



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, GALVESTON DISTRICT
5151 FLYNN PARKWAY, SUITE 306
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS 78411-4318

CESWG-RDR

16 June 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Pre-2015 Regulatory Regime
Approved Jurisdictional Determination in Light of *Sackett v. EPA*, 143 S. Ct. 1322
(2023),¹ SWG-2004-00935²

BACKGROUND. An Approved Jurisdictional Determination (AJD) is a Corps document stating the presence or absence of waters of the United States on a parcel or a written statement and map identifying the limits of waters of the United States on a parcel. AJDs are clearly designated appealable actions and will include a basis of JD with the document.³ AJDs are case-specific and are typically made in response to a request. AJDs are valid for a period of five years unless new information warrants revision of the determination before the expiration date or a District Engineer has identified, after public notice and comment, that specific geographic areas with rapidly changing environmental conditions merit re-verification on a more frequent basis.⁴ For the purposes of this AJD, we have relied on section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (RHA),⁵ the Clean Water Act (CWA) implementing regulations published by the Department of the Army in 1986 and amended in 1993 (references 2.a. and 2.b. respectively), the 2008 *Rapanos-Carabell* guidance (reference 2.c.), and other applicable guidance, relevant case law and longstanding practice, (collectively the pre-2015 regulatory regime), and the *Sackett* decision (reference 2.d.) in evaluating jurisdiction.

This Memorandum for Record (MFR) constitutes the basis of jurisdiction for a Corps AJD as defined in 33 CFR §331.2. The features addressed in this AJD were evaluated consistent with the definition of “waters of the United States” found in the pre-2015 regulatory regime and consistent with the Supreme Court’s decision in *Sackett*. This AJD did not rely on the 2023 “Revised Definition of ‘Waters of the United States,’” as

¹ While the Supreme Court’s decision in *Sackett* had no effect on some categories of waters covered under the CWA, and no effect on any waters covered under RHA, all categories are included in this Memorandum for Record for efficiency.

² When documenting aquatic resources within the review area that are jurisdictional under the Clean Water Act (CWA), use an additional MFR and group the aquatic resources on each MFR based on the TNW, interstate water, or territorial seas that they are connected to. Be sure to provide an identifier to indicate when there are multiple MFRs associated with a single AJD request (i.e., number them 1, 2, 3, etc.).

³ 33 CFR 331.2.

⁴ Regulatory Guidance Letter 05-02.

⁵ USACE has authority under both Section 9 and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 but for convenience, in this MFR, jurisdiction under RHA will be referred to as Section 10.

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amended on 8 September 2023 (Amended 2023 Rule) because, as of the date of this decision, the Amended 2023 Rule is not applicable in this state due to litigation.

1. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS.

- a. Provide a list of each individual feature within the review area and the jurisdictional status of each one (i.e., identify whether each feature is/is not a water of the United States and/or a navigable water of the United States).
 - i. Mud Flat 1 (0.45 acres), jurisdictional, Section 404, 27.825468 -97.074122
 - ii. Mud Flat 2 (3.52 acres), jurisdictional, Section 404, 27.827020 -97.076388
 - iii. Wetland 1 (0.67 acres), jurisdictional, Section 404, 27.827184 -97.076878

2. REFERENCES.

- a. Final Rule for Regulatory Programs of the Corps of Engineers, 51 FR 41206 (November 13, 1986).
- b. Clean Water Act Regulatory Programs, 58 FR 45008 (August 25, 1993).
- c. U.S. EPA & U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Clean Water Act Jurisdiction Following the U.S. Supreme Court's Decision in *Rapanos v. United States & Carabell v. United States* (December 2, 2008)
- d. *Sackett v. EPA*, 598 U.S. 651, 143 S. Ct. 1322 (2023)
- e. 12 March 2025 Memorandum to the Field Between the U.S. Department of Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Concerning the Proper Implementation of "Continuous Surface Connection" Under the Definition of "Waters of the United States" Under the Clean Water Act

3. REVIEW AREA.

Review Area 1: An approximately 0.99-acre review area located on Block 114 (Lot 1) in Port Aransas, Nueces County, Texas

LATITUDE/LONGITUDE (Decimal Degrees):

Latitude: 27.825468 N; Longitude: 97.074133 W

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Review Area 2: An approximately 4.56-acre review area located on Block 135 (Lots 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10) and Block 148 (Lots 1 and 2) on Sixth Street in Port Aransas, Nueces County, Texas.

LATITUDE/LONGITUDE (Decimal Degrees):

Latitude: 27.826939 N; Longitude: 97.076584 W

4. NEAREST TRADITIONAL NAVIGABLE WATER (TNW), INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS TO WHICH THE AQUATIC RESOURCE IS CONNECTED.⁶

Mud Flat 1, Mud Flat 2, and Wetland 1 are connected to Corpus Christi Bay, a TNW subject to the ebb and flow of the tide and presently used to transport interstate commerce via the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

5. FLOWPATH FROM THE SUBJECT AQUATIC RESOURCES TO A TNW, INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS

Mud Flat 1 is a coastal mud flat that directly abuts and flows continuously into Corpus Christi Bay through Mud Flat 2. Mud Flat 2 is a coastal mud flat that directly abuts and flows continuously into Corpus Christi Bay. Wetland 1 is an emergent wetland that directly abuts Mud Flat 2, which directly abuts and flows continuously into Corpus Christi Bay.

