - Re-water Nechako River Canyon
  - Provide downstream benefits
- **Support from a variety of people and organizations for building a WRF**
- **CCN and partners proposing to build a hydro-electric generating station in conjunction with a WRF . Proposal includes the establishment of a legacy fund (Nechako Environmental Enhancement Fund )**

## Water Release Facility – Preliminary Assessment

- **A technically feasible option with benefits that are real, long term and focused on Cheslatta Watershed**
- **Significant costs with NEEF representing ~10% of overall financial needs; no other source of funds identified; financial viability of CCN proposal uncertain at this time (firm power, outcome of EPA).**
- **Risks associated with sediment transport and uncertainty related to flow required to rehabilitate Cheslatta watershed and of outcome of a EA process remain.**

## Water Release Facility – Preliminary conclusions!

- **Up to 80% of NEEF should be reserved for a period of four years to allow the WRF time to be reviewed, approved and construction started.**
- **In the interim, funding (2%) should be provided to allow a business plan for this option to be fully developed, carry it through the EA process and negotiate an Energy Purchase Agreement (EPA)**
- **Milestones to be determined but after four years, if there is no viable project underway, the reserved NEEF funds will be allocated to a Legacy Fund.**

# Cheslatta Watershed Restoration

- **The Cheslatta Watershed is affected by Skins Lake Spillway discharge in a unique way**
- **Should a WRF be built at Kenney Dam this tributary would be greatly affected and work needs to be done to understand potential actions to be taken when the WRF is built and also if a WRF is not built.**
- **Rehabilitation in advance of building a WRF is also possible**
- **2% of NEEF is to be allocated over a period of 10 years**



## White Sturgeon Recovery – What we Heard!

- **Nechako River White Sturgeon, listed as an endangered species under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, continue their population decline first identified in 2000**
- **Implementation of recovery work is required immediately to avoid extinction of the population**
- **The NWSRI have developed a strategy that requires stable funding over an extended period**

## White Sturgeon Recovery – Preliminary Assessment

- **FFSBC, with proven track record, has demonstrated technical feasibility of conservation aquaculture element of recovery strategy**
- **Timing – conservation aquaculture element must proceed immediately to be of any value**
- **High degree of certainty of outcome with manageable risks for funded elements.**

## White Sturgeon Recovery – Preliminary Conclusions

- **8% of NEEF to be allocated over a period of 10 years for operation of a recovery centre, habitat research and stewardship functions. This represents 50% of the requested funds.**
- **High degree of certainty of outcome. Long-term success of population sustainability dependent upon a number of factors.**

## Tributary Restoration and Stewardship – What we heard!

- **Support from a variety of sources for tributary watershed restoration and enhancement**
- **Nechako Environment and Water Stewardship Society (NEWSS) would build upon successes achieved in the Murray Creek Watershed and work to increase awareness of and encourage water stewardship, re-establish or repair riparian habitat and improve fish access in a number of tributary watersheds**
- **Funds requested were \$1M/year for 20 years**

## Tributary Restoration and Stewardship – Preliminary Assessment

- **Benefits are considerable:**
  - **Positive flow changes**
  - **Improved fish passage, land use practices, reduced water temperature and sediment loading in the mainstem and more accessible habitat**
  - **Education and stewardship**
- **Technically feasible but dependent upon a number of factors:**
  - **Landowner co-operation and participation**
  - **Sustained volunteer effort, effective co-ordination and critical mass in each priority watershed**

## Tributary Restoration and Stewardship – Preliminary Conclusions

- **4% of NEEF be allocated over a ten year period.**
- **Funding conditional upon satisfactory strategic level plan, periodically updated and receipt of annual operating plans to include monitoring component**

## Legacy Fund – What we heard!

- **Support for the establishment of a legacy fund was heard from a number of groups**
- **Such a fund would provide flexibility to address both currently known issues as well as future issues**
- **There was limited discussion on a governance structure to manage/oversee a legacy fund**

# Legacy Fund – Preliminary Assessment

- **Limitation at the outset is the availability of matching funds**
- **If established, benefits can be considerable with flexibility to address current and emerging issues over the long term**
- **Several examples of similar funds show that this option is manageable**



# Legacy Fund – Preliminary Conclusions

- **If after 4 years the WRF option has not made progress or received support for the necessary remaining funds, the balance of NEEF would be allocated to a Legacy Fund for the Nechako Watershed.**
- **Such a fund would be managed by the partners and interest derived from invested funds would be available for relevant projects on a matching funds basis.**

# Integrated Research

- **Biological and physical attributes of the Nechako River continue to change. Natural events (MPB) will continue to influence the watershed for many years. To gain confidence in and understanding of likely outcomes of enhancement options ongoing research and study of the physical, biological, water management and human environmental health interactions is warranted.**
- **To improve future decisions 2% of NEEF to be allocated for 10 years to improve decision making related to enhancement options**



**Questions and Comments!**

# Closing Remarks