



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CHARLESTON DISTRICT
1519 TAYLOR STREET, COLUMBIA, SC 29201-2918

CESAC-RD

May 21, 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 SAC-2024-01382, Seeley Solar Site, Chester County, SC

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 For the purposes of this AJD, we have relied on Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (RHA),⁴ 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 amended on 8 September 2023 (Amended 2023 Rule) because, as of the date of this decision, the Amended 2023 Rule is not applicable in this state due to litigation.

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 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.

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1. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS.

Name of Aquatic Resource	Acres (AC.)/Linear Feet (L.F.)	Waters of the U.S. (WOUS)	Section 404/Section 10
NJ Wetland W4 (forested)	0.67 AC	No	None
NJ Wetland W5 (forested)	1.76 AC	No	None
NJ Wetland W6 (forested)	0.38 AC	No	None
NJ Wetland W7 (forested)	0.09 AC	No	None
NJ Wetland W13 (forested)	0.06 AC	No	None
NJ Pond P2	1.82 AC	No	None
NJ Stream S7	485 LF	No	None
NJ Stream S8	2,034 LF	No	None
NJ Stream S9	88 LF	No	None
NJ Stream S10	16 LF	No	None
NJ Stream S11	46 LF	No	None
NJ Stream S12	397 LF	No	None
NJ Stream S13	157 LF	No	None
NJ Stream S14	85 LF	No	None

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)
- e. EPA / HQ joint memo, 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 CLEAR WATER ACT, dated March 12, 2025

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3. REVIEW AREA. The AJD review area is limited to the specified review area depicted on the attached figure “Aquatic Features of the US Delineation Map –Proposed Seeley Solar Project”
 - a) Project area size:126 acres
 - b) Center coordinates of the review area: 34.7578, -81.2582
 - c) Nearest City: Chester
 - d) County: Chester
 - e) State: South Carolina
4. NEAREST TRADITIONAL NAVIGABLE WATER (TNW), INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS TO WHICH THE AQUATIC RESOURCE IS CONNECTED. N/A
5. FLOWPATH FROM THE SUBJECT AQUATIC RESOURCES TO A TNW, INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS. 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 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.

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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- 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
- 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”).⁷ 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

⁷ 51 FR 41217, November 13, 1986.

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- 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).

NJ Wetland W4 and NJ Stream S7 are within a valley and have no discrete continuous surface connection connecting this group to the RPW over 500 feet away. Some evidence of drainage towards the RPW was present for 300 feet below the end of the group, but USACE field site visit on 19 March 2025 determined that this drainage ends 200 feet from the nearest RPW.

Based on the information above, these features do not abut a requisite water and do not meet the definition of "waters of the United States."

NJ Wetlands W5, W6, W7, W13; NJ Pond P2; and NJ Streams S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13, and S14 form one watershed and terminate in NJ Pond 2, with Wetland W13 immediately below the dam. There is no discernible outlet from the pond, and no obvious drainage of water connecting this group to the RPW over 1000 feet away. Satellite photos show erosional features through the fields, but only some small segments (20-30 feet) of a discernible channel were visible on the ground. The majority of the fields between the group and RPW were flat and had no discrete continuous surface connection. USACE field site visit on 19 March 2025 determined that this group has no drainage outside of the immediate vicinity.

Based on the information above, these features do not abut a requisite water and do not meet the definition of "waters of the United States."

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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. Agent report dated December 13, 2024
 - I. Field photos (field visit June 7-9, July 12, 2023)
 - II. Wetland Determination Field Data Sheets
 - III. Feature Description Narratives
 - IV. USGS Topo and USDA Soils Maps
 - V. DEM and NWI Maps
- b. USACE field visit conducted March 19, 2025
 - I. Site Visit Notes
 - II. Field photos
- c. National Regulatory Viewer Layers accessed March 17, 2025
 - I. USFWS NWI Map Service
 - II. USGS NHD Map Service
 - III. NRCS SSURGO Map Service
 - IV. USDA Soils Hydric Class Map Service
 - V. USGS 3D Elevation Program (3DEP) Map Service
 - VI. USGS 3DEP Bare Earth DEM Dynamic Map Service
 - VII. ORM Project layers

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.



Client:



Renewable Energy Services

Project:

PROPOSED
SEELEY SOLAR
PROJECT

DUBLIN ROAD,
CHESTER, CHESTER,
COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Title:

AQUATIC FEATURES OF THE U.S. DELINEATION MAP

- NOTES:
1. POTENTIALLY JURISDICTIONAL WATERS OF THE US WERE DELINEATED BY ECS ON JUNE 7-9 AND JULY 12, 2023.
 2. FINDINGS DEPICTED ON THIS MAP HAVE NOT BEEN VERIFIED BY THE USACE AND/OR SCDEH. THE DELINEATION FINDINGS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON AGENCY VERIFICATION.
 3. THIS MAP SHOULD BE USED FOR PRELIMINARY PLANNING PURPOSES.

Drawn By:	Scale:
ZJW	1" = 400'
Approved By:	Date:
PMS	5/15/2025
ECS Project No.	
49: 20463	

FIGURE 7

