



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SAVANNAH DISTRICT  
100 W OGLETHORPE AVE  
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401

CESAS-ZR

24 June 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),<sup>1</sup> SAS-2024-01074<sup>2</sup>

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> 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 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<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, 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.).

<sup>3</sup> 33 CFR 331.2.

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

<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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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. 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. Pond: 1.59 acres – Non-Jurisdictional under Section 404.

## 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)

3. REVIEW AREA. The review area is approximately 1.59 acres and includes only the pond feature on the parcel. The review area is located at 1350 North Columbia Avenue in Rincon, Effingham County, Georgia (Latitude: 32.310897, Longitude: -81.242402). An aquatic resources delineation review (ARDR) evaluation for 5.43 acres of the 20.76-acre parent site is being conducted concurrently with this AJD. All wetland areas were determined to be aquatic features within the 5.43-acre review area. The project site is mostly undeveloped and forested aside from a single structure and man-made pond on the west side of the parcel. The structure and pond were constructed sometime between 1951 and 1972 based on historical aerial imagery. According to a 1962 USGS topographic map with revisions dated 1977 (#32081-C2-TF-024), the pond was created partially within the wetlands adjacent to Polly Creek, although the data source for the revisions was based on aerial imagery and was not verified in the field. The USDA Web Soil Survey (Figure 8) shows hydric soils surrounding the pond, suggesting that the pond was dug within wetlands with fill placement around the pond subsequently severing connection from the wetlands adjacent to Polly Creek. The AJD review area is depicted in Figure 1.

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4. NEAREST TRADITIONAL NAVIGABLE WATER (TNW), INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS TO WHICH THE AQUATIC RESOURCE IS CONNECTED. N/A. The pond in the review area is non-jurisdictional and does not abut or otherwise exhibit a continuous surface connection with a TNW.<sup>6</sup>
5. FLOWPATH FROM THE SUBJECT AQUATIC RESOURCES TO A TNW, INTERSTATE WATER, OR THE TERRITORIAL SEAS. N/A. The pond in the review area is non-jurisdictional and does not have an outfall or other conveyance leading to a TNW.
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.<sup>8</sup> 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

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<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>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>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.

- 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”).<sup>9</sup> 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

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<sup>9</sup> 51 FR 41217, November 13, 1986.

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*.

The review area includes one man-made pond feature surrounded by a berm. The earliest available occurrence was found on a 1962 USGS topographic map. Based on historical images, Digital Elevation Model data, and soil data, the pond appears to have been excavated within wetlands adjacent to Polly Creek, which flows into a TNW (Savannah River via Lockner Creek). However, based on historical aeriels and site photos provided by the applicant, the pond has no culvert, outfall, or other conveyance structure that would provide a continuous surface connection to the wetlands abutting Polly Creek or any downstream TNW. Therefore, the pond is determined to be non-jurisdictional.

- 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). N/A
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. 1. Date of Office (desktop review): February 20, 2025, and May 2, 2025
  - b. Data sources used to support this determination (included in the administrative record).
    - ☒ Aquatic Resources delineation submitted on behalf of the applicant: “JDB Zipperer Townhomes,” dated November 18, 2024 (Figure 2)
    - ☒ Wetland field data sheets prepared by Zack Marsh of Resource and Land Consultants dated June 25, 2024
    - ☒ Aerial Imagery: Current conditions aerial image with project area, prepared by Resource and Land Consultants and dated November 15, 2025 (Figure 3); Historic aeriels (1951, 1972, via <https://historicaeriels.com/>) accessed February 20, 2025 (Figures 5 and 6)
    - ☒ LIDAR: Digital Elevation Model and Hillshade imagery accessed via National Regulatory Viewer, dated May 2, 2025 (Figures 7 and 8)
    - ☒ USDA NRCS Soil Survey: Online soil mapper, dated May 2, 2025 (Figure 9)

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- ☒ USFWS NWI maps: National Wetlands Inventory online mapper, dated May 2, 2025 (Figure 10)
- ☒ USGS topographic maps: Historic mapping dated 1953, 1957, 1960, 1961 (Figure 11), 1962 (Figure 12)

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.



