



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

CESPA-RD

October 8, 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-2024-00263, Amended AJD.

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

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),⁴ the 2023 Rule as amended, as well as other applicable guidance, relevant case law, and longstanding practice in evaluating jurisdiction.

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 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.

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. **This review includes a single review area labeled in this AJD as *review area 1 (RA1)* measuring approximately 640-acres and is following a request for an amended project area that encompasses the features previously evaluated and discussed in item ‘ii’ below. RA1 does not have any other features that exhibit an ordinary high water mark or features that are wetlands. Therefore, the remaining review area is comprised entirely of dry land (i.e., there are no waters such as streams, rivers, wetlands, lakes, ponds, tidal waters, ditches, and the like in the entire review area and there are no areas that have previously been determined to be jurisdictional under the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 in the review area). This conclusion is based on a desktop review utilizing information provided by the agent and applicant, maps, and resources found in the USACE National Regulatory Viewer, and aerial imagery.**
 - ii. **A previous AJD dated August 6, 2024, for a Cattle Water Tank was found to not be a water of the United States and an overflow area, that was also found to not be a water of the United States since they are considered excluded features under 33 CFR part 328(b)-*Exclusions, (5)-Artificial lakes or ponds created by excavating or diking dry land to collect and retain water and which are used exclusively for such purposes as stock watering, irrigation, settling basins, or rice growing..* a copy of this AJD can be accessed [here](#).**

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 AREA: The review area is approximately 640-acre in size and includes the above-mentioned cattle water tank and a nearby ponded overflow area. The area is located on the AC Bar Ranch, at latitude 32.729442°,**

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longitude -103.277139° northwest of the town of Hobbs, in Lea County, New Mexico.

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 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**
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**
 - e. Tributaries (a)(3): **None**

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.

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- 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).⁷ **None**

9. 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). **None**

10. 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. **Report entitled, *Wetland Delineation for the AC ranch 1 Solar Project Hobbs, New Mexico* (# 1C33379), prepared by Souder, Miller & Associates, LLC, dated August 7, 2024.**
- b. **Office evaluation, which evaluated Google Earth images dated January 2023, February 2020, December 2019, November 2017, February 2014, March 2012, July 2011.**
- c. **The USACE, National Regulatory Viewer, South Pacific Division, New Mexico, NHD data set and NWI data set, accessed on 7/29/2024.**

11. OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION. **N/A**

12. 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.

⁷ 88 FR 3004 (January 18, 2023)

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Enclosure 1

