Торіс	Process/Activity	Who	Notes
Welcome and Virtual Housekeeping	 Welcome Message from Mark Overview of tools/tech we'll use today 	Mark Craven	Roll call: Craig Nelson, Laura Meyer, Cindy Reed, Larry Cochran, Bill Eller, Brynn Brady, Christy Roman, Dave Hedrick, John Switzer, Kirstin Haugen, Rachael Guth, Ron Shultz, Ryan Baye, Shirley St. John, Tom Salzer, Mark Craven, Stephanie Crouch, Cindy Reed, Audrey Ahmaan, Joy Garitone
Discussion of Michigan CD Election Process		John Switzer Christy Roman Rachael Guth	 General Background: -75 CDs covering all 83 MI Counties -No state appropriated operations funding (eliminated in 2007). Supplemented grant funding with admin funding. -Boards of 5 directors, elected or <i>appointed</i> (allows district directors to appoint in event of a vacancy) -Nonpartisan elections occur at annual meetings (annual meetings are loosely defined) -CD determines when elections are held -Residents of the district vote during elections -MDARD oversees and certifies election results Overview of election requirements: -Standard term of office is 4 years -A director shall hold office until: A successor has been elected They resign and the resignation is accepted by the board They pass away Appointed directors must run for the remainder of term at the next election. -Terms are staggered, so hopefully there aren't more than 1-2 up for election at a time. Election process - Petitions: -Resident of the district, at least 18 years' old -Declare which open term they are seeking -Submit a petition signed by 5 residents of the district at least 60 days' prior Election process - Annual meeting:

-Registration cards are distributed to voters and checked for coting eligibility
requirements
-If qualified, exchanged for ballot
-Polling count ballots
-Announced at meeting
Election process - Certification
-Election docs submitted to MDARD
-Oaths of office are completed ad notarized
-MDARD notifies CD of determination on election within 90 days.
Example election events:
-Typical:
- Annual meeting (special dinner, presentations, etc.)
- Open house
-Non-typical"
- Drive through election during tree sale
Joint annual meeting and election
-County fair
-Potluck with landowners
Elements of success:
- Great presentation/speaker/event
- Food
- Low/no cost
- Awards
- Farmer of the year
-Community recognition
- Freebies/Door prizes
-Word of mouth/promotion
- Save the dates
- Personal invites
What could go wrong?
- Challenges to enforce properly held elections
-Lack of penalty in statye
- Lack of funding to incentivize
-Improper elections = inability to certify
- Process is reactive

- Specific examples:
- Bay CD
 Have not held an election since 2013, but they are minimally active. Because of loophole, the board can still operate. Still doing grant work, have a part-time district manager. Were supposed to hold an election on April 3, 2020. There was a contested election with 8-9 people in the running – had to cancel due to COVID. In April 2021, got an appointed board in place of elections. Gratiot CD Run election wrong – each time has been a different issue. Timing is specific, not getting election docs in within window of 90 days.
-Stagnant/inactive boards (loophole) "A director shall hold office until a successor has been elected) -Lack of diversity - Recruiting who you know rather than who you need
 Specific examples: Antrim CD: Had 5 men on the board, and essentially ran the one woman off of the board through harassment. Macomb CD: All board members were related (cousins) Ottawa CD: Board director feel like it is family lineage/legacy to be directors, as father was an original member.
-Low voter turnout -Weather/timing - Fee vs. free (what's being offered) - Lack of promotion
-Exceptionally high voter turnout due to controversy.
-Specific examples: - Presque Isle CD - Own natural area purchased from DNR, and performed a clear cut that wasn't prefaced in the community. The

