



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

CESWG-RD-C

20 March 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-2023-00764²

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 Texas 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. Wetland 1, 0.37-acre; [REDACTED]; non-jurisdictional/non-adjacent
 - ii. Wetland 2, 0.04-acre; [REDACTED]; non-jurisdictional/non-adjacent
 - iii. Wetland 3, 0.61-acres, [REDACTED]; non-jurisdictional/non-adjacent
 - iv. Wetland 4, 0.04-acres, [REDACTED]; non-jurisdictional/non-adjacent

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)

3. REVIEW AREA. The 10-acre site located directly Southeast of the intersection of [REDACTED] in Thompsons, Fort Bend County, Texas.

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

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5. FLOWPATH FROM THE SUBJECT AQUATIC RESOURCES TO A TNW, INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS. N/A
6. SECTION 10 JURISDICTIONAL WATERS⁶: 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 10.⁷ N/A
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

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

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

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”).⁸ 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

⁸ 51 FR 41217, November 13, 1986.

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

Four were identified in the review area; Wetland 1 (0.37-ac), Wetland 2 (0.04-ac), Wetland 3 (0.61 ac), and Wetland 4 (0.04 ac). The wetlands total approximately 1.06 acres of the approximate 10-acre tract. The wetlands identified and delineated within the review area do not share a continuous surface connection with Dry Creek, the nearest RPW, located approximately 0.2-mile northwest of the project site, or any TNW or other water of the United States. There is an absence of any swales, erosional features, ditches, or culverts that would potentially serve as surface connections to an RPW/TNW. No more than overland sheet flow would exit the four wetlands within the review area. Therefore, Wetland 1, Wetland 2, Wetland 3, and Wetland 4 do not meet the definition of adjacent as defined in the pre-2015 regime post *Sackett* guidance and are not waters of the United States.

Google Earth Aerial imagery shows development and tree clearing present in the earliest available imagery dated 1995. Development decreased and now the property is largely re-vegetated. The NWI shows no wetlands within the review area but a large wetland complex to the north around Dry Creek. Both the topographic map and DEM data show the property at an elevation about 5 to 10 feet higher than Dry Creek. The DEM and imagery shows a connection between Wetland 4 and the drainage ditch running along the north edge of the property. Using street view on Google earth the drainage ditch that runs along the northern edge of the property is interrupted by the third driveway that does not have a culvert. The driveway levels the ditch for several feet before the ditch re-establishes. Due to this interruption, Wetland 4 does not connect to the large manmade ditch east of the property that flows north to Dry Creek. Following that same drainage ditch along the northern edge of the property to the west there are no culverts present that would connect this ditch to the other side of Y.U. Jones Road. The drainage ditch curves and follows Lockwood Road south. There are no culverts at the intersection of Y.U. Jones Road and Lockwood Road that would connect this drainage ditch with the large ditch that runs north to Smithers Lake. No culverts, pipes, swales, or erosional features connect the aquatic resources observed on site with any RPWs or TNWs. This desktop review supports the Corps determination that the four observed wetlands are non-adjacent/non-jurisdictional.

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.

