



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT
4101 JEFFERSON PLAZA NE
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87109-3435

CESPA-RD

June 4, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Approved Jurisdictional Determination in accordance with the "Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States'"; (88 FR 3004 (January 18, 2023) as amended by the "Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States'; Conforming" (8 September 2023) ,¹ SPA-2024-00134 (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

On January 18, 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Army ("the agencies") published the "Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States,'" 88 FR 3004 (January 18, 2023) ("2023 Rule"). On September 8, 2023, the agencies published the "Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States'; Conforming", which amended the 2023 Rule to conform to the 2023 Supreme Court decision in *Sackett v. EPA*, 598 U.S., 143 S. Ct. 1322 (2023) ("*Sackett*").

This Memorandum for Record (MFR) constitutes the basis of jurisdiction for a Corps AJD as defined in 33 CFR §331.2. For the purposes of this AJD, we have relied on Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (RHA),⁵ the 2023 Rule as amended,

¹ While the Revised Definition of "Waters of the United States"; Conforming 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, the territorial seas, or interstate water 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.

as well as other applicable guidance, relevant case law, and longstanding practice in evaluating jurisdiction.

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 (0.28 acres) – is not a water of the United States.**
 - ii. **Wetland 2 (0.06 acres) – is not a water of the United States.**
 - iii. **Wetland 3 (1.20 acres) – is not a water of the United States.**
 - iv. **Wetland 4 (0.08 acres) – is not a water of the United States.**
 - v. **Unnamed Drainage 1 (343 linear feet) – is not a water of the United States.**
 - vi. **Unnamed Drainage 2 (2492 linear feet) – is not a water of the United States.**
 - vii. **Unnamed Drainage 3 (482 linear feet) – is not a water of the United States.**
 - viii. **Unnamed Drainage 4 (530 linear feet) – is not a water of the United States.**
 - ix. **Unnamed Drainage 5 (308 linear feet) – is not a water of the United States.**
 - x. **Unnamed Drainage 6 (162 linear feet) – is not a water of the United States.**

2. REFERENCES.

- a. **“Revised Definition of ‘Waters of the United States,’” 88 FR 3004 (January 18, 2023) (“2023 Rule”)**
- b. ***Sackett v. EPA*, 598 U.S. __, 143 S. Ct. 1322 (2023)**
- c. **“Revised Definition of ‘Waters of the United States’; Conforming” 88 FR 61964 (September 8, 2023)**

3. **REVIEW AREAS: The review area measures approximately 2.031-acres and is centrally located at latitude 33.043815°, longitude -103.080351°, approximately 16 miles Northeast of the Town of Lovington, in Lea County, New Mexico.**

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4. NEAREST TRADITIONAL NAVIGABLE WATER (TNW), THE TERRITORIAL SEAS, OR INTERSTATE WATER TO WHICH THE AQUATIC RESOURCE IS CONNECTED. **N/A**
5. FLOWPATH FROM THE SUBJECT AQUATIC RESOURCES TO A TNW, THE TERRITORIAL SEAS, OR INTERSTATE WATER. **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 2023 Rule as amended, 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 2023 Rule as amended. 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. Traditional Navigable Waters (TNWs) (a)(1)(i): **None**
 - b. The Territorial Seas (a)(1)(ii): **None**
 - c. Interstate Waters (a)(1)(iii): **None**
 - d. Impoundments (a)(2): **None**

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.

- e. Tributaries (a)(3): **None**
- f. Adjacent Wetlands (a)(4): **None**
- g. Additional Waters (a)(5): **None**

8. NON-JURISDICTIONAL AQUATIC RESOURCES AND FEATURES

- a. Describe aquatic resources and other features within the review area identified in the 2023 Rule as amended as not “waters of the United States” even where they otherwise meet the terms of paragraphs (a)(2) through (5). Include the type of excluded aquatic resource or feature, the size of the aquatic resource or feature within the review area and describe how it was determined to meet one of the exclusions listed in 33 CFR 328.3(b).⁸ **None**
- b. 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 2023 Rule as amended (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 1-4 are considered relatively permanent waters but do not have a continuous surface connection or discrete flow path to jurisdictional waters of the U.S. this determination is based on the review of Google Earth aerial photographs, NRCS web soil survey, the Corps’ National Regulatory Viewer desktop resources [i.e., National Wetland Inventory mapper (NWI) and National Hydrologic Dataset (NHD)], and wetland delineation reports with site photographs submitted by the agent.

Drainages 1-6 do not exhibit relatively permanent flow and do not have a continuous Ordinary High-Water Mark that would provide evidence of a continuous surface connection to an a (1-3) water. Based on the review of Google Earth aerial photographs, NRCS web soil survey, the Corps’ National Regulatory Viewer desktop resources (i.e., NWI and NHD), and Site photographs provided by the Agent these resources appear to be remnant irrigation ditches or upland swales; (B3) waters.

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.

⁸ 88 FR 3004 (January 18, 2023)

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- a. Report entitled, *Aquatic Resources Delineation Report and Preliminary Jurisdictional Analysis*, Project Number: SPA-2024-00134, prepared by Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., Dated November 2023.
 - b. Corps office evaluation, which included Google Earth images dated February 2023, February 2020, December 2019, January 2018, August 2015, September 2014, October 2012, July 2011, June 2010, May 2009, August 2008, August 2006, June 2005, July 2005, June 2003, and January 1996.
 - c. The USACE, National Regulatory Viewers, South Pacific Division, New Mexico viewer, NHD data set and NWI data set on 5/13/2024.
10. OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION. Based on the information provided and an evaluation of over 20+ years of aerial images, the wetlands identified in the review area are considered relatively permanent waters (RPW) but do not have a continuous surface connection to an A(1-3) water as the nearest RPW is more than 75 miles away in all directions. Additionally, flow regimes of the unnamed drainages within the project area are considered non-relatively permanent and do not have a continuous surface connection to an A (1-3) water. The remaining area of this study consist entirely of uplands and upland erosional features such as rills.
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.