

# Conservation District Candidates

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Washington State



**Conservation  
Commission**



# Washington State Conservation Commission

In Washington, conservation districts hold a unique position in the conservation of our natural resources. They serve as the local contact for landowners, farmers, and ranchers as they seek to conserve our natural resources.

Conservation districts are governed by a board of supervisors, three of whom are elected and two of whom are appointed by the Conservation Commission. Conservation districts function best when they are filled with elected and appointed board members who care about and are involved in the conservation of natural resources.

When created in 1939, conservation districts in Washington State were given the ability to conduct their own elections by the Washington State Legislature, and that process continues to this day. The Conservation Commission is required to set conservation district election policies and procedures to promote fair and open elections.

This publication explains the election law relating to filing for the office of conservation district supervisor. Please note, this publication is not a substitute for the statutes and regulations governing this process but rather should be read in conjunction with them.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact your conservation district or the Conservation Commission.

We will be happy to assist you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Clark', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

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Alternate document formats are available upon request.

## Checklist - you will need

- Candidate Information form
- Qualified Nominating Petition form, depending on which type of candidacy you choose
- Candidate Statement (including photograph), if required by your conservation district

## Where to file

Each Conservation District determines their own election day, which in turn determines when, where, and how a candidate must file for office. Online filing may be available through your conservation district.

[Contact your conservation district](#) for directions and hours of operation.

There are two ways you may file:

### 1. Online

[Check with your conservation district](#) for this option.

### 2. In person

[Check with your conservation district](#) for directions and hours of operation.

## Important dates

Each Conservation District determines their own election day between January and March, which in turn determines when a candidate must file. Contact your conservation district for their election date. The filing deadline is typically four weeks before Election Day, unless the conservation district board of supervisors has adopted a term greater than four weeks.

## Qualifications

You must be a qualified district elector on the day of filing and possess the qualifications specified by law. A qualified district elector is a registered voter in the county where the district is located and who resides within the conservation district boundary. To determine if you reside within the conservation district boundary, please [contact your conservation district](#).

A candidate might also need to be a landowner or farm operator, as defined in WAC Chapter 135-110, in order to be qualified to serve as a supervisor. [Contact your conservation district](#) to determine if that requirement needs to be met and to learn if there are additional qualifications.

## What to File

There are two forms for candidates to file. Candidates submit either form to their conservation district either in person, by mail, or electronically, as determined by each conservation district.

1. The Candidate Information. Every candidate must file a candidate information form (or application). Those forms are available at your conservation district. This form assists the conservation district in determining your eligibility to be elected and serve as a board supervisor. Candidates who file the candidate information on or before the filing deadline may be eligible to have their name printed on the official ballot. Even write-in candidates must file candidate information forms (after the election) to be eligible.

2. The Qualified Nominating Petition. The qualified nominating petition is a form that is used by candidates who wish their name to be printed on the official ballot. A candidates must get at least 25 signatures of qualified district electors in order to have their name printed on the official ballot. The qualified nominating petition must also be submitted on or before the filing deadline.

## Approval

Immediately after the filing deadline, the conservation district will determine candidate eligibility. Once you have been approved as a candidate, the conservation district will contact you to confirm your candidacy.

The final ballot order of candidates will be alphabetical by last name.

## Determine Your Candidacy Type

There are three types of candidates:

1. A declared candidate is a qualified candidate who submits the candidate information to the conservation district by the filing deadline. A declared candidate's name will not appear on the official ballot.
2. A declared nominated candidate is a qualified candidate who submits both the candidate information and a qualified nominating petition to the conservation district by the filing deadline. A valid nominated petition contains at least 25 signatures of qualified district electors. A declared nominated candidate's name will appear on the official ballot.
3. An undeclared write-in candidate is a person who has not submitted the candidate information to the conservation district by the filing deadline. An undeclared write-in candidate's name will not appear on the official ballot. An undeclared write-in candidate who wins the election must file a candidate information within 28 days of the election in order to be qualified to serve as a supervisor. There could also be other qualifications that could make an undeclared write-in candidate ineligible to be served if not met.

## Personal information

Enter your name and address as it appears on your voter registration. Titles denoting occupations, including military rank, positions on issues, political affiliation, symbols, or anything intentionally designed to mislead voters are not acceptable.

## Conservation District

Choose the conservation district for which you want to be a candidate. You are responsible for meeting all qualifications and filing for the correct conservation district.

## Party Preference

There is no option for party preference in conservation district elections.

## Qualifications

Declare your eligibility to serve by indicating that you are a registered voter and that you live within the conservation district boundaries. If you do not know if you are a registered voter, please check with the Secretary of State's office. If you do not know if you live within the conservation district boundary, please [contact the conservation district](#).

You may also be required to be a landowner or operator of a farm, depending on the current composition of the conservation district board of supervisors. A "landowner" means a person with legal title of record to real property in the conservation district at the time of applying for appointment. "Farm operator" or "operator of a farm" means a person who operates farm and agricultural land. "Farm and agricultural land" means either:

- (a) Land in any contiguous ownership of twenty or more acres devoted primarily to agricultural uses;
- (b) Any parcel of land five acres or more, but less than twenty acres devoted primarily to agricultural uses, which has produced a gross income from agricultural uses equivalent to one hundred dollars or more per acre per year for three of the five calendar years preceding the date of application for classification under this chapter; or
- (c) Any parcel of land of less than five acres devoted primarily to agricultural uses which has produced a gross income of one thousand dollars or more per year for three of the five calendar years preceding the date of application for classification under this chapter.
- (d) Agricultural lands shall also include farm woodlots of less than twenty and more than five acres and the land on which appurtenances necessary to production, preparation or sale of the agricultural products exist in conjunction with the lands producing such products.
- (e) Agricultural lands shall also include any parcel of land of one to five acres, which is not contiguous, but which otherwise constitutes an integral part of farming operations being conducted on land qualifying under this section as "farm and agricultural lands."

## Oath and Signature

Sign the acknowledgement of the accuracy of the information you provided.

## Filing fee

There is no filing fee.

## Campaigning

It is the duty of each candidate to inform voters of the candidate's desire and qualifications to be elected to serve as a conservation district supervisor.

Candidates may not seek to influence voters to vote for or against a specific candidate within 300 feet of ballot boxes on Election Day. Candidates may observe an election while the polls are open but may not interfere with voters or polling officers. Candidates may observe the counting of ballots but may not interfere with polling officers or the election supervisor.

## Candidate Statements

A conservation district may provide equal opportunity and equivalent space to candidates for candidate statements, but are not required to do so. Such information must not be provided within 300 feet of polls on Election Day. Each conservation district determines the filing deadline for submittal of candidate statements, and each conservation district determines the length, content, and other requirements related to them. For more information, please [contact your conservation district](#).

## Withdrawal of candidacy

A candidate wishing to withdraw his or her candidacy must provide written notice to that effect to the conservation district before Election Day. Notice by any other means will be considered invalid. If the candidate is running as a nominated candidate and ballots have already been printed, the conservation district is not obligated to reprint ballots to remove the withdrawn candidate's name.

It is the candidate's duty to inform the voting public of their intention to withdraw before the conservation district prints the official ballot. A candidate who withdraws before Election Day is no longer eligible to serve.

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