community wanted to remove the board members because of
this – high voter turnout
 USPS had slow mail because of a snow storm, absentee
ballots did not arrive in time to be counted. It is likely that this
affected the outcome of the election.
- Genesee CD
Surrounding a district director who was difficult. The board
wanted him to resign, so the director lobbied the community to
try and replace those who wanted him to resign. The board
also lobbied. DM got surrounding volunteers to perform
election, was transparent surrounding process.
election, was transparent surrounding process.
Empowering districts to be successful:
-Regional coordinators: Influence v. authority
-Tools and resources to assist:
Annual meeting and elections
Election worksheet
"Life cycle of a director" training
Recruitment strategies
Associate Director policies
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Q: Any political pushback from state legislators?
A: Frankly, no. A direct response to a few things, including that there is not a
conservation commission, coupled with the lack of district funding. CDs fly
under the radar.
Q: Are elections advertised just once? Does it have to be a legal ad in the
paper?
A: It is required only once. Encouraged to do a legal ad, but it is very
expensive. Encouraged to document date advertised via affidavit, scan of
newspaper, etc.
Q: Do many CDs advertise more than once?
A: Those who do have more successful elections. Folks who do bare
minimum are the low turnout elections.
Q : Are there other special purpose districts in Michigan?
A: Not really – CDs are the only special use districts. Closest comparison are
school districts.

			 Q: Who do Michigan CDs serve, and who are directors accountable to? A: Transitioned in the last 5-10 years. Traditionally, MI beign a very diverse ag state, boards were made up of farmers. Diversified funding sources and outside grants. Delved into watershed and invasive species programs. Gradual shift to a diversified board, general scope still resides in agriculture. Genesee CD encompasses Flint, MI, and were able to build tunnels in and around the city of Flint. Also delving into urban agriculture. A: Ultimately, directors are accountable to their constituents. Districts are accountable to MDARD. One could argue that directors are the districts, and as such would be accountable to MDARD. Q: Have you seen instances of groups or reps that are political with specific agendas sort of take over and set the election a certain way? A: CDs who ran annual meetings at the farm bureau at times there is some influence. Generally speaking, politics have stayed out of CD elections in MI.
Report on Information Requested by JCE	 Legislative Engagement Election Costs CD Election Voter Data 	Brynn Brady Ron Shultz Ryan Baye Bill Eller	 Legislative engagement: Recommendation would be to not bring legislators into meetings. Reason being that through conversations with legislators is that there is a pretty good idea of where they fall. There will be some that want changes and know what those changes are, others that will defer to CDs. Not sure what value would be added by bringing some into share what they want changed, as those desired changes have been shared. What would it cost to go on general election ballot (via district auditors)? Cost would wildly vary between counties. Low end is \$5,000, high end is \$1.5 million. Parking lot: How do auditors calculate costs? May not be including cities, more information from auditors. Bill presents a spreadsheet that has combined various pieces of information, including info from the 2021 election cycle, 2015-2020 elections, and 2001-2002 costs (when CDs were put on the general election ballot).
New options discussion	 Presentation and discussion of any new options from matrix exercise. 	Laura Meyer Group Discussion	Discussion of election options – from Matrix exercise: A. Hybrid: 4-year term held EOY + option of either 1) General Election or 2) Current process/more outreach hosted during Conservation Month (March)

	 B. All positions appointed C. Commission runs CDs elections (close to current system, but run by SCC) D. Hybrid: 4-year term held EOY/staggered + Current process/more outreach hosted during Conservation Month (March) E. General Elections for all (NOT paid for by CDs) + 4-year term held EOY/staggered F. If no one files for position, SCC appoints to fill it G. Counties of certain population size (e.g. over 2 million) required to be on general election ballot. Option descriptions/assumptions Unless noted in option language, assuming 3 elected and 2 appointed supervisors For option A, SCC would lead promotion of Conservation Month directing folks (voters/constituents) to CDs Assuming the position make-up (e.g., # of farmers), matches current requirement
	 Unless noted in option language, assuming 3 elected and 2 appointed supervisors For option A, SCC would lead promotion of Conservation Month directing folks (voters/constituents) to CDs
	 Rankings are meant to get a better understanding of potential options committee members may want to consider/explore in more detail; not meant to be a final vote or complete recommendation to move forward at this point.
ADJOURN:	