

ADD-ON

Attached is Agenda Item #28

Adoption of a Draft Resolution Opposing the Proposed United States Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineering Rule to Redefine Waters of the United States

(This is a General Business Item)

Meeting of Tuesday, September 23, 2014

This document distributed September 19, 2014

**Leon County
Board of County Commissioners**

Notes for Agenda Item #28

Leon County Board of County Commissioners

Cover Sheet for Agenda #28

September 23, 2014

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Vincent S. Long, County Administrator 

Title: Adoption of a Draft Resolution Opposing the Proposed United States Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineering Rule to Redefine Waters of the United States

County Administrator Review and Approval:	Vincent S. Long, County Administrator
Department/ Division Review:	Alan Rosenzweig, Deputy County Administrator Ken Morris, Director of Economic Development and Business Partnerships
Lead Staff/ Project Team:	Cristina L. Paredes, Intergovernmental Affairs and Special Projects Coordinator Ryan Aamodt, Management Intern

Fiscal Impact:

This item has no immediate fiscal impact; however, if the proposed rule to redefine waters of the United States is adopted, local governments may experience increases in permit application costs and possible infrastructure requirements due to the expanded range of waters (and their conveyances) that would be subject to federal jurisdiction.

Staff Recommendation:

Board direction.

Report and Discussion

Background:

In 1972, the Clean Water Act (CWA) was enacted to restore and maintain the integrity of the nation's waters and provide oversight to the federal government. As defined in the CWA, the federal government's authority lies only over navigable waters of the United States. The definition of navigable waters of the United States derived from the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 to identify waters, which were involved in interstate commerce. Since the adoption of the CWA, several court cases have further defined navigable waters in the United States to include traditionally non-navigable waters, such as "waters with a relatively permanent flow" or "water that has a significant nexus" with a navigable water.

On April 21, 2014, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) jointly released a new proposed rule entitled, "Definition of Waters of the U.S. Under the Clean Water Act." This rule amends the current definition to expand the range of waters (and their conveyances) that would be subject to federal jurisdiction. The proposed rule would eliminate the distinction between traditional navigable waters (such as lakes, rivers, and streams) and conveyances such as ditches and drains, and would apply regardless of flow or hydrologic connections. The proposed rule, published in the Federal Register, is open for public comment until October 20, 2014.

During the September 16, 2014 meeting, the Board requested that a resolution opposing the proposed EPA and Corps rule to redefine Waters of the United States be added to the September 23rd Commission agenda for discussion (Attachment #1).

Analysis:

If the EPA and Corps proposal is approved, the scope of the CWA's jurisdiction will be greatly expanded subjecting counties to new rules or standards for federally protected waters. NACo has been active in the rulemaking process and has identified the following areas where counties will be impacted:

- Seeks to define waters under federal jurisdiction: The proposed rule would modify existing regulations, which have been in place for over 25 years, regarding which waters fall under federal jurisdiction through the CWA. The proposed modification aims to clarify issues raised in recent Supreme Court decisions that have created uncertainty over the scope of CWA jurisdiction and focuses on the interconnectivity of waters when determining which waters fall under federal jurisdiction. Because the proposed rule could expand the scope of CWA jurisdiction, counties could feel a major impact as more waters become federally protected and subject to new rules or standards.
- Potentially increases the number of county-owned ditches under federal jurisdiction: The proposed rule would define some ditches as "waters of the U.S." if they meet certain conditions. This means that more county-owned ditches would likely fall under federal oversight. In recent years, federal permits have been required for ditch maintenance activities such as cleaning out vegetation and debris. Once a ditch is under federal jurisdiction, the permit process can be extremely cumbersome, time-consuming and expensive, leaving counties vulnerable to citizen suits if the federal permit process is not streamlined.

- Applies to all Clean Water Act programs: Among these programs—which could become subject to increasingly complex and costly federal regulatory requirements under the proposed rule—are the following: National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program, Water Quality Standards (WQS) Program, and other programs including stormwater, green infrastructure, pesticide permits and total maximum daily load (TMDL) standards.

Attachment #2 provides a breakdown of NACo's analysis on the proposed rule and the potential financial impact on counties and states due to the requirement for dredge and fill federal permits and construction stormwater federal permits. Recently, NACo has called on the federal government to clarify that local streets, gutters, and human-made ditches are excluded from the definition of "waters of the U.S." In addition, several counties across the country have adopted resolutions showing the opposition to the definition change.