Figure 1: AJD Review Area



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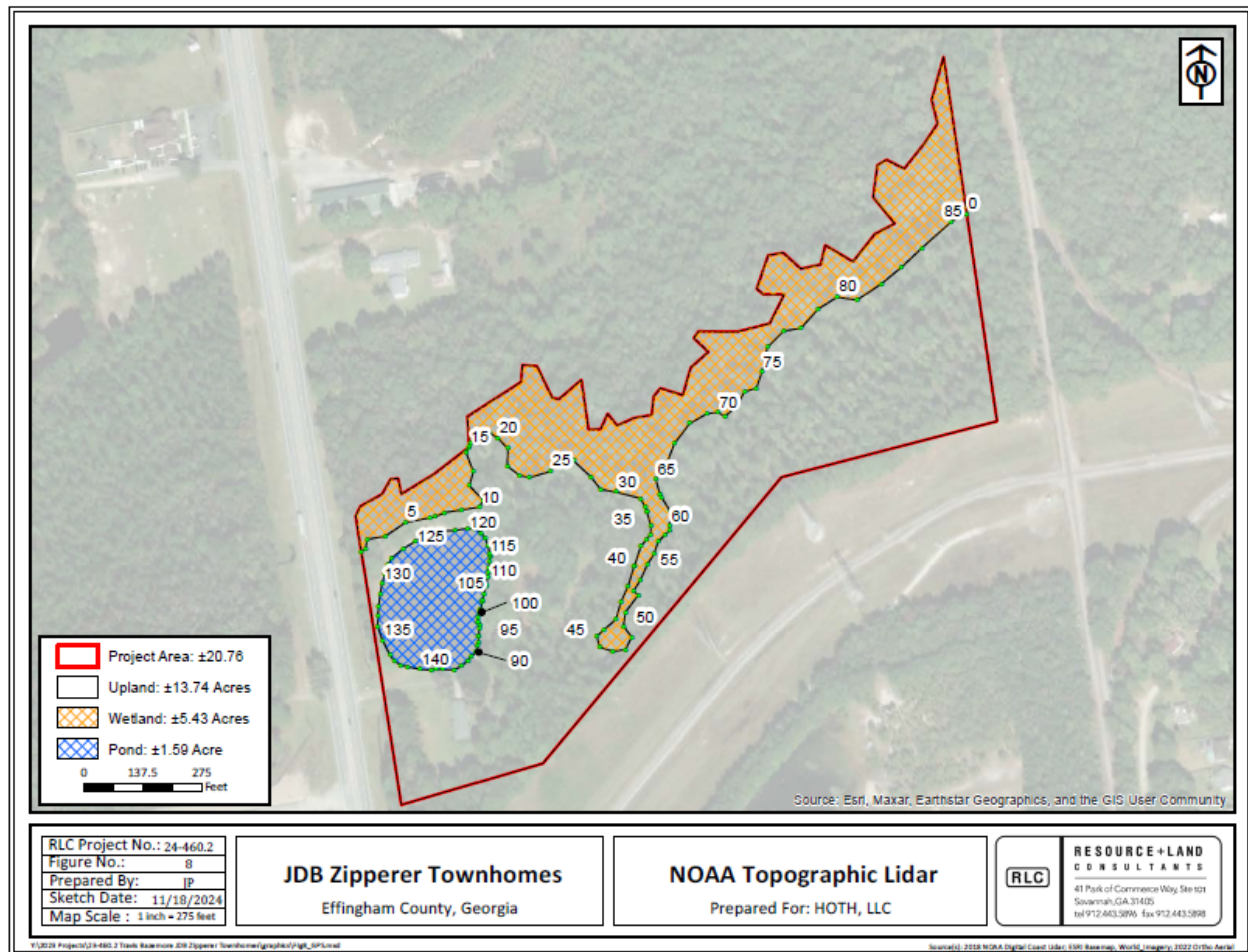


