



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Alaska District

FAIRBANKS FIELD OFFICE
Regulatory Division (1145)
CEPOA-RD
1046 Marks Road
Fort Wainwright, Alaska 99703

Public Notice of Application for Permit

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE:	May 21, 2025
EXPIRATION DATE:	June 20, 2025
REFERENCE NUMBER:	POA-2024-00584
WATERWAY:	Tanana River

Interested parties are hereby notified that a Department of the Army permit application has been received for work in waters of the United States as described below and shown on the enclosed project drawings.

All comments regarding this public notice should be sent to the address noted above. If you desire to submit your comments by email, you should send it to the project manager's email as listed below or to regpagemaster@usace.army.mil. All comments should include the public notice reference number listed above.

All comments should reach this office no later than the expiration date of this public notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact Greg Mazer at (907) 347-9059, toll free from within Alaska at (800) 478-2712, or by email at Gregory.j.mazer@usace.army.mil if further information is desired concerning this public notice.

APPLICANT: Tim Sponseller, Fort Wainwright Directorate of Public Works, U.S. Army Garrison (USAG) Alaska

AGENT: Dan Rees, Public Works Environmental Division

LOCATION: The project site is located within Section various, T. 4, 5 & 6 S., R. 1, 2, 3 E. and 1 W., Fairbanks Meridian; Latitude 64.7557° N., Longitude 146.4731° W.; Tanana Flats Training Area (TFTA), Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

PURPOSE: The applicant's stated purpose is to develop year-round access to the TFTA and the Blair Lakes Range Complex (BLRC) via a 24.2-mile double-lane gravel road. Currently, the Tanana River Bridge near Salcha provides year-round access to the TFTA for aircraft and low

ground pressure vehicles, and seasonal access for higher ground pressure vehicles via an unimproved winter trail extending from the bridge to the TFTA and BLRC. A gravel road designed and constructed to provide reliable, year-round access would enable the Army to better utilize the TFTA and the BLRC and thus more readily support the Army's Arctic Strategy.

PROPOSED WORK: Construction of the road would involve the discharge of clean gravel fill into 35.2 acres (30,905 linear feet) of wetlands and other waters. The proposed gravel road would follow the unimproved winter trail that is currently used to access TFTA and BLRC (see Sheets 1 through 26). The winter trail was established between 2015 and 2022 by clearing vegetation, masticating the cuttings, and leaving them on the trail.

The proposed road would be constructed over two seasons beginning in July 2025. During the first season, construction would begin where the gravel road from the Alaska Railroad Bridge over the Tanana River ends, approximately one mile from the southwest bank of the Tanana River. Road construction within the first season is anticipated to progress to Dry Creek, which is approximately 14.5 trail/road miles from the starting point. The second season, construction would begin at Dry Creek and end at an existing gravel road within the BLRC. While most of the construction would occur during the summer, some winter construction activities would occur, including the development of material sites, spreading gravel, and constructing one or more of the three planned bridges.

Typical road construction equipment would be used such as dump trucks, front end loaders, bulldozers, drag lines, graders, off road trucks, and potentially a crane to set the bridges. Construction crews would access the site via personal vehicles and construction vehicles would be left on site overnight.

Up to nine material sites, all in uplands and occupying between 20 and 50 acres, would be established along the route as a source of gravel for the road. Gravel would be extracted from each with an excavator to a maximum depth of 60 feet. Approximately 480,000 cubic yards of gravel would be mined from material sites and the gravel extracted would be utilized for project construction.

Earth moving or vegetation cutting in wetlands would not take place during construction of the road. No excavation within the alignment would occur. Construction-grade fabric would be rolled across the alignment and gravel fill would be placed above the fabric for road construction. The fabric and, to some degree the masticated cuttings, would protect permafrost within the segments where the road traverses wetlands, reducing the probability of frost degradation and subsidence. The base of the road would be 50 feet wide and the surface would be 36 feet wide with 4:1 side slopes.

The route would cross five stream channels: Dry Creek, Beaver Pond Creek, two channels of Clear Creek, and Rigney Creek. A low water crossing (900 feet long x 44 feet wide) would be constructed across Dry Creek. The creek would be excavated 3 feet deep with a bulldozer during a dry period when there is no water. Excavated material would be stored in uplands adjacent to the creek. The base of the excavated area would be filled with 6 to 8-inch diameter rock, surfaced with gravel, and armored with rip rap on the upstream side. Rip rap would also

be used to armor the upstream side of the road within 150 feet of Dry Creek to protect the road during high water events.

