

# DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SEATTLE DISTRICT 4735 EAST MARGINAL WAY, SOUTH BLDG 1202 SEATTLE, WA 98134-2388

**CENWS-Seattle District** 

10 July 2025

#### 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 NWS-2025-722

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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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),<sup>5</sup> the 2023 Rule as amended,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 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.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 33 CFR 331.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Regulatory Guidance Letter 05-02.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> 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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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. Ditch 1, non-jurisdictional
  - ii. Wetland G, non-jurisdictional
- iii. Wetland H, non-jurisdictional
- iv. Wetland I, non-jurisdictional
- v. Wetland J, non-jurisdictional
- vi. Wetland L, non-jurisdictional
- vii. Wetland M, non-jurisdictional

## 2. REFERENCES.

- a. "Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States," 88 FR 3004 (January 18, 2023) ("2023 Rule")
- b. "Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States'; Conforming" 88 FR 61964 (September 8, 2023)
- c. Sackett v. EPA, 598 U.S. 651, 143 S. Ct. 1322 (2023)
- d. "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)
- 3. REVIEW AREA. The approximately 1.7 acre review area is located at Bellingham, Whatcom County, Washington (48.78168, -122.43602). The review area slopes to the northwest and is characterized by undeveloped mixed deciduous and coniferous

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forest. Six wetlands and one ditch were identified within the review area. The review area is mostly surrounded by undeveloped forest, but is bounded by single family residential development and Lindshier Avenue to the south.

- 4. NEAREST TRADITIONAL NAVIGABLE WATER (TNW), THE TERRITORIAL SEAS, OR INTERSTATE WATER TO WHICH THE AQUATIC RESOURCE IS CONNECTED. Bellingham Bay, approximately 4 miles downstream and west of the review area. Bellingham Bay is a part of the Puget Sound which is listed as a navigable waterway on the Navigable Waters of the United States in Washington State list dated December 31, 2008.6
- 5. FLOWPATH FROM THE SUBJECT AQUATIC RESOURCES TO A TNW, THE TERRITORIAL SEAS, OR INTERSTATE WATER. There are no flowpaths directly from the subject aquatic resources to a TNW, the territorial seas, or interstate water. Drainage 2, located outside of the review area, flows north into wetlands adjacent to Squalicum Creek. Squalicum Creek flows southwest approximately 4 miles into Bellingham Bay.
- 6. SECTION 10 JURISDICTIONAL WATERS<sup>7</sup>: 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 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

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> 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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"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): N/A

b. The Territorial Seas (a)(1)(ii): N/A

c. Interstate Waters (a)(1)(iii): N/A

d. Impoundments (a)(2): N/A

e. Tributaries (a)(3): N/A

f. Adjacent Wetlands (a)(4): N/A

g. Additional Waters (a)(5): N/A

## 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).9 N/A
- 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).

Ditch 1: Ditch 1 extends approximately 50 feet within the southeastern portion of the review area. No outlet was observed from Ditch 1. Ditch 1 does not connect to any other aquatic resources or downstream waters. The Corps has determined

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> 88 FR 3004 (January 18, 2023)

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that Ditch 1 does not connect downstream to an (a)(1) water and is therefore not a water of the US.

Wetland G: Wetland G is a 126 square foot palustrine forested depressional wetland in the eastern portion of the review area. Wetland G is surrounded by upland vegetated primarily by snowberry (*Symphoriocarpos albus*) and sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*). The wetland does not abut an (a)(1), (a)(2) or (a)(3) water. Therefore, Wetland G does not have a continuous surface connection to an (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) waters and is not a water of the U.S.

Wetland H: Wetland H is a 418 square foot palustrine scrub shrub depressional wetland in the southern portion of the review area. Wetland H is surrounded by upland vegetated primarily by snowberry. The wetland does not abut an (a)(1), (a)(2) or (a)(3) water. Therefore, Wetland H does not have a continuous surface connection to an (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) waters and is not a water of the U.S.

Wetland I: Wetland I is a 620 square foot palustrine emergent slope wetland in the northwestern portion of the review area. Wetland I is surrounded by upland vegetated primarily by snowberry, sword fern, western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) and big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*). The wetland does not abut an (a)(1), (a)(2) or (a)(3) water. Therefore, Wetland I does not have a continuous surface connection to an (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) waters and is not a water of the U.S.