During the September 17-19, 2014 Florida Association of Counties (FAC) Policy Conference, the Federal Policy Committee discussed supporting federal legislation, consistent with NACo's position, clarifying that local streets, gutters, and human-made ditches should be excluded from the definition of "waters of the U.S.," while also requiring federal agencies to consult with state and local officials to identify which waters should be federally regulated and which should be left to the states. This proposed policy statement will be voted on by the FAC membership during the November Legislative Conference.

Options:

1. Adopt a draft Resolution Opposing the Proposed United States Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineering Rule to Redefine Waters of the United States.
2. Do not adopt a Resolution Opposing the Proposed United States Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineering Rule to Redefine Waters of the United States.
3. Board direction.

Recommendation:

Board Direction

Attachments:

1. Resolution Opposing the Proposed United States Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineering Rule to Redefine Waters of the United States
2. NACo's Analysis of the Proposed Rule by United States Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineering Rule to Redefine Waters of the United States

VSL/AR/KM/CLP/RA

RESOLUTION NO. 14-__

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA OPPOSING THE PROPOSED UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY AND ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERING RULEMAKING TO REDEFINE WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, Leon County is dedicated to protecting and improving the county's natural resources and the quality of life of its residents; and

WHEREAS, Leon County acknowledges the progress achieved under the Clean Waters Act in protecting water quality; and

WHEREAS, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) have proposed a new rule that would redefine "waters of the United States", which is a key and fundamental operative component of the *Clean Water Act* of 1972; and

WHEREAS, the proposed definition of "waters of the United States" goes beyond the traditional "navigable" standard which has been precedent for several years, adding new scope to the definition such as "adjacent waters", "significant nexus", "riparian area", "neighboring", and other criteria that are not sufficiently defined and left open for interpretation; and

WHEREAS, local jurisdictions are already mandated to protect and maintain flowage ditches, storm run-off, and irrigation infrastructure through existing regulations; and

WHEREAS, the proposed rule would not only significantly interfere with Leon County's home-rule authority but mandates onerous permitting requirements on local governments; and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court previously reprimanded the EPA and Corps for overreaching their authority and Congress has recently voiced their concern of this proposal to redefine federal powers under the Clean Water Act.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida, that:

1. Leon County opposes the overreaching definition of "waters of the United States" proposed by the EPA and Corps that unnecessarily puts undue burden on local governments, through onerous permitting requirements.
2. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

DONE, ADOPTED, AND PASSED by the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida, this 23rd day of September 2014.

LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY: _____
Kristin Dozier, Chairman
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST:

BOB INZER, CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY: _____
Herbert W. A. Thiele, County Attorney

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>“Waters of the U.S.”¹ Definition</p>	<p>40 CFR 230.3(s) The term “Waters of the United States” means:</p> <p>(1) All waters which are currently used, were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce, all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide;</p> <p>(2) All interstate waters², including interstate “wetlands”;</p>	<p>Define “Waters of the United States” for all sections (including sections 301, 311, 401, 402, 404) of the CWA to mean:</p> <p>(1) All waters which are currently used, were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide;</p> <p>(2) All interstate waters, including interstate wetlands;</p>	<p>No change from current rules</p> <p>These waters are referred to as traditionally navigable waters of the U.S. For the purposes of CWA jurisdiction, waters are considered traditional navigable waters if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are subject to section 9 or 10 of the 1899 Rivers and Harbors Appropriations Act • A federal court has determined the water body is navigable-in-fact under law • Waters currently used (or historically used) for commercial navigation, including commercial waterborne recreation (boat rentals, guided fishing trips, etc.) <p>No change from current rules</p> <p>Under the proposed rule, waters (lakes, streams, tributaries, etc.) would be considered “interstate waters” if they flow across state boundaries, even if they</p>

¹ There is only one Clean Water Act definition of “waters of the U.S.” This definition is used for all CWA programs (including sections 301, 311, 401, 402, and 404)

² All interstate waters are “waters of the U.S.”, even if they are non-navigable (under the current “waters of the U.S.” definition)

