

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION
PUBLIC NOTICE
WATERSHED PROTECTION BRANCH

October 28, 2025
Notice Issue Date

Tift County
City / County

November 27, 2025
Notice Close Date

SAS-2025-00694
Control Number

Sec. 401 Water Quality Certification
Race Trac Travel Center – US Army Corps of Engineers Sec. 404 Permit Application

This notice is issued to inform the public that a request has been received for water quality certification (WQC) in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The public is invited to comment during this 30-day period on the proposed activity. Information pertaining to the project is attached to this notice. Since the request is specific to 401 WQC, only comments pertaining to water quality are considered under the certification review process. Comments may be submitted via e-mail to: EPD.WQC@dnr.ga.gov. Comments may also be provided in writing to: Program Manager, Wetlands Unit, 2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. SE, Suite 1052 East, Atlanta, GA 30334. Include the words “Water Quality Certification Comment” and the Control Number above in the e-mail subject line or on the top of the first page of written comments to ensure that your comments will be forwarded to the appropriate staff. For additional information, contact Dewey Richardson at dewey.richardson@dnr.ga.gov.

Type of Permit Application: 401 Water Quality Certification

Applicable Law: Federal Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1341

Applicable Rules: 40 CFR part 121

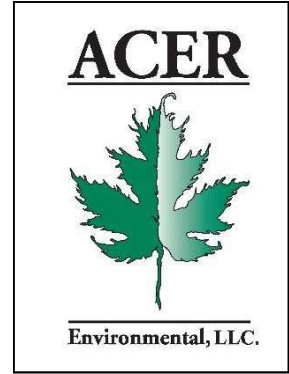
Description and Location of Proposed Activity:

SJC Ventures, LLC is seeking a Section 401 Water Quality Certification for aquatic resource impacts associated with the construction of a Race Trac Travel Center and associated infrastructure. The approximately 22-acre project area is located northwest of the intersection of Southwell Boulevard and U.S. Highway 41 and bisected by Southern Avenue in Tifton, Tift County, Georgia (31.4173, -83.5035). As proposed in the October 23, 2025 Request for 401 WQC, the project includes a full-service center that will cater to the needs of commercial truck traffic and passenger vehicles, which includes ample parking, expanded food options, and other driver amenities while still servicing local daily traffic.

The project, as currently proposed, requires a USACE Section 404 permit and entails impacting 2.31 acres of wetland (1.15 acres of open water wetland and 1.16 acres of forested wetland system) and 911 linear feet of stream (427 linear feet of perennial streams and 484 linear feet of intermittent streams). To offset the loss in aquatic function associated with the above impacts, the applicant has proposed the purchase of 9.36 grandfathered wetland mitigation credits from the Cecil Bay Mitigation Bank for wetland impacts and 214 perennial stream (2018) credits and 145 intermittent stream (2018) credits from the GALT-ILF Program for stream impacts.

Name and Address of Permit Applicant: Mr. Sean MacLaurin
SJC Ventures, LLC
1115 Howell Mill Road
Suite 360
Atlanta, GA 30318

October 23, 2025



Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Environmental Protection Division
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive SE
Suite 1456
East Tower
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Attention: Mr. Dewey Richardson/Environmental Specialist – Wetlands Unit

**Re: Request for Section 401 Water Quality Certification for Tifton Race Trac
ACOE Project Number: SAS-2025-00694 (Tifton Race Trac)**

Dear Mr. Richardson:

Acer Environmental, LLC., (Acer) appreciates the opportunity to present this request for Section 401 Water Quality Certification for the Tifton Race Trac (ACOE #: SAS-2025-00694). As part of this request, we are providing information required as the Minimum Contents of a Request for Certification which are as follows:

1. A description of the proposed activity.

RaceTrac is building a large travel center along interstate highways, targeting long-haul truck drivers and passenger vehicles. This facility has been planned to support the Interstate 75 corridor which is one of the busiest truck corridors in the United States. The facility is a full-service center that will cater to the needs of commercial truck traffic and passenger vehicles, which includes ample parking, expanded food options, and other driver amenities while still servicing local daily traffic. The travel center is being built in response to meet the needs of the trucking sector and passenger vehicles as they expand along with logistics routes become more reliant on reliable, service-rich stops that can accommodate large vehicles and extended rest periods.