Wetland J: Wetland J is a 286 square foot palustrine scrub shrub depressional wetland in the western portion of the review area. Wetland J is surrounded by upland vegetated primarily by snowberry and sword fern. The wetland does not abut an (a)(1), (a)(2) or (a)(3) water. Therefore, Wetland J does not have a continuous surface connection to an (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) waters and is not a water of the U.S.

Wetland L: Wetland L is a 313 square foot palustrine scrub shrub wetland in the central portion of the review area. Wetland L is approximately 35 feet south of Drainage 2 (located outside of the review area). The upland area between Wetland L and Drainage 2 is vegetated primarily by vine maple (*Acer circinatum*), snowberry, and oso berry (*Oemleria cerasiformis*). The wetland does not abut an (a)(1), (a)(2) or (a)(3) water. Therefore, Wetland L does not have a continuous surface connection to an (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) waters and is not a water of the U.S.

Wetland M: Wetland M is a 695 square foot palustrine scrub shrub depressional wetland in the northeastern portion of the review area. Wetland M is surrounded by upland vegetated primarily by sword fern, snowberry, vine maple, and

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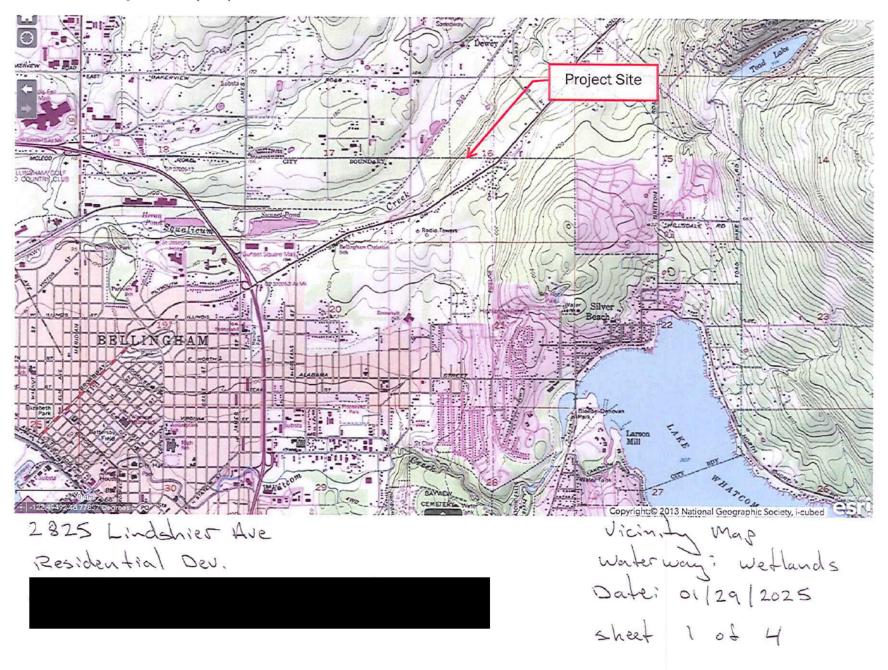
Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). The wetland does not abut an (a)(1), (a)(2) or (a)(3) water. Therefore, Wetland M does not have a continuous surface connection to an (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) waters and is not a water of the U.S.