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>“Waters of the U.S.” Definition (continued)</p>	<p>(3) All other waters such as interstate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds the use, degradation, or destruction of which would affect or could affect interstate or foreign commerce including any such waters:</p> <p>(i) Which are or could be used by interstate or foreign travelers for recreation or other purposes;</p> <p>(ii) From which fish or shellfish are or could be taken and sold in interstate or foreign commerce; or</p>	<p>(7) And on a case-specific basis, other waters, including wetlands, provided that those waters alone, or in combination with other similarly situated waters, including wetlands³, located in the same region, have a significant nexus to a traditional navigable water, interstate water or the territorial sea</p> <p>(i) through (iii) eliminated</p>	<p>are not considered “navigable” and do not connect to a “water of the U.S.”</p> <p>Under the proposed rule, “other waters” would not automatically be considered jurisdictional, instead, they would be assessed on a case-by-case basis, either alone or with other waters in the region to assess the biological, physical, chemical impacts to the closest jurisdictional waters</p> <p>Under the proposed rule, “other waters,” such as isolated wetlands, must meet the significant nexus test to be considered jurisdictional. <i>This is a major change over current practice.</i></p> <p>The agencies consider (i) through (iii) duplicative language</p>

³ The term wetlands means those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typical of wet soil conditions The term generally includes swamps, marshes, bogs and other similar areas

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>“Waters of the U.S.” Definition (continued)</p>	<p>(iii) Which are used or could be used for industrial purposes by industries in interstate commerce;</p> <p>(4) All impoundments of waters otherwise defined as waters of the U.S. under this definition;</p> <p>(5) Tributaries of waters identified in paragraphs (a) through (d) of this definition;</p> <p>(6) The territorial seas; and</p>	<p>(4) All impoundments of a traditional navigable water, interstate water, the territorial seas or a tributary;</p> <p>(5) All tributaries of a traditional navigable water, interstate water, the territorial seas or impoundment;</p> <p>(3) The territorial seas;</p>	<p>No change from current rules – County owned dams and reservoirs are under federal jurisdiction</p> <p>Proposed rule more broadly defines the definition of tributary to include manmade and natural ditches</p> <p>Proposed rule would potentially increase the number of county-owned ditches under federal jurisdiction</p> <p>All manmade and natural ditches that meet the definition of a tributary would be considered a “water of the U.S.” regardless of perennial, intermittent or ephemeral flow – <i>Refer to “Tributary” definition for further explanation</i></p> <p>No change from current rules</p> <p>Territorial seas are defined as <i>“the belt of the seas measured from the line of the ordinary low water along that portion of the coast which is in direct contact with the open sea and the line marking the seaward limit of inland waters, and</i></p>

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>“Waters of the U.S.” Definition (continued)</p>	<p>(7) Wetlands adjacent to waters (other than waters that are themselves wetlands) identified in paragraphs (a) through (f) of this definition.</p> <p>(8): Waters of the United States do not include prior converted cropland or waste treatment systems, including treatment ponds or lagoons designed to meet the requirements of the CWA (other than cooling points as defined in 40 CFR 423.11(m) which also meet the criteria of this definition) are not waters of the U.S.</p>	<p>(6) All waters, including wetlands, adjacent to a traditional navigable water, interstate water, the territorial seas, impoundment or tributary;</p> <p>Waters excluded from the definition of “waters of the U.S.” include:</p>	<p><i>extending seaward a distance of three miles”</i></p> <p>Proposed rule would broaden what types of waters next to a “waters of the U.S.” are considered jurisdictional</p> <p>Under the proposed regulation, wetlands, lakes, ponds, etc. that are adjacent to “waters of the U.S.” would be jurisdictional if they can meet the significant nexus test – meaning the adjacent waters must show a significant connect to a “water of the U.S.”</p> <p>The proposed rule change would be relevant for non-jurisdictional county-owned ditches near a “water of the U.S.” that have a significant connection (hydrologic water connection is not necessary) to a “water of the U.S.”</p> <p>The proposed rule excludes certain types of waters from being classified as a “water of the U.S.”</p> <p>The proposed rule codifies 1986 and 1988 guidance preamble language – meaning the proposed rule makes official a number of exemptions that have been in place since the 1980’s</p>

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>“Waters of the U.S.” Definition (continued)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste treatment systems, including treatment points or lagoons, designed to meet CWA requirements Prior converted cropland Ditches that are excavated wholly in uplands, drain only in uplands, and have less than perennial flow Ditches that do not contribute to flow, either directly or indirectly to a “water of the U.S.” 	<p>Over the years, some exemptions, such as for waste treatment systems, have been challenged in the courts. The exemptions may be interpreted very narrowly</p> <p>Under the proposed rule, only those waste treatment systems, designed to meet CWA requirements, would be exempt. For waste treatment systems that were built to address non-CWA compliance issues, it is uncertain whether the system would also be exempt</p> <p>The proposed rule exempts a certain type of uplands ditch – there is little consensus on how this language would (or would not) impact roadside ditches. EPA and Corps need to answer whether ditches will be considered in parts or in whole</p> <p>Under the new rule, other ditches, not strictly in uplands, would be regulated or potentially those ditches adjacent to a “water of the U.S.”</p> <p>The proposed rule would exempt ditches that show they do not contribute to the flow of a “water of the U.S.”</p>

