



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, GALVESTON DISTRICT
2000 FORT POINT ROAD
GALVESTON, TEXAS 77550

CESWG-RD-C

21 June 2024

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-2023-00359

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.² 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.³ For the purposes of this AJD, we have relied on section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (RHA),⁴ 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 amended on 8 September 2023 (Amended 2023 Rule) because, as of the date of this decision, the Amended 2023 Rule is not applicable in Texas due to litigation.

1. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS.

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 33 CFR 331.2.

³ Regulatory Guidance Letter 05-02.

⁴ 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.

- 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. Unnamed Tributary, 1,762 linear foot, Relatively Permanent Water, Jurisdictional/Section 404

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., 143 S. Ct. 1322 (2023)

REVIEW AREA. The project area is an approximate 1,762 linear foot drainage feature that bisects ONEOK's Mont Belvieu Storage (OMBS) and Fractionation Facility. The facility is located at the intersection of Loop 207 and E Winfree Street in Mont Belvieu, Chambers County, Texas. The center coordinates are 29.855956°, -94.891673°.

3. NEAREST TRADITIONAL NAVIGABLE WATER (TNW), INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS TO WHICH THE AQUATIC RESOURCE IS CONNECTED. Cedar Bayou
4. FLOWPATH FROM THE SUBJECT AQUATIC RESOURCES TO A TNW, INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS

The unnamed tributary flows into a roadside ditch that connects to culverts that drain south under East Winfree Street. This connection flows south of the project area and into Smith's Gulley. Smith's Gulley flows into Cedar Bayou, a traditional navigable water (TNW).

5. SECTION 10 JURISDICTIONAL WATERS⁵: 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 10.⁶ N/A
6. 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): The aerial photo from 1969 shows the drainage feature already in place. The 1961 topo map shows that the current drainage feature was likely a re-route of the original tributary or drainage system. The drainage feature does not change considerably from 1969-2023. The aerial photos show that the drainage feature has water standing, ponding, or flowing in it more than seasonally. The aerial maps also show that the drainage feature flows into a roadside ditch that connects to culverts that drain south under E Winfree Street.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

The aerial and topo maps show that this connection flows south of the project area and into Smith's Gulley. Smith's Gulley flows into Cedar Bayou, a traditional navigable water (TNW). The NWI map also shows that this project drainage connects with Smith's Gulley south of the project area. The google earth aerial photos and the APT show that the drainage feature has relatively permanent flow and the topo maps and the NWI map shows that water from this drainage feature flows indirectly into Cedar Bayou, a TNW. Therefore, the drainage feature (unnamed tributary) is a relatively permanent tributary of Cedar Bayou.

f. The territorial seas (a)(6): N/A

g. Adjacent wetlands (a)(7): N/A

7. 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").⁷ 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

⁷ 51 FR 41217, November 13, 1986.

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 non-relatively permanent waters; non-tidal wetlands that do not have a continuous surface connection to a jurisdictional water). N/A
8. 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. Aerial Photographs: 31 December 1969, 3 October 2014, 13 December 2015, 7 February 2016, 8 October 2016, 24 February 2017, 2 January 2018, 29 August 2021, 21 January 2022, 2 July 2022, 20 June 2023, 16 July 2023
 - b. United States Geological Survey Topographic Maps: Mont Belvieu 1961 1:24,000, Mont Belvieu 1994 1:24,000, Mont Belvieu 2010 1:24,000, Mont Belvieu 2022, 1:24,000
 - c. United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI): Google Earth NWI Mapper Accessed 6 June 2024
 - d. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey: Chambers County, Texas Accessed 6 June 2024
 - e. Antecedent Precipitation Tool (APT)
 - f. AJD Request from ONEOK Hydrocarbon, L.P submitted on 2 June 2023
9. OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION.
10. 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.

SWG-2023-00359

ONEOK AJD Request
Mont Belvieu, Chambers County, Texas

Exhibit Map



Google Earth

Image © 2024 Airbus

900 ft