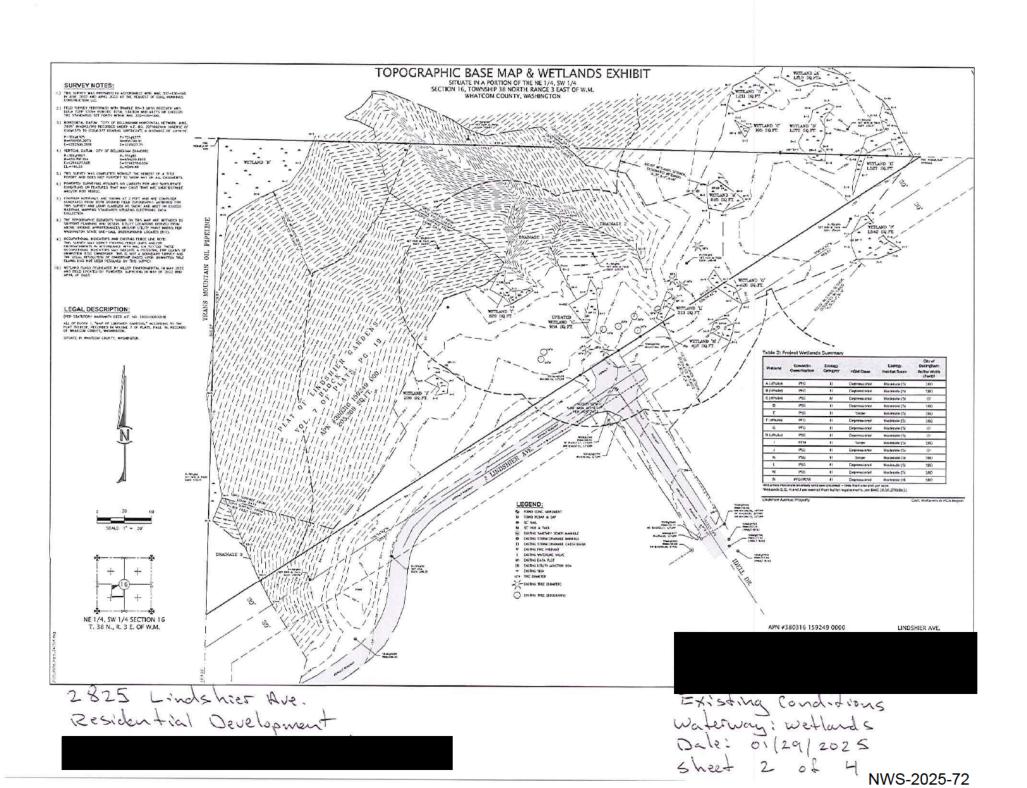
- DATA SOURCES. List sources of data/information used in making determination.
   Include titles and dates of sources used and ensure that information referenced is available in the administrative record.
  - a. Site visit conducted on 9 July 2025.
  - b. Critical Areas Report: Wetlands & Habitat Conservation Areas for Lindshier Avenue Property. Miller Environmental Services, LLC. 10 May 2024.
  - c. Bellingham City IQ. Accessed on 9 July 2025. https://maps.cob.org/geviewer/Html5Viewer/Index.html?viewer=cityiq
  - d. Washington LiDAR Portal. Accessed on 9 June 2025 at: https://lidarportal.dnr.wa.gov/

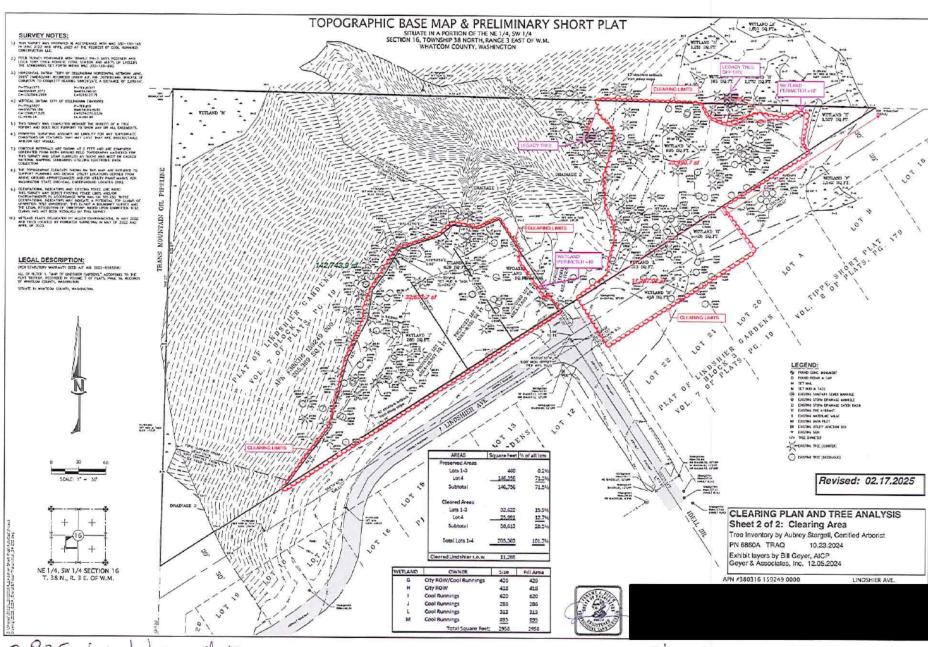
#### 10. OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION, N/A

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.

# Lindshier Ave Project Vicinity Map







2825 Lindshier Ave. Residential Development

clearing Area waterway: wetlands Date: 01729/2025
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