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>“Waters of the U.S.” Definition (continued)</p>		<p>Additionally, the following features are exempted (from the “waters of the U.S.” definition):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would exclude artificial areas that revert to uplands if application of irrigation water ceases; 2. Artificial lakes and ponds used solely for stock watering, irrigation, settling basins, rice growing; 3. Artificial reflecting pools or swimming pools created by excavating and/or diking in dry land 4. Small ornamental waters created by excavating and/or diking dry land for primarily aesthetic reasons; 5. Water-filled depressions created incidental to construction activity; 6. Groundwater, including groundwater drained through subsurface drainage systems; and 7. Gullies and rills and non-wetland swales⁴ 	<p>Question: Are there county maintained ditches that do not contribute to flow of a “water of the U.S.”?</p> <p>However, ditches can be a point source and regulated under the CWA Section 402 permit program</p> <p>Under the proposed rule, ditches that do contribute to the flow of a “water of the U.S.” regardless of perennial, intermittent or ephemeral flows, would be jurisdictional</p>

⁴ While non-jurisdictional geographic features such as non-wetland swales, ephemeral upland ditches may not be jurisdictional under the CWA section 404 permit program, the “point source” water discharges from these features may be regulated through other CWA programs, such as section 402

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>“Waters of the U.S.” Definition (continued)</p>			<p>Under the proposed rule, stormwater and green infrastructure are not explicitly exempt. Clarification is needed to ensure this type of infrastructure is not classified as a “water of the U.S.” through regional staff determinations or CWA citizen lawsuits</p> <p>If more waters are designated “waters of the U.S.,” those waters would then have to meet water quality standards (WQS), which are set by the state based on federally designated “waters of the U.S.” State standards for these waters must include a highest beneficial use based on scientific analysis—fishable, swimmable, water supply—these standards are often challenged in the courts. Under CWA statute, states must treat all “waters of the U.S.” equally, regardless of size or flow, when determining WQS</p> <p>In parts of California, stormwater channels are considered “waters of the U.S.” However, the designation is not currently enforced</p>

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>Ditches (aka “Tributaries”)</p>	<p>Tributaries are considered a “waters of the U.S.” under existing regulation.⁵</p> <p>Agencies have stated they <i>generally</i> would not assert jurisdiction over ditches (including roadside ditches) excavated wholly in and draining only in uplands and do not carry a relatively permanent flow of water.</p>	<p>Tributaries include, natural and manmade waters, including wetlands, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, impoundments, canals and ditches if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a bed, bank, and ordinary high water mark (OHWM)⁶ • Contribute to flow, either directly or indirectly, to a “water of the U.S.”⁷ <p>Would excludes ditches that are excavated wholly in uplands, drain only in uplands, and have less than perennial flow⁸</p>	<p>Proposed rule includes <i>for the first time</i> a regulatory definition of a tributary, which specifically defines ditches as jurisdictional tributaries unless exempted</p> <p>The proposed rule states that manmade and natural ditches are considered jurisdiction if they have a bed, bank and evidence of, and contribute to, flow, directly or indirectly, to a “water of the U.S.”</p> <p>Proposed rule would potentially increase the number of county-owned ditches under federal jurisdiction</p> <p>All manmade and natural ditches that meet the definition of a tributary would be considered a “water of the U.S.” regardless of perennial, intermittent or ephemeral flow</p> <p>Under the proposed rule, ditches are “exempt” if they are strictly uplands ditches with a less than a relatively permanent flow. There is uncertainty</p>

⁵ The term “tributary” is not defined under current regulations

⁶ Bed, bank and OHWM are features generally associated with flow. OHWM usually defines the lateral limits of the ditch by showing evidence of flow. The bed is the part of the ditch, below the OHWM, and the banks may be above the OHWM

⁷ The flow in the tributary may be ephemeral, intermittent or perennial, and the tributary must drain, or be a part of a network of tributaries that drain, into a “water of the U.S.”