Four 60-inch diameter culverts would be installed at the Beaver Pond Creek crossing. These culverts are intentionally oversized to accommodate overflow, also known as aufeis, which has been observed in the vicinity of this creek crossing. Additionally, thirty 18-inch diameter culverts would be placed at crossing of seasonally flowing drainages and wetlands to maintain hydrological connectivity and prevent ponding immediately adjacent to the road.

Full span bridges would be constructed across the two channels of Clear Creek and across Rigney Creek with concrete abutments placed in uplands outside of the 2-year floodplain. Bridges would be either single lane or double lane.

All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plan (Sheets 1-27), dated May 2025.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Other permits that the applicant is actively attempting to acquire include the following: i) Water Quality Certification from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, ii) Fish Habitat Permit from the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, and iii) Floodplain Permit from the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

The proposed construction is expected to cause some indirect impacts to aquatic resources within proximity to the project area. Specifically, vegetation clearing as well as soil compaction and rutting from heavy machinery during construction would adversely impact wetlands and streams near the project site, but not within the fill footprint. Further, there is a possibility of petrochemical spills during construction and the elevated level of human activity would repel fish and sensitive aquatic and semi-aquatic wildlife such as mink and moose.

The proposed road would lead to increased military training activities along the road at the TFTA and at the BLRC. Road construction would also enable increased recreation, mainly via hunting moose in September, as well as increased wood cutting for collecting firewood. These increased activities are reasonably foreseeable and thus constitute cumulative impacts.

Specifically, road construction would enable increased recreation traffic by vehicles under 1,500 lbs. (e.g., standard all terrain vehicles) during September when the gates blocking the Tanana River bridge are opened for recreational traffic. The approximately 4.5 acres of wetlands that intersect with trails situated within two miles of the proposed road would likely endure more traffic and thus more damage such as rutting, compaction, erosion and sedimentation. As occurs now, these gates would be closed at other times of the year. Thus, recreational vehicle anticipated to increase in September with no more than slight increases during other times of year. Increased traffic during winter would cause very little damage to wetlands and other waters because the snow and ice provide natural resistance to damage during this time of year.

Management of recreation, wood cutting, and other activities in the TFTA including the offered to the public is not expected to change as a result of road construction.

APPLICANT PROPOSED MITIGATION: The applicant proposes the following mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts to waters of the United States from activities involving discharges of dredged or fill material.

- a. Avoidance: Tanana Flats consists of large wetland complexes interspersed with uplands and therefore complete avoidance of wetland impacts is not feasible. The proposed road would mainly be constructed along the existing winter trail, which was routed to avoid severely wet areas to facilitate travel and avoid disturbing unstable, saturated ground. Wetland surveys and mapping were used to route the winter trail through the fewest wetlands possible prior to the existing trail's establishment. However, three segments of the alignment are routed away from the existing winter trail to avoid waters, wetlands, and areas most susceptible to permafrost degradation; these segments range from 0.4 to 3.0 miles long. One potential segment away from the winter trail was abandoned after determining that this segment would lead through a relatively high concentration of wetlands.

All nine borrow pits that would supply gravel for the road construction would be located entirely in uplands. One borrow pit that was originally sited in the channel of Dry Creek was removed from the plan due to concerns about trapping fish during periods of low water. Instead, gravel pits would be located in uplands on either side of the creek.

Bridges would be constructed to cross Rigney Creek and the two channels of Clear Creek. Clear Creek is a documented anadromous stream supporting Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and chum (*Oncorhynchus keta*) salmon whereas both creeks support resident fish such as northern pike (*Esox lucius*) and slimy sculpin (*Cottus cognatus*). The bridges would be full-span with no in-river piers and would have abutments placed in uplands and set back from the river bank.

- b. Minimization: The following actions would be taken to minimize adverse impacts to wetlands and other waters:
 - The proposed road minimizes disturbance to wetlands and waters and surrounding uplands by following an existing trail. Segments of the winter trail were rerouted in 2018 and 2020 to avoid and minimize direct impacts to wetlands with greater magnitude, duration, and frequency of inundation to the extent practicable.
 - Following recommendations from Alaska Department of Fish and Game Habitat Division, culverts that would be installed at Beaver Pond Creek are designed to enable fish passage. The lower 20-30 percent of each of these culverts would be buried in the streambed, which would allow for passage by fish and other aquatic organisms during low water. In addition, the embedded culverts would maintain natural stream bed substrate, minimizing the impact to benthic organisms.
 - Corrugated metal pipes 18 inches in diameter would be installed in 30 seasonally flooded wetland swales that the road would cross to maintain hydrologic connectivity

of seasonally flooded wetlands and prevent ponding, which could accelerate thermal degradation adjacent to the road.