Figure 2: Aquatic resource delineation

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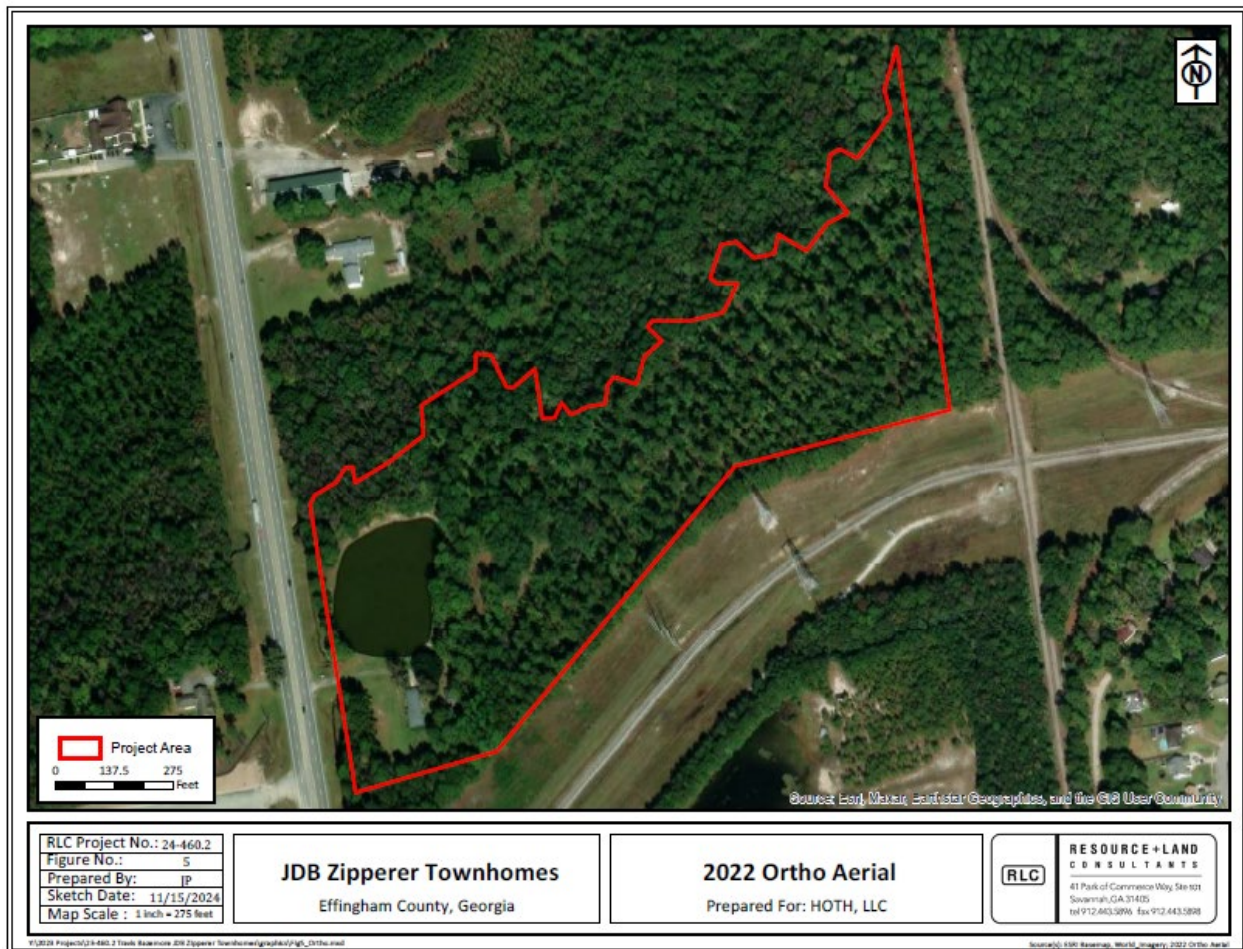


