



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, MOBILE DISTRICT
100 CANAL STREET
MOBILE, AL 36602-1901

CESAS-ZR

August 25, 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 SAM-2025-00409-SMW; MFR 1 of 1²

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

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.

CESAS-ZR

SUBJECT: Pre-2015 Regulatory Regime Approved Jurisdictional Determination in Light of *Sackett v. EPA*, 143 S. Ct. 1322 (2023), SAM-2025-00409-SMW

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 Alabama 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: 11.6 acres – non-jurisdictional, lacking connection to WOTUS

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)

3. REVIEW AREA. The review area is comprised of the entire 88-acre parcel located near 1200 Radcliff Road, Creola, Mobile County, Alabama. The review area is centered at Latitude 30.90013 and Longitude -88.06382. The review area is documented in the AJD Review Area map and entered in the administrative record for reference.

4. NEAREST TRADITIONAL NAVIGABLE WATER (TNW), INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS TO WHICH THE AQUATIC RESOURCE IS CONNECTED. Wetland 1 is located approximately 0.5 mile southwest of Gunnison Creek, which is designated Section 10 below river mile 7. Section 10 waters are a subset to TNWs.⁶

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

5. FLOWPATH FROM THE SUBJECT AQUATIC RESOURCES TO A TNW, INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS. A potential flowpath between Wetland 1 and Gunnison Creek could occur via an intermittent stream which includes culverts, that travels west to east across the project site and continues east and intersects with Gunnison Creek (TNW) at approximate river mile 6. The total distance from the review area to Gunnison Creek is approximately 1 mile.
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

(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. 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

⁹ 51 FR 41217, November 13, 1986.

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).

Wetland 1: This feature is an 11.6-acre non-tidal wetland within an 88-acre parcel. This wetland was assessed for adjacency criteria per the pre-2015, post-*Sackett* regulatory regime and following the March 12, 2025, memo for Continuous Surface Connections (CSC). During evaluation, the Corps reviewed the potential flowpath of an intermittent stream that is mapped on the National Hydrography Dataset, EPA WATERS GeoViewer, and Digital Elevation Models (DEM) which is depicted transversing west to east across the project site and then southeasterly to Gunnison Creek. The applicant provided a prior Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination (PJD), under file number SAM-2016-01547-JEB, that reviewed the aquatic resources of an approximately 330-acre review area which fully encompasses this review area. That PJD documented the wetland identified in this review area as being only located to the west of a dirt road running north to south on the eastern boundary. The requestor also provided photos documenting the lack of aquatic resource features near that road crossing, as well as delineation forms documenting only uplands present east of the culvert that crosses below that dirt road and outside of the review area. Digital Elevation Modeling does not show a discrete feature in this location. Agent photos show a lack of wetland vegetation, lack of hydric soils, and lack of stream features such as bed and bank. It is expected that any water that flows through the areas identified as uplands near this culvert occurs only sporadically during heavy precipitation events. Considering the March 12, 2025, EPA and the Army Joint Memorandum to the Field, and findings described above, it was determined that the feature Wetland 1 is a non-adjacent depressional wetland that does not physically abut an RPW, TNW, territorial sea, interstate tributary or jurisdictional impoundment, and therefore is 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.

- a. Prior PJD, SAM-2016-01547-JEB, dated June 23, 2017.

CESAS-ZR

SUBJECT: Pre-2015 Regulatory Regime Approved Jurisdictional Determination in Light of *Sackett v. EPA*, 143 S. Ct. 1322 (2023), SAM-2025-00409-SMW

- b. Thompson Engineering, Inc application packet, dated June 02, 2025
- c. USACE National Regulatory Viewer, accessed June 17, 2025
- d. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) WATERS GeoViewer database, accessed June 17, 2025
- e. Mobile County Revenue Commission database, accessed August 22, 2025.
- f. University of Alabama Air Photo Archives, accessed August 22, 2025.

10. OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION.

- a. Memorandum to the Field Between the U.S. Department Of The 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 (March 12, 2025).

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.