- Vegetation clearing needed for road construction would occur outside of the nesting bird window, which extends from May 1 to July 15 in interior Alaska according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to minimize disturbances to nesting migratory birds.
- Upon completion of construction, road embankments would be seeded with certified weed-free native grasses to prevent erosion and discharge of sediments into adjacent wetlands and waters.
- Construction equipment would be cleaned and inspected before entering the project site to ensure invasive weed species are not introduced during construction. Annual surveys would be conducted along the road for two years after construction is complete. The surveys would document presence or absence of invasive weeds, embankment sloughing, or any other problems that may arise.
- To avoid the potential for trapping fish, gravel extraction sites would be located so they do not become connected by surface water to any nearby streams.

c. Compensatory Mitigation: As there are no credits available from mitigation banks or in-lieu fee programs in Interior Alaska, the applicant has proposed to conduct permittee-responsible mitigation to compensate for the proposed unavoidable adverse impacts. Although the proposed construction would have relatively small adverse impacts on aquatic resource function due to the proposed avoidance and minimization and the relatively light development that has occurred in the subwatersheds traversed by the project, the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts are nonetheless substantial and must be offset to comply with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines.

After gravel extraction for construction of the TFTA road is complete, at least two of the nine borrow pits would be recontoured to create open water/emergent wetland complexes. The goal is to create at least 70.4 acres of wetland and water habitat, which is double the area of wetlands and other waters that would be filled by the proposed construction. It is anticipated that restoration of two of the borrow pits adjacent to the road would be sufficient to reach this goal, but additional borrow pits would be restored if necessary. A detailed plan of wetland establishment, monitoring and management at the material sites must be submitted to the Alaska District prior to permit issuance.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: A permit for the described work will not be issued until a certification or waiver of certification, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 95-217), has been received from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The applicant is serving as lead Federal agency and is thereby responsible for compliance with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The applicant has determined that there are cultural resources within 3,000 meters (9,840 feet) of the alignment. Except for a 10-mile section of the route, the alignment has been pedestrian-surveyed for cultural resources over several field seasons. The 10-mile section not surveyed will be pedestrian-surveyed in summer of 2025 (see Sheet 27). However, the USAG does not anticipate finding cultural resources in this segment. As such, the USAG has determined that the undertaking would have No Adverse Effect on historic properties. In a letter dated March 6, 2025, the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), also known as the Office of History & Archaeology, concurred with this determination. The letter also states that the finding is contingent on the USAG completing an archaeological pedestrian survey in 2025 of the areas not yet surveyed and implementing a 5-year monitoring plan.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: No threatened or endangered species are known to use the project area.

We have determined the described activity would have no effect on any listed or proposed threatened or endangered species and would have no effect on any designated or proposed critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844). Therefore, no consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is required. However, any comments they may have concerning endangered or threatened wildlife or plants or their critical habitat will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, requires all Federal agencies to consult with the NMFS on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

The portion of Clear Creek that would be traversed by the proposed project is identified by the Alaska Fish and Game's Anadromous Waters Catalog as supporting Chinook (*O. tshawytscha*) and chum (*O. keta*) salmon. Thus, this part of the stream is considered EFH. The two channels of Clear Creek would each be spanned without in-river piers and abutments placed in uplands set back from the river banks. The proposed construction would avoid in-stream impacts and greatly minimize the potential for increased bed and bank erosion. Hence, we have determined the described activity would not adversely affect EFH.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION: The Corps fully supports tribal self-governance and government-to-government relations between Federally recognized Tribes and the Federal government. Tribes with protected rights or resources that could be significantly affected by a proposed Federal action (e.g., a permit decision) have the right to consult with the Corps, Alaska District, on a government-to-government basis. Views of each Tribe regarding protected rights and resources will be accorded due consideration in this process. This public notice serves as notification to the Tribes within the area potentially affected by the proposed work and invites their participation in the Federal decision-making process regarding the protected Tribal rights or resources. Consultation may be initiated by the affected Tribe upon written request to the

District Commander. This application is being coordinated with federally recognized tribes and other consulting parties. Any comments that federally recognized tribes and other consulting parties may have concerning presently unknown archeological or historic artifacts that may be lost or destroyed by the work under the requested permit will be considered in the Corps final assessment of the described work.

PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, reasons for holding a public hearing.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts, which the proposed activity may have on the public interest, requires a careful weighing of all the factors that become relevant in each particular case. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The outcome of the general balancing process would determine whether to authorize a proposal, and if so, the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur. The decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge that would be authorized by such permit would not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(1) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria (see Sections 320.2 and 320.3), a permit will be granted unless the District Commander determines that it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

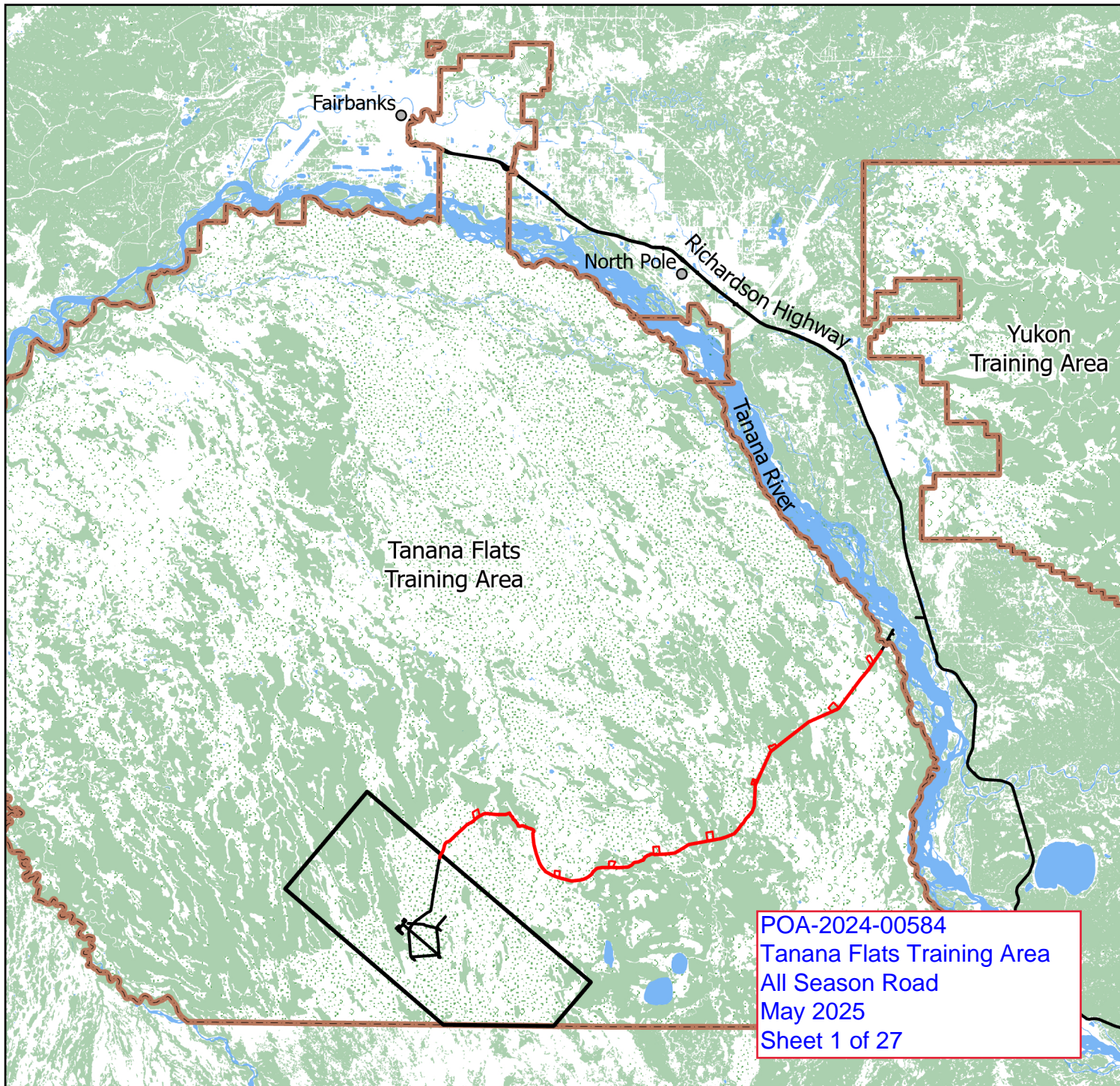
AUTHORITY: This permit will be issued or denied under the following authorities:

(X) Discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States – Section 404 Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Therefore, our public interest review will consider the guidelines set forth under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230).

