



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

CESWG-RD-P

31 October 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-2024-00236, MFR 1 of 1.²

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. S1001, 119.23 linear feet, non-jurisdictional, 30.073762, -95.108184
 - ii. S1002, 45.41 linear feet, non-jurisdictional, 30.073781, -95.108530
 - iii. S1003, 102 linear feet, non-jurisdictional, 30.073679, -95.108519
 - iv. W1001, 0.03 acre, non-adjacent, non-jurisdictional, 30.071706, -95.102764
 - v. W1002, 2.16 acres, non-adjacent, non-jurisdictional, 30.071838, -95.103734
 - vi. W1003, 1.18 acres, non-adjacent, non-jurisdictional, 30.072897, -95.107086
 - vii. W1004, 0.01 acre, non-adjacent, non-jurisdictional, 30.073789, -95.108222
 - viii. W1005, 2.00 acres, non-adjacent, non-jurisdictional, 30.073610, -95.107029

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 (25 August 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 review area is an approximate 36.30-acre tract located on Farm-to-Market Road 2100 three miles northwest of Huffman, Harris County, Texas. 30.071868, -95.103784

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4. NEAREST TRADITIONAL NAVIGABLE WATER (TNW), INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS TO WHICH THE AQUATIC RESOURCE IS CONNECTED. N/A⁶
5. FLOWPATH FROM THE SUBJECT AQUATIC RESOURCES TO A TNW, INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS. N/A
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
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]

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.

- 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): 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”).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.

There are three ditches (S1001, S1002, and S1003) in the project area. S1001 and S1002 do not carry a relatively permanent flow. S1001 and S1002 were excavated in 2019 after the property adjacent to the project area was cleared. These two ditches flow to S1003. S1003 has no outlet for the water to drain; therefore, there is standing water visible in aerial photos for the past few years. S1001, S1002, and S1003 do not flow into a Traditional Navigable Water; therefore, S1001, S1002, and S1003 do not meet the definition of a tributary as defined in the pre-2015 regime post *Sackett* guidance and are not waters of the United States.

- 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

⁹ 51 FR 41217, November 13, 1986.

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

Wetlands W1001 and W1002 are located totally within the project site and do not connect to a swale, ditch, tributary, culvert, pipe or other feature that could be a continuous surface connection. Wetlands W1003, W1004, and W1005 could potentially extend north of the project site, however, the extent could not be determined due to the adjacent property being cleared. Wetlands W1003, W1004, and W1005 connect to ditches S1001, S1002, and/or S1003, however, based on LiDAR Digital Elevation Model, S1003 is a low area and does not appear to drain through the ditch system to Luce Bayou, a relatively permanent water (RPW). Based on our desk review, Wetlands W1001, W1002, W1003, W1004, and W1005 do not have any known continuous surface connection to a traditional navigable water, interstate water, the territorial seas, or an RPW. Luce Bayou or any other water of the United States. No more than overland sheet flow would exit the wetlands. Therefore, Wetlands W1001, W1002, W1003, W1004, and W1005 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.

- 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. Google Earth 2018, 2019, and 2023
 - b. Huffman, Texas Quadrangle 1920, 2016, and 2019.

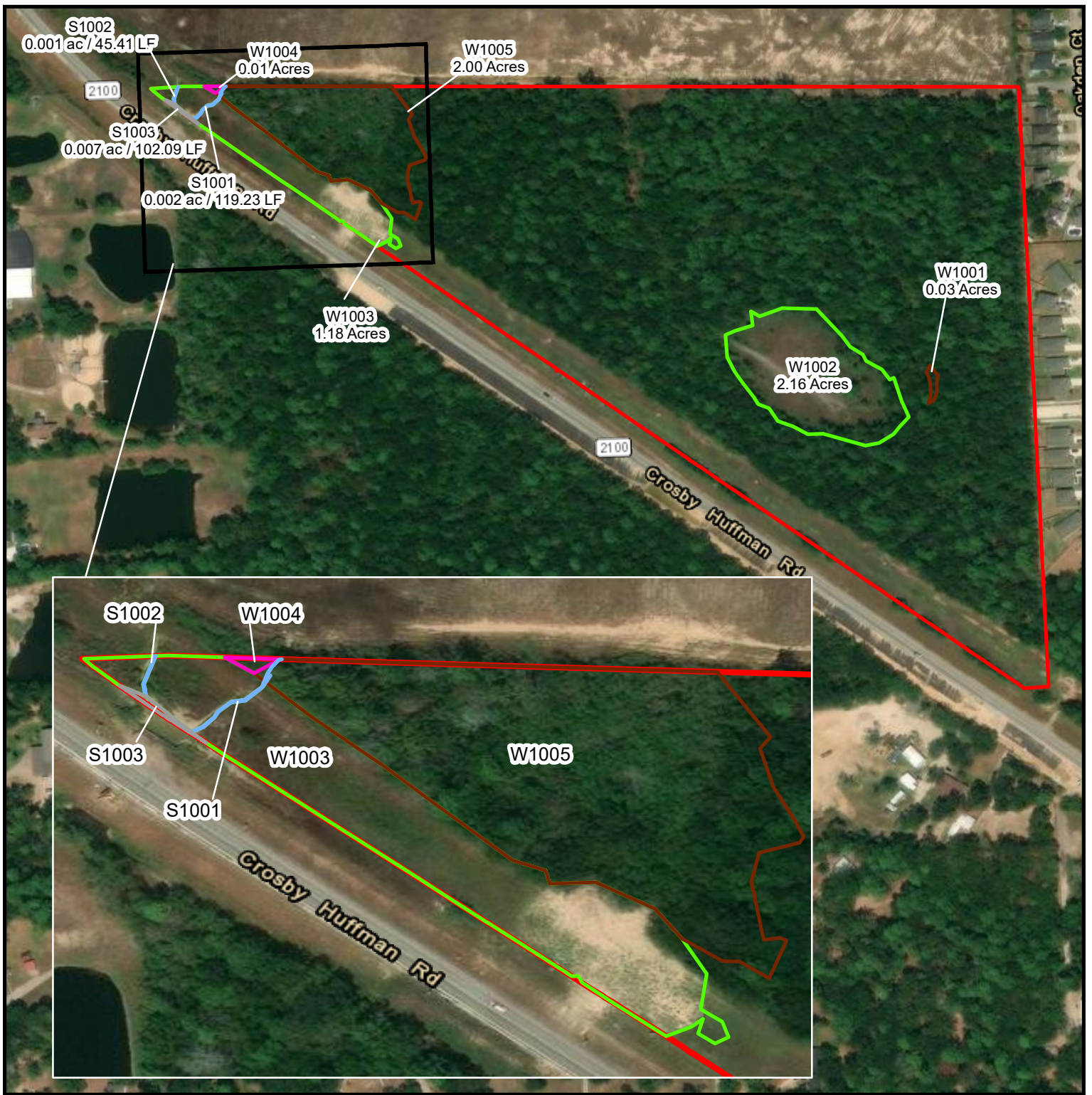
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- c. Wetland Delineation Report dated 23 January 2024, submitted by applicant.
- d. United States Geological Survey Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) elevation data dated 2018.

10. OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION.

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.



<p>Legend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Boundary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drainage Ditch PEM PFO PSS Roadside Ditch 	
<p>Figure 7A-2 Delineated Aquatic Features Map</p> <p>Luce Bayou Regional Detention Basin HCFCF Project ID S200-00-00-E001</p>	<p>Project Limits: HCFCF Basemap: ESRI (2023) Sources: ArcGIS Map Service</p>	<p>September 2024</p>