As part of this development, the development site proposes impacts to approximately 10 acres which will include encroachment on 2.31 acres of wetland impacts (1.15 acres of open water wetland and 1.11 acres forested wetland system in Wetland A, 0.03 acres of forested wetland in Wetland B and 0.02 acres of forested wetland in Wetland C) and 911 linear feet of stream impacts (427 linear feet of perennial stream in Streams 1 & 4 and 484 linear feet of intermittent stream in Streams 2 & 3).

4800
Duncans Lake
Drive
Buford, Georgia
30519
(404)520-9422
www.acerenv.net

2. The specific location of any discharge(s) that may result from the proposed activity.

The only discharge point for this project is associated with the detention facility which will be discharged into Stream 4 which will be at the edge of the GDOT right-of-way.

The discharge of fill material will be 2.31 acres of wetland impacts (1.15 acres of open water wetland and 1.11 acres forested wetland system in Wetland A, 0.03 acres of forested wetland in Wetland B and 0.02 acres of forested wetland in Wetland C) and 911 linear feet of stream impacts (427 linear feet of perennial stream in Streams 1 & 4 and 484 linear feet of intermittent stream in Streams 2 & 3).

Please see the attached Figures for the location of fill material in wetlands and streams by the development activities.

3. Map or diagram of the proposed activity site, including proposed activity boundaries in relation to local streets, roads and highways.

Please see the attached Figures for this information.

4. Description of current activity site conditions.

The total study site is a 22-acre development that is mostly covered by a pine forest. This forested area in the front half of the property is dominated mostly by planted longleaf pines that are approximately 60 years old, and the back half of the property are planted longleaf that is approximately 10 to 20 years old. Then there is a large wetland area in the middle of the property that is 2.1 acres of open water wetland that is surrounded by 1.58 acres of forested wetlands and then two forested wetlands along Stream 3. Also, on the property there is 911 linear feet of stream with 427 linear feet of perennial stream in Streams 1 & 4 and 484 linear feet of intermittent stream in Streams 2 & 3. Please see the attached Figures to see the location of these features.

Palustrine Forested wetland cover types are dominated by trees and shrubs that have developed a tolerance to a seasonal high-water table. In order to be characterized as forested, a wetland must be dominated by trees and shrubs that are at least six meters tall (Cowardin et. al., 1979). Forested wetlands typically have a mature tree canopy, and depending upon the species and density, can have a broad range of understory and groundcover community components. PFO wetlands in the project area are dominated in the overstory by longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) as the dominant species intermixed with a few red maple (*Acer rubrum*), tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and water oak (*Quercus nigra*). The sapling and shrub layer is dominated by water oak and red maple. The herbaceous layer in this system was mostly Japanese stilt grass (*Microstegium vimineum*) or open water areas. Common species were limited to clumps which were very few of cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), soft rush (*Juncus effuses*), and sedges (*Carex spp.*).

PAB4 or open water wetland cover type is mostly a ponded area that is less than one meter deep and is dominated by elephant's ear (*Calocasia esculenta*) and a few large willow trees (*Salix nigra*) in the shallow end of the pond. The PAV wetlands are the result of some sort of past

disturbance where the land was cleared and grubbed and the outlet from the property was restricted by an undersized culvert.

5. Dates.

Project will start one month after Section 404, Section 401 & Stream Buffer Variance are completed. The start date is estimated to be March 2026 and completion date will be one year from the start date.

6. A list of all other Federal, State, and Local agency authorizations required for the proposed activity and the current status of each authorization.

Section 404 CWA – Completed 45-day public and agency review period. We are waiting for the agency review comments. We have been providing information to the ACOE for the decision document.

Sediment Erosion Control Plans – Submitted to Tift County, waiting on approval.

Zoning – Property has the appropriate zoning for this project.

Stream Buffer Variance – Once Sediment and Erosion Control plan has been approved by Tift County, we will submit the SBV.

7. Pre-Filing Meeting

The pre-filing meeting was held by teleconference on September 23, 2025

As part of the submittal and to support this document, I have attached the figures that were included with the Section 404 submittal to the ACOE.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

ACER ENVIRONMENTAL, LLC.

J. Patrick Barber
Partner

Attachments