6. SECTION 10 JURISDICTIONAL WATERS⁷: Describe aquatic resources or other features within the review area determined to be jurisdictional in accordance with Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. Include the size of each aquatic resource or other feature within the review area and how it was determined to be jurisdictional in accordance with Section 10.⁸ N/A

⁶ This MFR should not be used to complete a new stand-alone TNW determination. A stand-alone TNW determination for a water that is not subject to Section 9 or 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (RHA) is completed independently of a request for an AJD. A stand-alone TNW determination is conducted for a specific segment of river or stream or other type of waterbody, such as a lake, where upstream or downstream limits or lake borders are established.

⁷ 33 CFR 329.9(a) A waterbody which was navigable in its natural or improved state, or which was susceptible of reasonable improvement (as discussed in § 329.8(b) of this part) retains its character as “navigable in law” even though it is not presently used for commerce, or is presently incapable of such use because of changed conditions or the presence of obstructions.

⁸ This MFR is not to be used to make a report of findings to support a determination that the water is a navigable water of the United States. The district must follow the procedures outlined in 33 CFR part 329.14 to make a determination that water is a navigable water of the United States subject to Section 10 of the RHA.

7. SECTION 404 JURISDICTIONAL WATERS: Describe the aquatic resources within the review area that were found to meet the definition of waters of the United States in accordance with the pre-2015 regulatory regime and consistent with the Supreme Court's decision in *Sackett*. List each aquatic resource separately, by name, consistent with the naming convention used in section 1, above. Include a rationale for each aquatic resource, supporting that the aquatic resource meets the relevant category of "waters of the United States" in the pre-2015 regulatory regime. The rationale should also include a written description of, or reference to a map in the administrative record that shows, the lateral limits of jurisdiction for each aquatic resource, including how that limit was determined, and incorporate relevant references used. Include the size of each aquatic resource in acres or linear feet and attach and reference related figures as needed.

- a. TNWs (a)(1): N/A
- b. Interstate Waters (a)(2): N/A
- c. Other Waters (a)(3): N/A
- d. Impoundments (a)(4): N/A
- e. Tributaries (a)(5): N/A
- f. The territorial seas (a)(6): N/A
- g. Adjacent wetlands (a)(7):

Mud Flat 1: Based on the data sources listed above and the two site visits, we have determined that Mud Flat 1 is jurisdictional because it abuts and has a continuous surface connection to Corpus Christi Bay, a TNW, through a low elevation area connected to Mud Flat 2. Corpus Christi Bay is a TNW because it is subject to the ebb and flow of the tide and is presently used to transport interstate commerce via the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. In accordance with 33 CFR Part 328.3, a wetland is considered a WOUS when it is adjacent to waters identified in paragraph (a)(1)-(a)(3) of the federal regulations. In accordance with pre-2015 regulatory regime in light of *Sackett v. EPA* and the 12 March 2025 Memorandum to the Field Between the U.S. Department of Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Concerning the Proper Implementation of "Continuous Surface Connection" Under the Definition of "Waters of the United States" Under the Clean Water Act, a wetland is considered adjacent if connected by a continuous surface connection, meaning that the wetland must physically abut or touch the paragraph (a)(1), a

jurisdictional impoundment, or relatively permanent water. Therefore, the discharge of dredged and/or fill material into Mud Flat 1 is subject to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and would require a DA permit.

Mud Flat 2: Based on the data sources listed above and the two site visits, we have determined that Mud Flat 2 is jurisdictional because it abuts and has a continuous surface connection to Corpus Christi Bay through mud flats. Corpus Christi Bay is a TNW because it is subject to the ebb and flow of the tide and is presently used to transport interstate commerce via the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. In accordance with 33 CFR 328.4, jurisdiction extends beyond the ordinary high water mark to the limit of the adjacent wetland when adjacent wetlands are present. In this particular case, jurisdiction extends to the limit of the mud flat. In accordance with 33 CFR Part 328.3, a wetland is considered a WOUS when it is adjacent to waters identified in paragraph (a)(1)-(a)(3) of the federal regulations. In accordance with pre-2015 regulatory regime in light of *Sackett v. EPA* and the 12 March 2025 Memorandum to the Field Between the U.S. Department of Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Concerning the Proper Implementation of “Continuous Surface Connection” Under the Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act, a wetland is considered adjacent if connected by a continuous surface connection, meaning that the wetland must physically abut or touch the paragraph (a)(1), a jurisdictional impoundment, or relatively permanent water. Therefore, the discharge of dredged and/or fill material into Mud Flat 1 is subject to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and would require a DA permit.