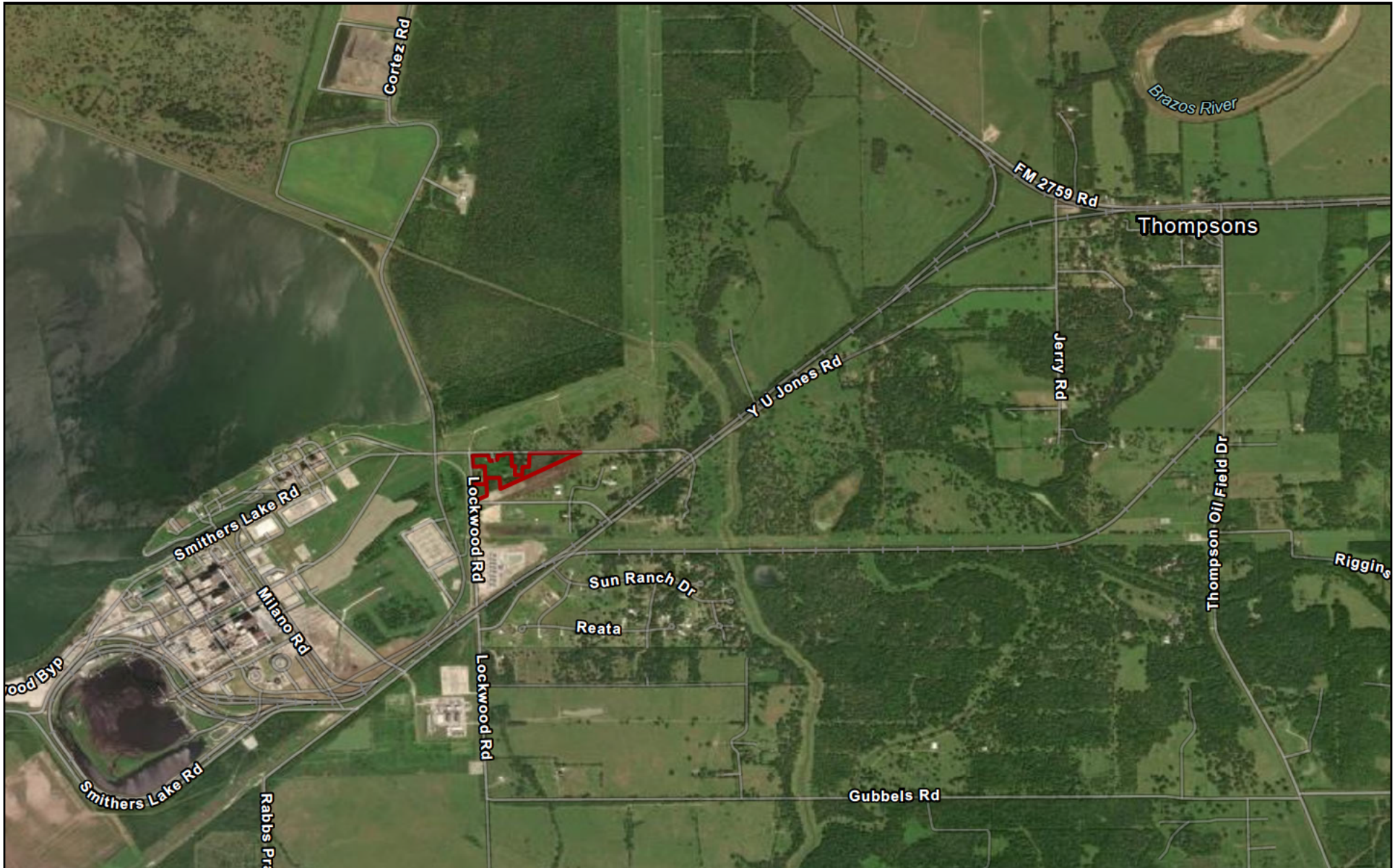
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- a. Desk Review: 10 January 2024
- b. Maps, plans, plots, and data submitted by or on behalf of the applicant consultant: Submitted by [REDACTED] on 14 November 2023
- c. Aerial Photos: Google Earth Aerial Imagery (1995-2022)
- d. Texas Natural Resource Information System (TNRIS) DataHub, 2014 Fort Bend County Lidar.
- e. United States Geological Survey (USGS) Topographic Map, Quad Thompsons, TX 2022 1:24,000.
- f. United States Department of the Interior (DOI), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Wetland Inventory (NWI); FWS NWI Esri Layer.
- g. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO), USA Soil Map Units Esri Layer.

10. OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION. N/A

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.



