

## APPROVED JURISDICTIONAL DETERMINATION FORM U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

This form should be completed by following the instructions provided in Section IV of the JD Form Instructional Guidebook.

SECTION I:	BACKGROUND	INFORMATION
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DISTRICT OFFICE, FILE NAME, AND NUMBER: Galveston District, SWG-2019-00579, Mercedes Levee
PROJECT LOCATION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION:  State: Texas
REVIEW PERFORMED FOR SITE EVALUATION (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):  Office (Desk) Determination. Date: 25 September 2019 Field Determination. Date(s):  CTION II: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
RHA SECTION 10 DETERMINATION OF JURISDICTION.
re Are no "navigable waters of the U.S." within Rivers and Harbors Act (RHA) jurisdiction (as defined by 33 CFR part 329) in the ew area. [Required]  Waters subject to the ebb and flow of the tide.  Waters are presently used, or have been used in the past, or may be susceptible for use to transport interstate or foreign commerce. Explain:
CWA SECTION 404 DETERMINATION OF JURISDICTION.
1. Waters of the U.S.  a. Indicate presence of waters of U.S. in review area (check all that apply):  TNWs, including territorial seas  Wetlands adjacent to TNWs  Relatively permanent waters <sup>2</sup> (RPWs) that flow directly or indirectly into TNWs

### b. Identify (estimate) size of waters of the U.S. in the review area:

Non-wetland waters: linear feet: width (ft) and/or acres
Wetlands: acres

Non-RPWs that flow directly or indirectly into TNWs

Wetlands directly abutting RPWs that flow directly or indirectly into TNWs

Wetlands adjacent to non-RPWs that flow directly or indirectly into TNWs

Isolated (interstate or intrastate) waters, including isolated wetlands

Wetlands adjacent to but not directly abutting RPWs that flow directly or indirectly into TNWs

# c. Limits (boundaries) of jurisdiction based on: Pick List

Impoundments of jurisdictional waters

Elevation of established OHWM (if known):

### 2. Non-regulated waters/wetlands (check if applicable):<sup>3</sup>

Potentially jurisdictional waters and/or wetlands were assessed within the review area and determined to be not jurisdictional. Explain: Mercedes Levee is is located within a drainage ditch that was excavated within uplands for the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Boxes checked below shall be supported by completing the appropriate sections in Section III below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For purposes of this form, an RPW is defined as a tributary that is not a TNW and that typically flows year-round or has continuous flow at least "seasonally" (e.g., typically 3 months).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Supporting documentation is presented in Section III.F.

primary purpose to provide water for irrigation and is not a jurisdictional waters of the US and is not subject to Section 404 of the CWA, or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. Per 33 CFR 328.3(b)(3)(ii), ditches with ephemeral flow that are not a relocated tributary or excavated in a tributary are not considered jurisdictional waters of the US; therefore; we find that these canals are not jurisdictional waters of the US and are not subject to Section 404 of the CWA, or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

### **SECTION III: CWA ANALYSIS**

### A. TNWs AND WETLANDS ADJACENT TO TNWs

The agencies will assert jurisdiction over TNWs and wetlands adjacent to TNWs. If the aquatic resource is a TNW, complete Section III.A.1 and Section III.D.1. only; if the aquatic resource is a wetland adjacent to a TNW, complete Sections III.A.1 and 2 and Section III.D.1.; otherwise, see Section III.B below.

#### 1. TNW

Identify TNW:

Summarize rationale supporting determination:

#### 2. Wetland adjacent to TNW

Summarize rationale supporting conclusion that wetland is "adjacent":

# B. CHARACTERISTICS OF TRIBUTARY (THAT IS NOT A TNW) AND ITS ADJACENT WETLANDS (IF ANY):

This section summarizes information regarding characteristics of the tributary and its adjacent wetlands, if any, and it helps determine whether or not the standards for jurisdiction established under *Rapanos* have been met.

The agencies will assert jurisdiction over non-navigable tributaries of TNWs where the tributaries are "relatively permanent waters" (RPWs), i.e. tributaries that typically flow year-round or have continuous flow at least seasonally (e.g., typically 3 months). A wetland that directly abuts an RPW is also jurisdictional. If the aquatic resource is not a TNW, but has year-round (perennial) flow, skip to Section III.D.2. If the aquatic resource is a wetland directly abutting a tributary with perennial flow, fill out Section III.D.2 and Section III.D.4.