Figure 3: Project site



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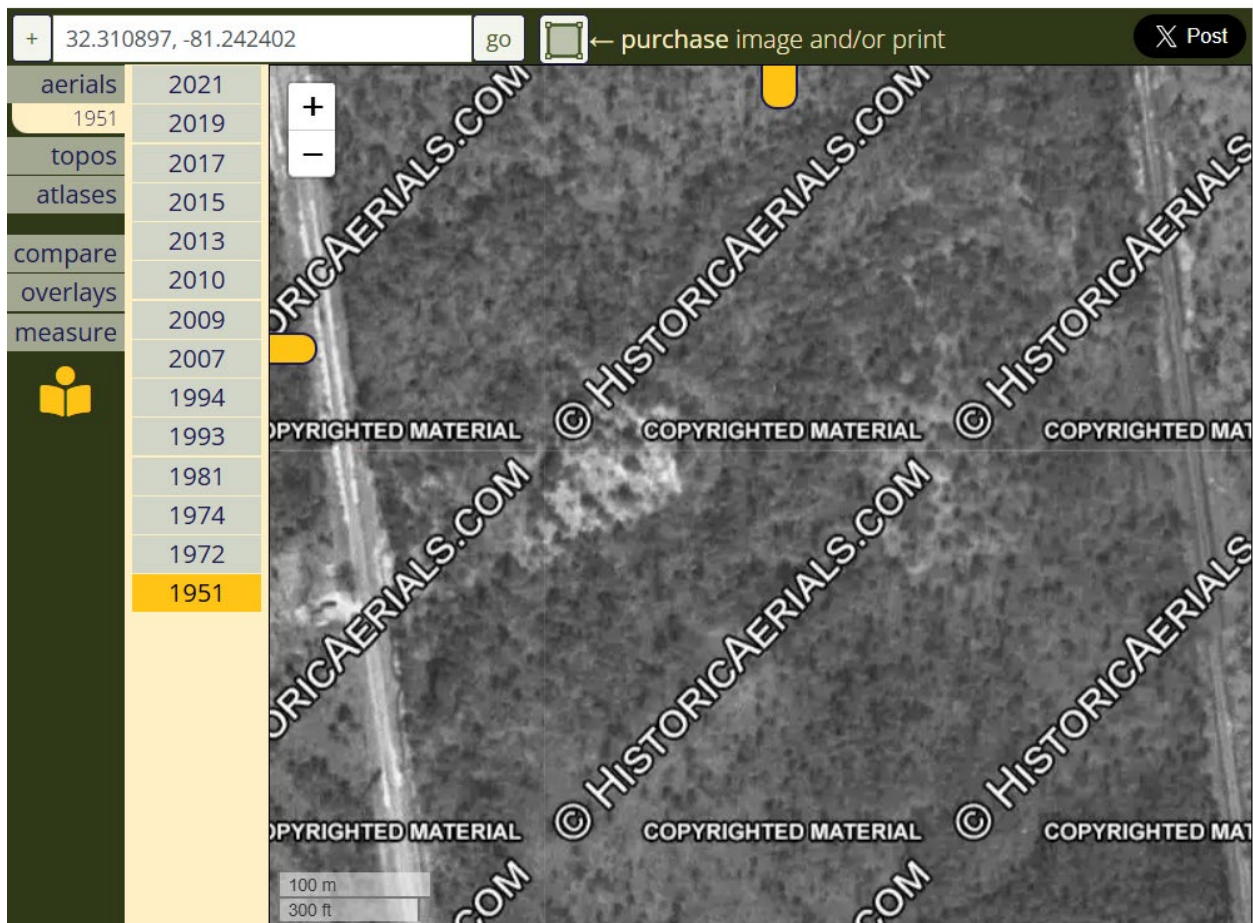


Figure 4: Historic aerial (1951)

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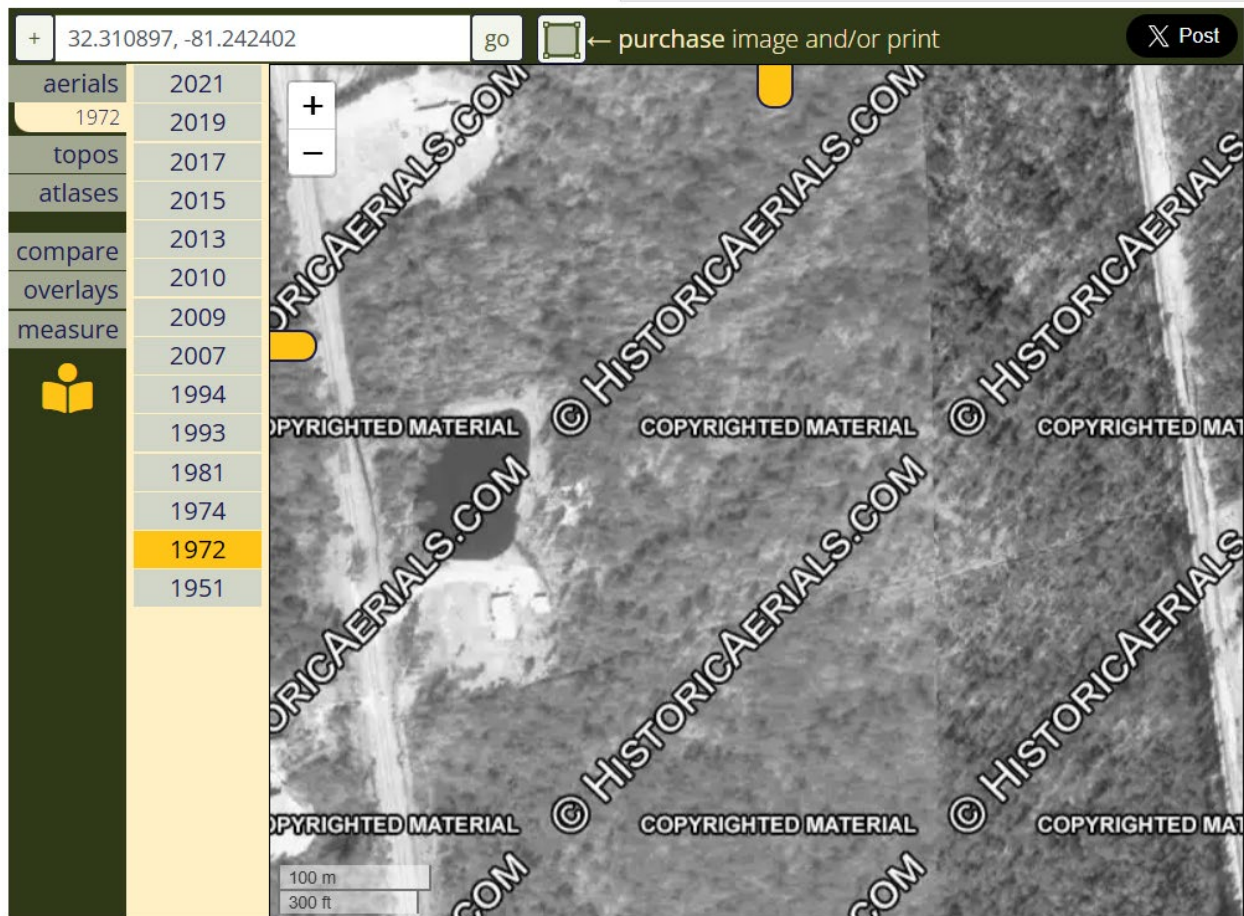