Legend

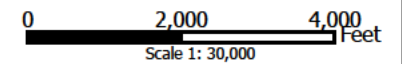
 Review Area

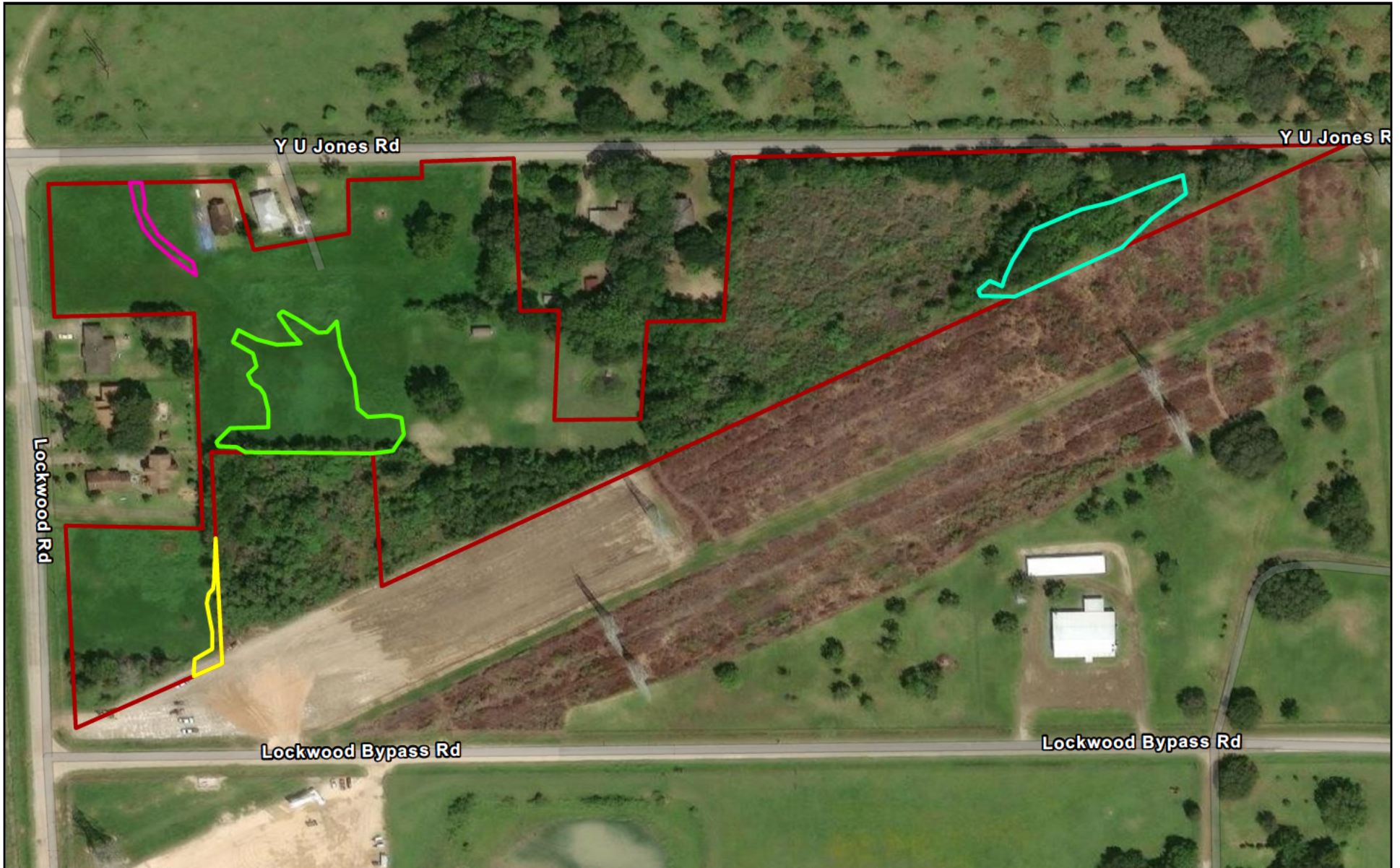
SWG-2023-00764 Vicinity Map
Approximate 10-acre Site



Prepared
 17 January 2024

Coordinate System
 GCS North American 1983





Legend

- Review Area
- Wetland 01 - 0.37 acres
- Wetland 02 - 0.04 acres
- Wetland 03 - 0.61 acres
- Wetland 04 - 0.04 acres

SWG-2023-00764 Delineation Map
ESRI Imagery - Maxar 09/12/2022

Prepared
 17 January 2024
 Coordinate System
 GCS North American 1983