A wetland that is adjacent to but that does not directly abut an RPW requires a significant nexus evaluation. Corps districts and EPA regions will include in the record any available information that documents the existence of a significant nexus between a relatively permanent tributary that is not perennial (and its adjacent wetlands if any) and a traditional navigable water, even though a significant nexus finding is not required as a matter of law.

If the water body<sup>4</sup> is not an RPW, or a wetland directly abutting an RPW, a JD will require additional data to determine if the water body has a significant nexus with a TNW. If the tributary has adjacent wetlands, the significant nexus evaluation must consider the tributary in combination with all of its adjacent wetlands. This significant nexus evaluation that combines, for analytical purposes, the tributary and all of its adjacent wetlands is used whether the review area identified in the JD request is the tributary, or its adjacent wetlands, or both. If the JD covers a tributary with adjacent wetlands, complete Section III.B.1 for the tributary, Section III.B.2 for any onsite wetlands, and Section III.B.3 for all wetlands adjacent to that tributary, both onsite and offsite. The determination whether a significant nexus exists is determined in Section III.C below.

### 1. Characteristics of non-TNWs that flow directly or indirectly into TNW

# (i) General Area Conditions:

Watershed size: Pick List
Drainage area: Pick List
Average annual rainfall: inches
Average annual snowfall: inches

# (ii) Physical Characteristics:

(a) Relationship with TNW:

Tributary flows directly into TNW.

Tributary flows through **Pick List** tributaries before entering TNW.

Project waters are **Pick List** river miles from TNW.

Project waters are **Pick List** river miles from RPW.

Project waters are **Pick List** aerial (straight) miles from TNW.

Project waters are **Pick List** aerial (straight) miles from RPW.

Project waters cross or serve as state boundaries. Explain:

Identify flow route to TNW<sup>5</sup>:

Tributary stream order, if known:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Note that the Instructional Guidebook contains additional information regarding swales, ditches, washes, and erosional features generally and in the arid West

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Flow route can be described by identifying, e.g., tributary a, which flows through the review area, to flow into tributary b, which then flows into TNW.

	(b)	General Tributary Characteristics (check all that apply):  Tributary is:
		Manipulated (man-altered). Explain:  Tributary properties with respect to top of bank (estimate):  Average width: feet  Average depth: feet
		Average side slopes: Pick List  Primary tributary substrate composition (check all that apply):
		☐ Silts ☐ Concrete   ☐ Cobbles ☐ Gravel   ☐ Bedrock ☐ Vegetation. Type/% cover:   ☐ Other. Explain:
		Tributary condition/stability [e.g., highly eroding, sloughing banks]. Explain: Presence of run/riffle/pool complexes. Explain: Tributary geometry: Pick List Tributary gradient (approximate average slope): %
	(c)	Flow: Tributary provides for: Pick List Estimate average number of flow events in review area/year: Pick List Describe flow regime: Other information on duration and volume: Surface flow is: Pick List. Characteristics: Subsurface flow: Pick List. Explain findings:  Dye (or other) test performed:
		Tributary has (check all that apply):  Bed and banks  OHWM <sup>6</sup> (check all indicators that apply):  clear, natural line impressed on the bank changes in the character of soil destruction of terrestrial vegetation shelving vegetation matted down, bent, or absent leaf litter disturbed or washed away sediment deposition destruction of terrestrial vegetation the presence of wrack line sediment sorting sediment sorting multiple observed or predicted flow events abrupt change in plant community other (list): Discontinuous OHWM. <sup>7</sup> Explain:
		If factors other than the OHWM were used to determine lateral extent of CWA jurisdiction (check all that apply):    High Tide Line indicated by:
(iii)	Cha	emical Characteristics: racterize tributary (e.g., water color is clear, discolored, oily film; water quality; general watershed characteristics, etc.) Explain: httfy specific pollutants, if known:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>A natural or man-made discontinuity in the OHWM does not necessarily sever jurisdiction (e.g., where the stream temporarily flows underground, or where the OHWM has been removed by development or agricultural practices). Where there is a break in the OHWM that is unrelated to the water body's flow regime (e.g., flow over a rock outcrop or through a culvert), the agencies will look for indicators of flow above and below the break. <sup>7</sup>Ibid.

