

# Washington State Conservation Commission Election Policy

Policy #	19-_____ Election Quality Assurance Plan (EQAP) for Districts
Applies to:	Conservation Commission and Commission Agency Operations
Effective Date:	

## PURPOSE:

*To assure those stakeholders interested, that the quality of conservation district elections provided by Washington State Conservation Districts meets or exceeds an accepted standard of quality. This includes both administration and outreach related to elections.*

*Interested stakeholders include, but are not limited to: landowners receiving District assistance; the general public who ask for governmental accountability; those that provide funding such as legislators, voters, and others; other agencies that provide pass thru funds; and other conservation districts.*

## BACKGROUND

One specific goal of all Conservation Districts, that we promote, is that Districts conduct open, fair and equitable conservation district elections of the three board members who serve in elected positions.

However, Conservation Districts in Washington State do not currently have a uniform system of providing quality assurance of their election processes, and some Districts have no quality assurance process at all. This erodes confidence in district elections, reduces consistency of quality, and brings into question the quality of work done by Districts in all areas.

It is common for service type businesses and organizations, such as Conservation Districts, to have some form of quality assurance and control process to monitor and to improve the quality of their services, including how they conduct elections.

This policy will provide a unified effort to demonstrate and verify that Washington State Conservation Districts do provide an accepted level of quality in conducting conservation district elections.

The statewide Conservation District Election Quality Assurance Plan (EQAP), authorized by this policy, will provide an opportunity to document those Districts already utilizing an internal quality assurance process and provide an option for all Districts to be part of a unified, statewide multi- District quality assurance process.

## **POLICY**

A statewide Conservation District Election Quality Assurance Plan (EQAP) for Washington State Conservation Districts will be established, and as funding allows, the Center for Technical Development will develop, implement, review, and update said EQAP.

District participation in the statewide Conservation District Election Quality Assurance Plan (EQAP) is optional for each District at this time, but all Districts will be encouraged to have some type of written quality assurance plan to ensure a standard of conservation plans and planning.

# Washington's Statewide Conservation Districts Election QAP White paper—as of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Purpose:** a project of the CTD to assure those people interested in conservation district elections conducted by Washington state conservation districts that the quality of the elections meets or exceeds an acceptable standard of quality.

## **Development process to date:**

### **District wide Input Webinar**

-Advertise the need for district input on EQAP development in the \_\_\_\_\_ CTD newsletter and on an \_\_\_\_\_ all Gov Delivery mail out.

-Hold a 2 hour Webinar on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ people attended and provided input that was captured in a set of notes.

### **WACD input**

-At the WACD Annual Conference in Kennewick WA on \_\_\_\_\_, the CTD had a vendor table promoting CTD and the EQAP development. A number of participants stopped at the table to discuss the EQAP development and some provided suggestions or comments concerning the development. The suggestions not already mentioned in the webinar were captured in a set of notes.

### **To CDEAC for input and edits.**

-based on prior input, drafted a rough 1) EQAP proposal and a 2) paper clarifying the expectations that districts share in conducting elections. These two documents were sent to a small task group of district folks who expressed interest in helping to develop an EQAP. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Why needed:**

To assure those stakeholders who are funding District work of the quality of conservation district elections. To assure those stakeholders receiving a District's services of the quality of conservation district elections. To assure all stakeholders who are relying on conservation district services of the quality of the elections.

## **Benefits:**

- Will have a method of identifying Opportunities for Improvements in conducting conservation district elections and sharing them.
- In the future EQARs may reduce duplication of efforts by replacing WSCC election monitoring and practice checks by regional managers.
- Better accountability of district operations.

- More transparency of district operations.

**Technical EQAP will include:**

1. Quality controls developed by each individual conservation District
2. Quality assurance provided by independent reviewers utilizing a standardized QAR process under the direction of the CTD.
3. A resolution process outlined to address issues of concern or deficiencies.



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## Expectations of Conservation Districts in Conducting Conservation District Elections

### **Goal**

One specific goal of all Conservation Districts, that we promote, is that Districts conduct open, fair and equitable conservation district elections of the three board members who serve in elected positions.

### **Expectation** (to achieve our goal)

To conduct open, fair and equitable conservation district elections, district staff should be expected to:

- a. Be trained in conducting conservation district elections.
- b. Be able to successfully fill out and submit Conservation Commission election forms.
- c. Abide by all election process deadlines, requirements, policies, procedures, rules, regulations and laws.
- d. Provide election assistance for to candidates, voters, and the public.
- e. As necessary, be able to handle election emergencies and unforeseen events during an election.
- f. Document all election process contacts, actions, and outcomes.

### **Quality Control** to achieve the expectations

In order to ensure that a district can conduct open, fair and equitable conservation district elections, a district needs to:

- a. Employ qualified people who are capable of doing what is expected
- b. Provide for appropriate staff training to become proficient, maintain proficiency and verify proficiency
- c. Utilize appropriate election templates, tools, forms and processes
- d. Ensure and follow an internal review process



## Quality Assurance

A district needs dependable, consistent and transparent mechanisms to assure themselves and stakeholders that the quality controls are working and its staff are conducting open, fair and equitable conservation district elections.

## Quality Assurance Review

A regular review of how conservation districts conduct conservation district elections would be a typical mechanism used to provide the assurance of proper elections.

## General Note:

Quality Control is the responsibility of each individual district and determined by each district's policies and procedures.

Quality Assurance benefits each individual district, as well as all districts collectively.

## QAP Plan Developed

To help Washington Conservation Districts to meet their expectation of providing open, fair and equitable conservation district elections, the Center for Technical Development has developed a Conservation District Election Quality Assurance Plan (EQAP), which is outlined on a separate document.

## \*Conducting Elections Note:

Specific expectations of what district staff do when conducting conservation district elections:

- a. Obtain training in conducting conservation district elections.
- b. Successfully fill out and submit Conservation Commission election forms.
- c. Abide by all election process deadlines, requirements, polices, procedures, rules, regulations and laws.
- d. Provide election assistance for to candidates, voters, and the public.
- e. As necessary, be able to handle election emergencies and unforeseen events during an election.
- f. Document all election process contacts, actions, and outcomes.