Topic	Process/Activity	Who	Notes
Welcome and Virtual Housekeeping	• Welcome Message from Mark • Overview of tools/tech we'll use today	Mark Craven	**Roll Call:** Mark Craven, Laura Meyer, Stephanie Crouch, Ron Shultz, Audrey Ahmann, Bill Eller, Brynn Brady, Dave Hedrick, Jeanette Dorner, Kirstin Haugen, Mike Mumford, Mike Nordin, Ryan Baye, Tom Salzer, Shirley St. John, Cindy Reed, Joy Garitone, Larry Cochran, Craig Nelson
Discussion of Member "Key Issues" for Elections	• Review each member's list of key issues for elections • Discuss the list and identify common themes • Decide how this information will be used when evaluating election options	Mark Craven Group Discussion	**List of key issues for elections:** - Key goals: Figure out a way for rural CDs in counties with light populations to have an adequate election without exorbatent costs. - Concern over small rural districts, especially ones without rates and charges, survive through election changes (financially). - Maintain individuality between districts. - Hoping that coming out of this summer having a path forward that would satisfy the CDs that are very interested in this process, and finding a way for flexibility between CDs. - Maintain the Commission appointment of 2 members - Increase public engagement in district work - Election needs to be easily accessible for voters - Clear and transparent how one can become a candidate - Election increases the process of communication surrounding elections - More funding is needed if the Commission is to remain engaged in election work - Inspiring public confidence in CD elections - Increasing public participation - Finding a way to deal with cost issue that seems to prevent steps forward - Reduce the impact on CD operations - Feels that opening RCW is a risk - Increasing term length seems to be a good idea - Exhaust all of other options before considering putting CD elections on general ballot

			- Increased outreach, Conservation week, media blitz, all seem like good ideas if it means staying off of general ballot - CD and SCC should be out of the election business – would like to just focus on conservation work. - Find a way to allow some CDs that need to get on the general ballot, but allow other CDs to find other ways. - Voters really don't care where funding comes from to run elections – voters care that districts are on general ballot for a number of reasons. It mostly has to do with low voter turnout. - Be true to the mission and RCW - Inclusive and transparent - Affordability is a common theme for all CDs - Realistic – can CDs still attract and maintain board members? - Part of the scrutiny being paid to CD elections is that CDs are expanding their work and more people are becoming aware of the work that CDs provide. - Maybe this is a moment to invite more people to support conservation. - Does not want to go on the general ballot. It is crippling to smaller districts financially. Concern surrounding keeping board members coming in. - Worried about constituents' taxes used for running elections if on general ballot. - Would want to maintain farmers' representation on boards - "Conservation Week" – feels like that would increase participation throughout the state - DEI is the foremost issue to consider when considering elections - Keeping elections off of general ballot, as it can be expensive - Keep in mind general resources budget - Protect conservation integrity - Funding can be used for conservation, worried about having to use conservation funding for elections - Oftentimes voters don't turn out unless there is a concern.

- There are some who don't trust that there is fair or good governance in the current election system – wants to figure out how to address the lack of confidence in the election system.
- Come up with a flexible solution that addresses the different areas and CDs throughout the state, but do so in a way that gives folks within each area an opportunity to have a voice.
- Reduces burden on CDs
- Concern is the cost of being on a general ballot, especially for smaller CDs
- Voter turnout and engagement of area – how do we make the public aware of what's happening and what CDs are doing (Conservation Week is appealing)
- Four-year terms sound like a great idea, but mostly concerned about general ballot.
- Fair, equitable, and accessible voting process
- Ensure landowner requirement remains
- Process that doesn't increase cost
- Process that minimizes politicization of elections
- If increased cost, should be borne by WA State
- Commission involved in elections may give smaller districts the chance for a fair/accessible election.
- May need to define what a landowner is – may need to look at RCW
- Follow through with any proactive recommendations, wants to understand process that was followed in order to defend it with legislators.
- Maintain Commission appointment for 2 positions
- A *choice* to be on general ballot (thinks the state should fund it if CDs so choose) – rates and charges should go to projects.
- Concern about public disclosures and the future makeup of boards.