Figure 5: Historic aerial (1972)

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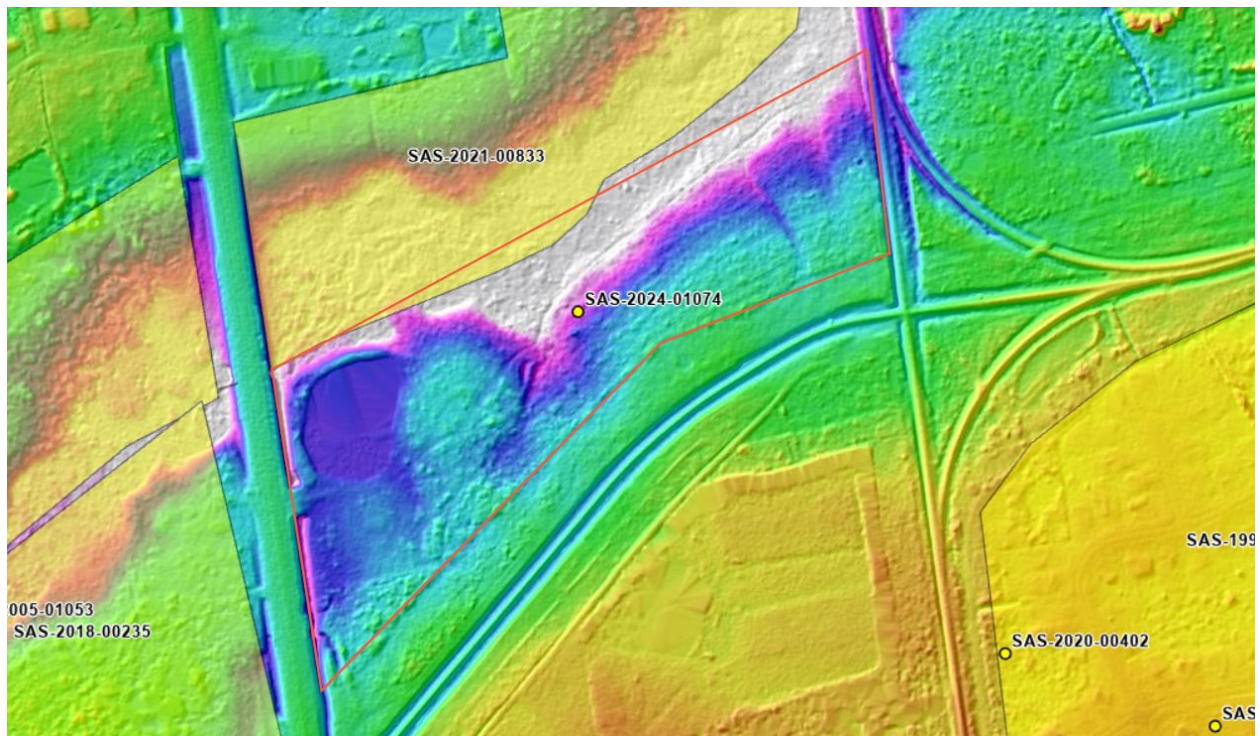