⁸ Perennial flow means that water is present in a tributary year round when rainfall is normal or above normal

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>Ditches (aka “Tributaries”) (continued)</p>		<p>Would exclude ditches that do not contribute flow, either directly or through another water, to a traditional navigable water, interstate water, the territorial seas or an impoundment of a jurisdictional water</p> <p>Jurisdictional ditches include, but are not limited to, natural streams that have been altered (i.e. channelized, straightened, relocated); ditches that have been excavated in “waters of the U.S.” including jurisdictional wetlands; ditches that have perennial flow; and ditches that connect two or more “waters of the U.S.”</p> <p>Tributaries that have been channelized in concrete or otherwise human altered, may also be jurisdictional if they meet the definitional conditions</p> <p>All tributaries in a watershed will be considered in combination to assess whether they have a significant nexus to a “water of the U.S.”</p>	<p>whether this designation would protect all roadside ditches in uplands since many ditches run through both uplands and wetlands through the length of the ditch</p> <p>Under the proposed rule, ditches that do not contribute to flow of a “waters of the U.S.” would be exempt. Since the majority of public infrastructure ditches are ultimately connected to a “water of the U.S.” it is uncertain how this would be documented</p> <p>EPA officials indicate the intent of the rule to regulate ditches that remain “wet” most of the year and have a mostly permanent flow –pooled or standing water is not jurisdictional.</p> <p>Question: if all perennial, intermittent and ephemeral ditches are jurisdictional, how can they be differentiated from exempt ditches?</p>

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p style="text-align: center;">Ditches (aka “Tributaries”) (continued)</p>		<p>A water, that is considered a jurisdictional tributary, does not lose its status if there are manmade breaks – bridges, culverts, pipes, or dams – or natural breaks – wetlands, debris piles, boulder fields, streams underground –as long as there is a bed, bank, and OHWM identified upstream of the break. This is relevant for arid and semi-arid areas where banks of the tributary may disappear at times.</p>	<p>The proposed rule notes that manmade and natural breaks in ditches – pipes, bridges, culverts, wetlands, streams underground, dams, etc. – are not jurisdictional. However, the ditch considered a “water of the U.S.” above the break is also a jurisdictional water after the break</p> <p>The term uplands is not defined under the current or the proposed regulation.</p> <p>Question: how can the term uplands be defined to lessen impact on county operations?</p> <p>The proposed rule states that tributary connection may be traced by using direct observation or U.S. Geological Survey maps, aerial photography or other reliable remote sensing information, and other appropriated information in order to claim federal jurisdiction over the ditch</p> <p>Question: how can the agencies delineate how seasonal ditches will be regulated under the proposal?</p>

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>“Other Waters”</p>	<p>All other waters such as interstate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds that would impact interstate or foreign commerce</p>	<p>“Other waters” are jurisdictional if, “either alone or in combination with similarly situated “other waters” in the region⁹, they have a “significant nexus” to a traditional navigable water, interstate water, or the territorial seas.”</p> <p>“Other waters” would be evaluated either individually, or as a group of waters, where they are determined to be similarly situations in the region</p> <p>Waters would be considered “similarly situated” when they perform similar functions and are located sufficiently close together or when they are sufficiently close to a jurisdictional water</p>	<p>Under the proposed rule, “other waters” are not automatically considered jurisdictional, instead, they must be assessed on a case-by-case basis, either alone or with other waters in the region to assess the biological, physical, chemical impacts to the closest jurisdictional waters</p> <p>Under the proposed rule, “other waters” will be under federal jurisdiction if they have a significant connection to “waters of the U.S.”</p> <p>Question: In the proposed rule, how can agencies clearly distinguish between landscape features that are not waters or wetlands and those that are jurisdictional</p> <p>Question: The agencies request, in the proposed rule, comments on alternative methods to determine “other waters.” For example, should determinations be made on ecological or hydrologic landscape regions? If so, why and how? How would the various definitions impact counties?</p>

⁹ “In the region,” means the watershed that drains to the nearest traditional navigable water, interstate water, or the territorial seas through a single point of entry