Wetland 1: Based on the data sources listed above the two site visits, we have determined that Wetland 1 is jurisdictional because it directly abuts and has a continuous surface connection to Mud Flat 2, which directly abuts and flows continuously into Corpus Christi Bay, a TNW. Corpus Christi Bay is a TNW because it is subject to the ebb and flow of the tide and is presently used to transport interstate commerce via the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. In accordance with 33 CFR Part 328.3, a wetland is considered a WOUS when it is adjacent to waters identified in paragraph (a)(1)-(a)(3) of the federal regulations. In accordance with pre-2015 regulatory regime in light of *Sackett v. EPA* and the 12 March 2025 Memorandum to the Field Between the U.S. Department of Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Concerning the Proper Implementation of “Continuous Surface Connection” Under the Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act, a wetland is considered adjacent if connected by a continuous surface connection, meaning that the wetland must physically abut or touch the paragraph (a)(1), a jurisdictional impoundment, or relatively permanent water.

Therefore, the discharge of dredged and/or fill material into Wetland 1 is subject to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and would require a DA permit.

8. NON-JURISDICTIONAL AQUATIC RESOURCES AND FEATURES

- a. Describe aquatic resources and other features within the review area identified as “generally non-jurisdictional” in the preamble to the 1986 regulations (referred to as “preamble waters”).⁹ Include size of the aquatic resource or feature within the review area and describe how it was determined to be non-jurisdictional under the CWA as a preamble water. N/A
- b. Describe aquatic resources and features within the review area identified as “generally not jurisdictional” in the *Rapanos* guidance. Include size of the aquatic resource or feature within the review area and describe how it was determined to be non-jurisdictional under the CWA based on the criteria listed in the guidance. N/A
- c. Describe aquatic resources and features identified within the review area as waste treatment systems, including treatment ponds or lagoons designed to meet the requirements of CWA. Include the size of the waste treatment system within the review area and describe how it was determined to be a waste treatment system. N/A
- d. Describe aquatic resources and features within the review area determined to be prior converted cropland in accordance with the 1993 regulations (reference 2.b.). Include the size of the aquatic resource or feature within the review area and describe how it was determined to be prior converted cropland. N/A
- e. Describe aquatic resources (i.e. lakes and ponds) within the review area, which do not have a nexus to interstate or foreign commerce, and prior to the January 2001 Supreme Court decision in “*SWANCC*,” would have been jurisdictional based solely on the “Migratory Bird Rule.” Include the size of the aquatic resource or feature, and how it was determined to be an “isolated water” in accordance with *SWANCC*. N/A
- f. Describe aquatic resources and features within the review area that were determined to be non-jurisdictional because they do not meet one or more categories of waters of the United States under the pre-2015 regulatory regime consistent with the Supreme Court’s decision in *Sackett* (e.g., tributaries that are

⁹ 51 FR 41217, November 13, 1986.

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non-relatively permanent waters; non-tidal wetlands that do not have a continuous surface connection to a jurisdictional water). N/A

9. DATA SOURCES. List sources of data/information used in making determination. Include titles and dates of sources used and ensure that information referenced is available in the administrative record.
 - a. Aerials (2009, 2012, 2016, 2020, 2023, Google Earth)
 - b. USGS Topographic Map: 1:24,000 Port Aransas (2022)
 - c. NRCS Web Soil Survey: Hydric Rating Map for Nueces County, Texas. Accessed: 29 January 2024 (Review Area 2) and 31 January 2024 (Review Area 1)
 - d. USFWS National Wetland Inventor, Accessed: 29 January 2024 (Review Area 2) and 31 January 2024 (Review Area 1)
 - e. National Hydrography Dataset: Refreshed: January 2024
 - f. FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map: Map #48355C0380G, Dated: 13 October 2022
 - g. 2021 2-meter Topographic Lidar Digital Elevation Model (DEM) of the Lower Coast (<https://data.griidc.org/data/HI.x833.000:0010>)
 - h. NOAA Port Aransas, Texas tidal gauge (8775237, dataset from 1983-2001. Accessed 4 June 2024).
 - i. ORM2 Database:
 - a. A PJD was issued for this property on 3 August 2004. Though this PJD was issued over 5 years ago and is no longer valid, it was used to compare the previously identified features with those identified during the most recent wetland delineation. Both review areas were noted as containing saltwater coastal flats which are frequently inundated and saturated at or near the surface and were determined to be jurisdictional under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act as “wetlands adjacent to waters (other than waters that are themselves wetlands)”.
 - j. Site visits conducted on 1 February 2024 and 2 July 2024
10. OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION. N/A

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11. NOTE: The structure and format of this MFR were developed in coordination with the EPA and Department of the Army. The MFR's structure and format may be subject to future modification or may be rescinded as needed to implement additional guidance from the agencies; however, the approved jurisdictional determination described herein is a final agency action.



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Delineation Map

Review Area 1 (0.99 acres) 27.825468 -97.074133

Mud Flat 1 (0.45 ac) 27.825427 -97.074148

Legend

 Review Area 1

Habitat

 Mud Flat



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Delineation Map

Review Area 2 (4.56 acres): 27.826939 -97.076584

Mud Flat 2 (3.52 acres): 27.827020 -97.076388

Wetland 1 (0.67 acres): 27.827184 -97.076878

Legend

 Review Area 2

Habitat

 Mud Flat

 Wetland