

Washington State Conservation Commission Elections and Appointment Policy and Procedure Changes September 2015

SUMMARY

Commissioners of the Washington State Conservation Commission, at their September 17, 2015 meeting, approved changes to a variety of election and appointment procedures and policies, including to the conservation district Election and Appointment Manual and moving certain election and appointment forms on-line. The adopted Election and Appointment Manual (with changes in red) is posted on the [Commission's election web page](#). Links to the new on-line election and appointment forms are also included on that page.

BACKGROUND

The Commission is authorized in Chapter 89.08.190 Revised Code of Washington to establish conservation district election procedures: *"The Commission shall establish procedures for elections, canvass the returns and announce the official results thereof."*

The Commission has adopted election rules in WAC Chapter 135-110, effective November 19, 2010. District elections are to be conducted annually, and must comply with election rules and procedures. The election procedures exist to assist conservation districts and conservation district supervisors in the election, appointment, and replacement of supervisors in the State of Washington, and to assure fair treatment of all parties involved in such proceedings, and to provide guidance for compliance with WAC Chapter 135-110.

Comments on the proposed amendments were taken from July to September 2015. The Commission reviewed the comments before adopting the changes at its September Commission meeting. The changes are effective for the 2016 election cycle.

The Commission understands the burden on districts when new policies and procedures are instituted, therefore the need for the new policies and procedures must be clear. The number of issues that came to light during the last election cycle warranted them for consideration, and other changes were already slated to be made during the normal course of operations.

CHANGES

Proposed changes include:

Election Process:

Amendments to the Election and Appointment Manual. Specific changes and clarifications include:

- All original election materials stay at the district.
- Districts must retain all original forms, documents, and ballots for 12 months after the election has been certified, at which time they may be destroyed unless the election has not been certified or the election is contested to the Commission. This requirement conforms to the [Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule \(CORE\)](#).
- To the extent possible, election forms have been re-organized and moved on-line. On-line election forms will be filled out by the Election Supervisor. The intent is that by filling out forms on-line, districts will provide all the information the Commission needs

to certify and announce district election results.

- Certain forms do not lend themselves to being transferred to on-line forms. Those forms will remain "paper" forms to be used by the Election Supervisor and polling officers to process the election.
- All "paper" forms will remain in the custody of the district, and no copies are needed at the Commission (unless requested by the Commission).

On-line forms only (available for data entry at the [Commission's elections web page](#)):

[EF1 – CD Election Information](#) (same as old election form #1)

[EF2 – Candidate Verification](#)

[EF3 – Automatic Re-Election Checklist](#) (same as before)

[EF4 – Due Notice Compliance](#) (same as old election form #5)

[EF5 – Ballot Results Report](#) (same as old election form #7)

[Election Feedback Form](#): a new form for anyone (the public, district staff, supervisors) to use to comment on the CD election process. This form gives folks a pathway to express concerns, compliments, and other information directly with the Commission.

Paper Forms (available for download at the [Commission's elections web page](#)):

[PF-A – Candidate Information for Elected Supervisor Position](#) (same as old form #2)

[PF-B – Nominating Petition for Elected Supervisor Position](#) (same as old form #3)

[PF-C – Poll List](#) (same as old form #6)

[PF-D – Ballot Template](#) (same as old form)

Appointment Process:

Specific changes and clarifications include:

- The appointment application is now on-line only. Therefore, districts will advertise for expiring appointee positions, direct applicants to an on-line application, and recruit applicants. However, districts will no longer need to send applications to the Commission, nor will any original or copies of recruitment announcements need to be sent to the Commission.
- Applicants for appointment to appointed positions will fill out the appointment application on-line directly with the Commission.
- The entire Appointment process section in the Election and Appointment Manual was edited to reflect these changes.

Appointment forms are now as follows:

On-line forms only (available for data entry at the [Commission's elections web page](#)):

[AF1 – Conservation District Appointed Supervisor Application](#) (same as old form)

[AF2 – Mid-Term Elected Position Appointment Verification of Qualifications](#) (same as old form, but re-titled)