Figure 6: LiDAR (project site)



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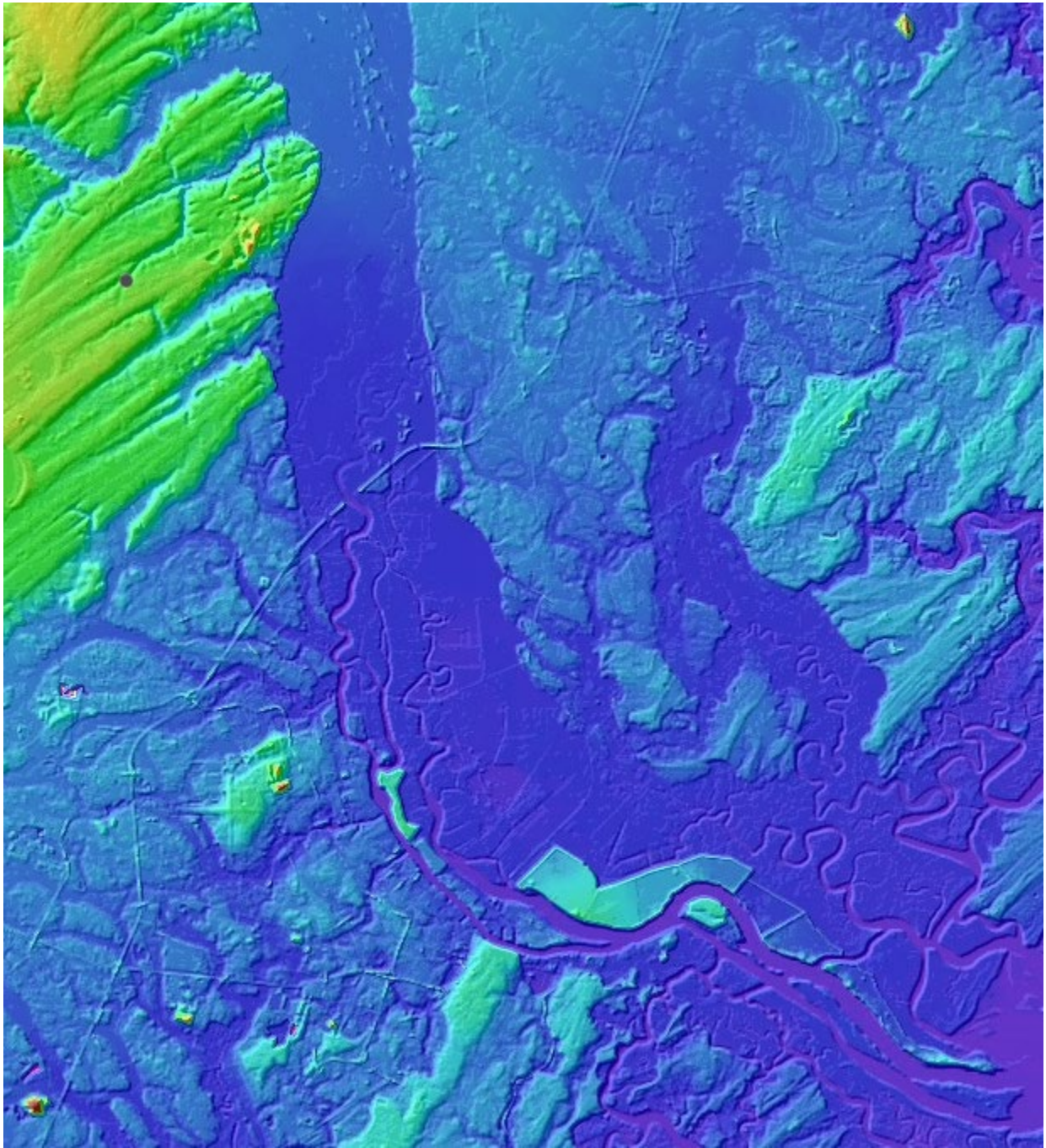


Figure 7: LiDAR (vicinity)

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Figure 8: Soil map



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Figure 9: NWI map

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Figure 10: USGS topo (1961)



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Figure 11: USGS topo (1962)