Discuss lists/Identify Common threads:
Possibly consider not calling these elections – not elected officials in the way most of the public thinks of elected officials. This may require opening the RCW to redefine elections – potentially change to "nominations" from peers.

			SCC is supposed to supervise elections – does SCC have authority to give different options to CDs and elections? - Not sure that this is possible under the current statute to allow the Commission to have that authority (Bill Eller response) Needs mentioned the most: - Affordability/Manageability - Flexible/True-to-mission
Discussion and "Filling In" of Election Matrix	• Review election matrix • Walk through each option, discuss and clarify, then each member completes the matrix column for the option	Mark Craven Group Discussion	**Walk through each option, discuss and clarify, then each member completes the matrix column for the option** - A: General Election for All (Paid for by CDs) - A1: General Election Option (Paid for by CDs) – not a requirement for all CDs - A2: General Election for All (Not paid for by CDs) – Requires funding from the state in order to pay for the general elections - B: Conservation Week for All – This was an idea looked at favorably by the Commission. Currently, the statute says elections must be held within a 3-month period – CDs choose their date. Within Conservation Week, SCC would be increasing outreach, all CDs would have elections within the same day. - B1: Conservation Week Option – Same as above, CDs are not required to participate/can hold elections within 3-month period - C: More outreach within the current process for all – Maintain the current election process, Commission would do more statewide outreach, CDs would increase their outreach - C1: More outreach within the current process OPTION – same as above, but CDs could choose to do more, or not - D: Precincts – CDs hold elections by having board members elected from 3 CD precincts - E: 4 year terms – Shifting to four-year terms- can save money with election times - F: Every other year – Under current system, may save money - G: More flexible date – Limiting to three-month period can confuse voters who are not used to having elections during these months.

Why do we currently have the three-month period?
- Held elections so farmers could engage, they typically weren't as busy during these months

Concern is that the matrix limits discussion to current process and what is currently "in the box."
- This is a round one to see if this tool is helpful. It may help to identify some of the gaps that will lead into more creative ideas. These won't be the only options – think of it as a jumping off point.

- Needs for column – may be beneficial to go through and make sure members are on the same page about the weight of those needs.
- Oregon model: Counties pay for elections as a subsidy since there is a service provided with such a direct impact.
- Propose removing a category: Since the precinct option is already state law and provides CDs an option to use this model, it may be beneficial to remove this.
- Add a category: May be beneficial to add the current model in order to compare options to what's currently happening.
- Appointments are not always equitable and may lead to the same "good ol' boys" appointing the same folks again and again. Appointments may also turn political if members are appointed by the governor, maybe less so if appointed by county commissioners.
- What are the most important goals vs. what are the needs? Understanding the goals that rise to the top would help as we work through the matrix.
- Outreach and conservation work go hand in hand.
- Legislators will look to us for how to solve the elections issue. Legislators are not the issue at hand to be solved.

What is the problem we are trying to solve?
- Cost

  II
- Disruption to CD operations

  II
- Maintaining local representation

  II

			- Ability to get money for rates and charges (legally) - Outreach to community, legislators, schools about who CDs are (if we do this, the rest seems to fall into place) V - Maintain or improve fair, equitable, and transparent way to have leadership for our natural resources I - Creating more interest in CDs and the work they do I - Restoring public trust and confidence in method of choosing leadership I - Appearance issue that elections are not open to others I - Voting rights and participation I - Accountability - Ensuring that as many people as possible are participating – identify methods to do so - For many districts, it doesn't feel like there *is* a problem - Creating more engagement of the CD with the public - Not all 45 CDs and their communities are satisfied by the current election process – need a process that satisfies all or most parties - Lack of credibility among the general public and voters, which can inhibit ability to get funds, due to very small voter participation.
Discuss Next Steps	• Agenda items for May meetings • District, legislator, and stakeholder engagement • What is our "finished product?"	Mark Craven Group Discussion	**Agenda items for May meetings:** Take these problems and discuss how we can solve them during our next meeting. How can each option in the matrix help solve the problems identified?

ADJOURN:	