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
“Adjacent Waters”	<p>Under existing regulation for “adjacent wetlands,” only wetlands adjacent to a “water of the U.S.” are considered jurisdictional</p> <p>Adjacent means bordering, ordering, contiguous or neighboring</p>	<p>Adjacent waters are defined as wetlands, ponds, lakes and similar water bodies that provide similar functions which have a significant nexus to “waters of the U.S.”</p> <p>Waters, including wetlands, separated from other waters of the U.S. by man-made dikes or barriers, natural river berms, beach dunes, etc. are “adjacent waters” are jurisdictional</p>	<p>The proposed rule replaces the term “adjacent wetlands” with “adjacent waters” – this definition would include adjacent wetlands and ponds</p> <p>Under the proposed rule, adjacent waters to a “water of the U.S.” are those waters (and tributaries) that are highly dependent on each other, which must be shown through the significant nexus test</p> <p>The proposed rule uses other key terms in definition—riparian area and flood plains—to claim jurisdiction over adjacent waters</p>
“Significant Nexus”	n/a	<p>The term “significant nexus” means that a water, including wetlands, either alone or in combination with other similarly situated waters in the region (i.e. the watershed that drains to the nearest “water of the U.S.”) and significant affect the chemical, physical or biological integrity of the water to which they drain</p> <p>For an effect to be significant, it must be more than speculative or insubstantial</p> <p>Other waters, including wetlands, are similarly situated when they perform similar functions and are located sufficiently close together or sufficiently close to a “water of the U.S.” so they can be evaluated as a single landscape unit regarding their chemical, physical, or biological impact on a “water of the U.S.”¹⁰</p>	<p>Newly defined term – The proposed rule definition is based on Supreme Court Justice Kennedy’s “similarly situated waters” test. A significant nexus test can be based on a specific water or on a combination of nearby waters</p> <p>The proposed rule states waters would be considered jurisdictional, the waters either alone or in conjunction, with another water must perform similar functions such as sediment trapping, storing and cleansing of water, movement of organisms, or hydrologic connections.</p>

¹⁰ Note: The term “single landscape unit is not defined in the proposed regulation.

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>“Riparian Area”</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>The term riparian area means an area bordering a water where the surface or subsurface hydrology directly influence the ecological processes and plant and animal community structure in that area.</p> <p>Riparian areas are transition areas between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems that influence the exchange of energy and materials between those ecosystems¹¹</p> <p>No uplands located in “riparian areas” can ever be “waters of the United States.”</p>	<p>Newly defined term</p> <p>The proposed rule broadly defines “riparian area” to include aquatic, plant or animal life that depend on above or below ground waters to exist</p> <p>Under the proposed rule, a riparian area would not be jurisdiction in itself, however, it could be used as a mechanism to claim federal jurisdiction</p> <p>Under the proposed rule, there is no limiting scope to the size of a riparian area or a definition of the types of animal, plant and aquatic life that may trigger this definition</p> <p>The proposed rule states that no uplands in a riparian area can ever be “waters of the U.S.”</p>

¹¹ Note: Under the new term “riparian area,” terms used in the definition – area, ecological processes, plant and animal community structure, exchange of energy and materials are not defined.

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>“Flood Plain”</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Flood plain, under this definition, means an area bordering inland or coastal waters that was formed by sediment preposition from such water under present climatic conditions and is inundated during periods of moderate to high water flows</p> <p>Absolutely no uplands located in riparian areas and flood plains can ever be “waters of the U.S.”</p> <p>There may be circumstances where a water located outside a flood plain or riparian area is considered adjacent if there is a confined surface or shallow subsurface hydrology connection</p> <p>Determination of jurisdiction using the terms “riparian area,” “flood plain,” and “hydrologic connection” will be based on best profession judgment and experience applied to the definitions proposed in this rule</p>	<p>Newly defined term</p> <p>The proposed rule uses the term “flood plain” to identify waters and wetlands that would be near (adjacent) to a “waters of the U.S.” in order to establish federal jurisdiction</p> <p>The proposed rule definition relies heavily on “moderate to high water flows” rather than the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) flood plain definitional terms such as 100 year or 500 year floodplains</p> <p>The proposed rule states waters near to a “water of the U.S.” could be jurisdiction <i>without a significant nexus</i> if they are in a flood plain or riparian area</p>

Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

Summary of Draft Regulation As Proposed by EPA and Corps

(Working draft subject to change, updated April 23)

Key Terms	Current EPA/Corps Regulations	Proposed Regulatory Language	Analysis of Potential County Impact
<p>“Neighboring”</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Neighboring is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including waters located within the riparian area or floodplain of a “water of the U.S.” or waters with a confined surface or shallow subsurface hydrological connection ¹² to a jurisdictional water; • Water must be geographically proximate to the adjacent water; • Waters outside the floodplain or riparian zone are jurisdictional if they are reasonably proximate 	<p>Under the proposed rule, neighboring is defined for the first time</p>

¹² While shallow subsurface flows are not considered a “water of the U.S.” under the proposal, they may provide the connection establishing jurisdiction