



ELECTIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE CHANGES FOR THE 2016-2017 ELECTION CYCLE

COMMENTS REQUESTED

SUMMARY

Conservation Commission members, at their July 21 meeting, approved posting for comment DRAFT changes to conservation district election procedures and policies, including

- The adoption of a common date or week for district elections (sometime in the first quarter of the year (January-March)),
- To the conservation district election and appointment manual, and
- Consolidating certain on-line election forms.

Some of the proposed changes are the result of a number of issues that came to light during the last election cycle and other changes were slated to be made during the normal course of operations. The [draft Elections and Appointments Manual](#) (with proposed changes in red) is posted on the [Commission's elections web page](#). Links to the new draft on-line election form ([EF-2](#)) can also be found on the [Commission's web page](#).

CONSERVATION DISTRICT ACTION

Conservation Commission staff will be accepting comments on the proposed changes until **September 2, 2016**. Please use the [2016 Election Changes Comment Form](#) to submit your comments. The Commission intends to review comments and adopt the changes at its September Commission meeting. The changes would, therefore, be effective for the 2016-2017 election cycle.

Also, please feel free to try out the new on-line form ([EF-2](#)) by clicking on the link provided below. Data can be entered and the new forms "submitted" until September 2, at which time the system will be reset in anticipation of the start of the new election cycle.

Comments can be submitted using the [2016 Election Changes Comment Form](#).

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.

The Commission Elections Officer 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 warrants bringing them to the Commission for consideration. After review and possible revision, the changes would be presented to districts for comment. Final adoption in September would allow the changes to be effective for the 2017 election cycle (the next cycle).

PROPOSED CHANGES

Election Date Change: Currently, conservation district elections occur during the first quarter of the year (January - March). A district is free to choose any day or days during the months of January – March to hold their election.

The Commission has proposed the adoption of a common date or week for district elections (sometime in the first quarter of the year (January-March)). No specific date or week has been proposed yet, but the Commission is seeking input as to whether or not this should be adopted. If a date change is adopted by the Commission, it is not anticipated to take effect during the 2016-2017 election cycle.

Forms Change: Currently, there are 5 electronic election forms conservation districts are required to submit to the Commission:

EF1 – CD Election Information

EF2 – Candidate Verification

EF3 – Automatic Re-Election Checklist

EF4 – Due Notice Compliance

EF5 – Ballot Results Report

The Commission has proposed retaining [EF1](#) and combining EF2-5 into just one form – [EF2 – Election Report](#). All conservation districts fill out both [EF1](#) and [EF2](#) each election cycle. [EF1](#) is due before the election, on or before the candidate filing deadline established by each conservation district. [EF2](#) is due four weeks after the day set by the conservation district for the election (regardless of if the election is held).

There is no change to paper forms conservation districts use for various election purposes. Those are:

PF-A – Candidate Information for Elected Supervisor Position

PF-B – Nominating Petition for Elected Supervisor Position

PF-C – Poll List

PF-D – Ballot Template

There is no change to the electronic appointment forms conservation districts use either to seek applicants to appointed positions or to verify the qualifications of persons the district appoints to serve out the remainder of an elected positions' term. Those are as follows:

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)

Election and Appointment Manual changes: The Commission has proposed changes and amendments to the relevant sections of the elections manual to reflect the changes described above. Further, to aid in the election process, new checklists for specific occurrences (the automatic re-election of the incumbent, verifying a candidate’s eligibility to serve and be pre-printed on a ballot, and election results) have been created, in addition to a “master” election checklist with relevant links and references to the Elections Manual. Further, the Commission is now requiring, as a best practice, that mid-term vacancies in elected supervisor positions be advertised to the public. To that end, a new policy (Appendix E - Sample Elected Board Positions – Mid-Term Appointments) has been made available for districts. Please see the newly revised [draft Election and Appointment Manual](#) on the [Commission’s web page](#) here for all the changes.