	(iv) ]	Biological Characteristics. Channel supports (check all that apply):  Riparian corridor. Characteristics (type, average width):  Wetland fringe. Characteristics:  Habitat for:  Federally Listed species. Explain findings:  Fish/spawn areas. Explain findings:  Other environmentally-sensitive species. Explain findings:  Aquatic/wildlife diversity. Explain findings:
2.	Char	racteristics of wetlands adjacent to non-TNW that flow directly or indirectly into TNW
		Physical Characteristics:  (a) General Wetland Characteristics: Properties: Wetland size: acres Wetland type. Explain: Wetland quality. Explain: Project wetlands cross or serve as state boundaries. Explain:
	(	(b) General Flow Relationship with Non-TNW: Flow is: Pick List. Explain: Surface flow is: Pick List
		Characteristics:  Subsurface flow: Pick List. Explain findings:  Dye (or other) test performed:
	(	(c) Wetland Adjacency Determination with Non-TNW:  Directly abutting  Not directly abutting  Discrete wetland hydrologic connection. Explain:  Ecological connection. Explain:  Separated by berm/barrier. Explain:
	(	(d) Proximity (Relationship) to TNW Project wetlands are Pick List river miles from TNW. Project waters are Pick List aerial (straight) miles from TNW. Flow is from: Pick List. Estimate approximate location of wetland as within the Pick List floodplain.
	(	Chemical Characteristics:  Characterize wetland system (e.g., water color is clear, brown, oil film on surface; water quality; general watershed characteristics; etc.). Explain:  Identify specific pollutants, if known:
	(iii) ]     	Biological Characteristics. Wetland supports (check all that apply):  Riparian buffer. Characteristics (type, average width):  Vegetation type/percent cover. Explain:  Habitat for:  Federally Listed species. Explain findings:  Fish/spawn areas. Explain findings:  Other environmentally-sensitive species. Explain findings:  Aquatic/wildlife diversity. Explain findings:
3.		racteristics of all wetlands adjacent to the tributary (if any)  All wetland(s) being considered in the cumulative analysis: Pick List  Approximately ( ) acres in total are being considered in the cumulative analysis.

For each wetland, specify the following:

Directly abuts? (Y/N) Size (in acres) Directly abuts? (Y/N) Size (in acres)

Summarize overall biological, chemical and physical functions being performed:

#### C. SIGNIFICANT NEXUS DETERMINATION

A significant nexus analysis will assess the flow characteristics and functions of the tributary itself and the functions performed by any wetlands adjacent to the tributary to determine if they significantly affect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of a TNW. For each of the following situations, a significant nexus exists if the tributary, in combination with all of its adjacent wetlands, has more than a speculative or insubstantial effect on the chemical, physical and/or biological integrity of a TNW. Considerations when evaluating significant nexus include, but are not limited to the volume, duration, and frequency of the flow of water in the tributary and its proximity to a TNW, and the functions performed by the tributary and all its adjacent wetlands. It is not appropriate to determine significant nexus based solely on any specific threshold of distance (e.g. between a tributary and its adjacent wetland or between a tributary and the TNW). Similarly, the fact an adjacent wetland lies within or outside of a floodplain is not solely determinative of significant nexus.

Draw connections between the features documented and the effects on the TNW, as identified in the *Rapanos* Guidance and discussed in the Instructional Guidebook. Factors to consider include, for example:

- Does the tributary, in combination with its adjacent wetlands (if any), have the capacity to carry pollutants or flood waters to TNWs, or to reduce the amount of pollutants or flood waters reaching a TNW?
- Does the tributary, in combination with its adjacent wetlands (if any), provide habitat and lifecycle support functions for fish and other species, such as feeding, nesting, spawning, or rearing young for species that are present in the TNW?
- Does the tributary, in combination with its adjacent wetlands (if any), have the capacity to transfer nutrients and organic carbon that support downstream foodwebs?
- Does the tributary, in combination with its adjacent wetlands (if any), have other relationships to the physical, chemical, or biological integrity of the TNW?

Note: the above list of considerations is not inclusive and other functions observed or known to occur should be documented below:

- 1. Significant nexus findings for non-RPW that has no adjacent wetlands and flows directly or indirectly into TNWs. Explain findings of presence or absence of significant nexus below, based on the tributary itself, then go to Section III.D:
- 2. Significant nexus findings for non-RPW and its adjacent wetlands, where the non-RPW flows directly or indirectly into TNWs. Explain findings of presence or absence of significant nexus below, based on the tributary in combination with all of its adjacent wetlands, then go to Section III.D:
- 3. Significant nexus findings for wetlands adjacent to an RPW but that do not directly abut the RPW. Explain findings of presence or absence of significant nexus below, based on the tributary in combination with all of its adjacent wetlands, then go to Section III.D:

D.	DETERMINATIONS OF JURISDICTIONAL FINDINGS. THE SUBJECT WATERS/WETLANDS ARE (CHECK ALL
	THAT APPLY):

1.	TNWs and Adjacent Wetlands. Check all that apply and provide size estimates in review area:  TNWs: linear feet width (ft), Or, acres.  Wetlands adjacent to TNWs: acres.
2.	RPWs that flow directly or indirectly into TNWs.  ☐ Tributaries of TNWs where tributaries typically flow year-round are jurisdictional. Provide data and rationale indicating that tributary is perennial:  ☐ Tributaries of TNW where tributaries have continuous flow "seasonally" (e.g., typically three months each year) are jurisdictional. Data supporting this conclusion is provided at Section III.B. Provide rationale indicating that tributary flows

	Provide estimates for jurisdictional waters in the review area (check all that apply):  Tributary waters: linear feet width (ft)  Other non-wetland waters: acres Identify type(s) of waters:
3.	Non-RPWs <sup>8</sup> that flow directly or indirectly into TNWs.  Water body that is not a TNW or an RPW, but flows directly or indirectly into a TNW, and it has a significant nexus with a TNW is jurisdictional. Data supporting this conclusion is provided at Section III.C.
	Provide estimates for jurisdictional waters within the review area (check all that apply):  Tributary waters: linear feet width (ft).  Other non-wetland waters: acres Identify type(s) of waters:
4.	Wetlands directly abutting an RPW that flow directly or indirectly into TNWs.  Wetlands directly abut RPW and thus are jurisdictional as adjacent wetlands.  Wetlands directly abutting an RPW where tributaries typically flow year-round. Provide data and rationale indicating that tributary is perennial in Section III.D.2, above. Provide rationale indicating that wetland is directly abutting an RPW:
	Wetlands directly abutting an RPW where tributaries typically flow "seasonally." Provide data indicating that tributary is seasonal in Section III.B and rationale in Section III.D.2, above. Provide rationale indicating that wetland is directly abutting an RPW:
	Provide acreage estimates for jurisdictional wetlands in the review area: acres
5.	Wetlands adjacent to but not directly abutting an RPW that flow directly or indirectly into TNWs.  Wetlands that do not directly abut an RPW, but when considered in combination with the tributary to which they are adjacent and with similarly situated adjacent wetlands, have a significant nexus with a TNW are jurisidictional. Data supporting this conclusion is provided at Section III.C.
	Provide acreage estimates for jurisdictional wetlands in the review area: acres
6.	Wetlands adjacent to non-RPWs that flow directly or indirectly into TNWs.  Wetlands adjacent to such waters, and have when considered in combination with the tributary to which they are adjacent and with similarly situated adjacent wetlands, have a significant nexus with a TNW are jurisdictional. Data supporting this conclusion is provided at Section III.C.
	Provide estimates for jurisdictional wetlands in the review area: acres
7.	As a general rule, the impoundment of a jurisdictional tributary remains jurisdictional.  Demonstrate that impoundment was created from "waters of the U.S.," or  Demonstrate that water meets the criteria for one of the categories presented above (1-6), or  Demonstrate that water is isolated with a nexus to commerce (see E below).
DEC SUC 	OLATED [INTERSTATE OR INTRA-STATE] WATERS, INCLUDING ISOLATED WETLANDS, THE USE, GRADATION OR DESTRUCTION OF WHICH COULD AFFECT INTERSTATE COMMERCE, INCLUDING ANY CH WATERS (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY): 10 which are or could be used by interstate or foreign travelers for recreational or other purposes. from which fish or shellfish are or could be taken and sold in interstate or foreign commerce. which are or could be used for industrial purposes by industries in interstate commerce. Interstate isolated waters. Explain:  Other factors. Explain:
Idei	ntify water body and summarize rationale supporting determination:

E.

 <sup>8</sup>See Footnote # 3.
 To complete the analysis refer to the key in Section III.D.6 of the Instructional Guidebook.
 Prior to asserting or declining CWA jurisdiction based solely on this category, Corps Districts will elevate the action to Corps and EPA HQ for review consistent with the process described in the Corps/EPA Memorandum Regarding CWA Act Jurisdiction Following Rapanos.

		vide estimates for jurisdictional waters in the review area (check all that apply):  Tributary waters: linear feet width (ft)
		Other non-wetland waters: acres
		Identify type(s) of waters: Wetlands: acres
	ш	Wetlands: acres
F.		N-JURISDICTIONAL WATERS, INCLUDING WETLANDS (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):  If potential wetlands were assessed within the review area, these areas did not meet the criteria in the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual and/or appropriate Regional Supplements.  Review area included isolated waters with no substantial nexus to interstate (or foreign) commerce.  Prior to the Jan 2001 Supreme Court decision in "SWANCC," the review area would have been regulated based solely on the "Migratory Bird Rule" (MBR).
		Waters do not meet the "Significant Nexus" standard, where such a finding is required for jurisdiction. Explain:
sub dite jur	ject ches isdic	Other: (explain, if not covered above): Mercedes Levee is located within a drainage ditch that was excavated within a for the primary purpose to provide water for irrigation and is not a jurisdictional waters of the US and is not to Section 404 of the CWA, or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. Per 33 CFR 328.3(b)(3)(ii), with ephemeral flow that are not a relocated tributary or excavated in a tributary are not considered tional waters of the US; therefore; we find that these canals are not jurisdictional waters of the US and are not to Section 404 of the CWA, or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.
	fact	vide acreage estimates for non-jurisdictional waters in the review area, where the <u>sole</u> potential basis of jurisdiction is the MBR ors (i.e., presence of migratory birds, presence of endangered species, use of water for irrigated agriculture), using best professional
	juag	gment (check all that apply):  Non-wetland waters (i.e., rivers, streams):  Lakes/ponds:  acres.
		Other non-wetland waters: acres. List type of aquatic resource: Wetlands: acres.
		wide acreage estimates for non-jurisdictional waters in the review area that do not meet the "Significant Nexus" standard, where such adding is required for jurisdiction (check all that apply):  Non-wetland waters (i.e., rivers, streams): linear feet, width (ft).  Lakes/ponds: acres.  Other non-wetland waters: acres. List type of aquatic resource:  Wetlands: acres.
SEC	CTIC	ON IV: DATA SOURCES.
A.		PORTING DATA. Data reviewed for JD (check all that apply - checked items shall be included in case file and, where checked requested, appropriately reference sources below):
		Maps, plans, plots or plat submitted by or on behalf of the applicant/consultant: Aerials (2018 Google Earth)  Data sheets prepared/submitted by or on behalf of the applicant/consultant.  Office concurs with data sheets/delineation report.  Office does not concur with data sheets/delineation report
		Data sheets prepared by the Corps: Corps navigable waters' study: U.S. Geological Survey Hydrologic Atlas: 12110208 South Laguna Madre
		☐ USGS NHD data ☐ USGS 8 and 12 digit HUC maps
	$\boxtimes$	Galveston District's Approved List of Navigable Waters U.S. Geological Survey map(s). Cite scale & quad name: USGS 1:24K Quad name: Progresso, Texas
	$\boxtimes$	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey. Citation: USDA: Cameron County, Effective 14
		otember 2018
		National wetlands inventory map(s). Cite name: (NWI Mapper accessed 19 June 2019 State/Local wetland inventory map(s): FEMA/FIRM maps:
		100-year Floodplain Elevation is: (National Geodectic Vertical Datum of 1929)
	$\boxtimes$	Photographs:  ☐ Aerial (Name & Date): Google Earth 2018, USGS Topographic maps, or ☐ Other (Name & Date):

Previous determination(s). File no. and date of response letter:
Applicable/supporting case law:
Applicable/supporting scientific literature:
Other information (please specify):

B. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TO SUPPORT JD: Based on the desktop review, we determined that the review site is surrounded by agricultural crop fields. The Project will require work within an irrigation canal. The irrigation canal appears to have been manmade, constructed in uplands based on topography and straight-line course of canal, and is currently maintained with levees. The NWI Mapper classified the site as Lacustrine Limnetic Unconsolidated Bottom Permanently Flooded Diked/Impounded (L1UBHh). The Mercedes Levee is located within a drainage ditch that was excavated within uplands for the primary purpose to provide water for irrigation. These ditches/canals are not part of a surface tributary system, and do not expand the OHWM of any water of the US. Water from the Rio Grande is pumped into the canals for irrigation needs. These canals are managed according to water demand (withdrawals) or water surpluses and are considered man-made retention structures to hold water for agricultural and residential use. Aerial photography and topographical maps do not show any indication of current or historical hydrology that is/was natural. Per 33 CFR 328.3(b)(3)(ii), ditches with ephemeral flow that are not a relocated tributary or excavated in a tributary are not considered jurisdictional waters of the US; therefore, we find that these canals are not jurisdictional waters of the US, and are not subject to Section 404 of the CWA or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.