Project drawings are enclosed with this public notice.

District Commander
U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers

Enclosures



Tanana Flats Training Area All Season Road Overview Map



DPW Environmental
USAG Alaska
DPW Bldg 3023

- Installation Boundary
- Impact Area
- Proposed Road and Borrow Pits
- Existing Roads
- Water
- Forest
- Open Woodland
- Scrub

UTM Zone 6N
WGS84 - Meters
Grid Scale:
10,000 Meters

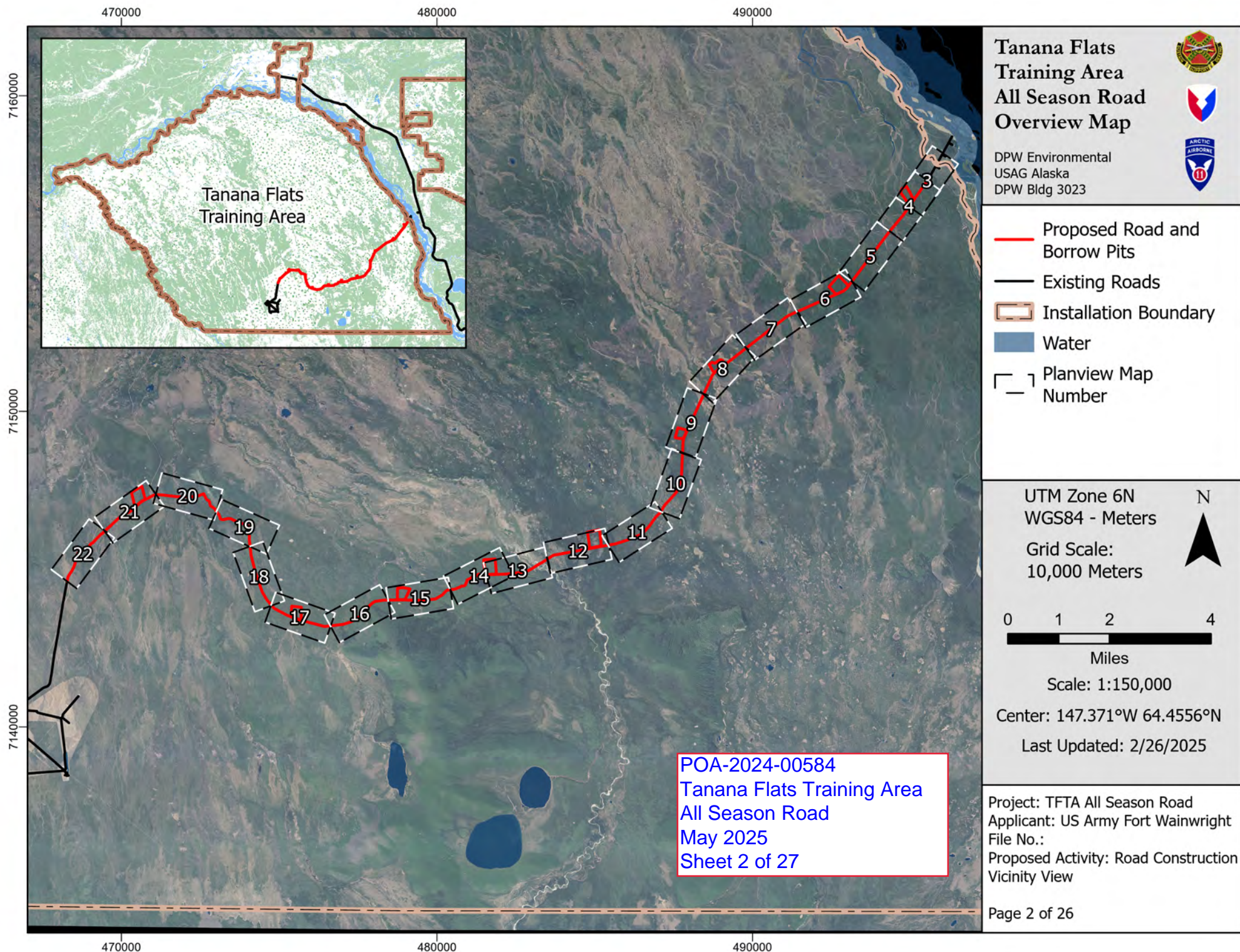


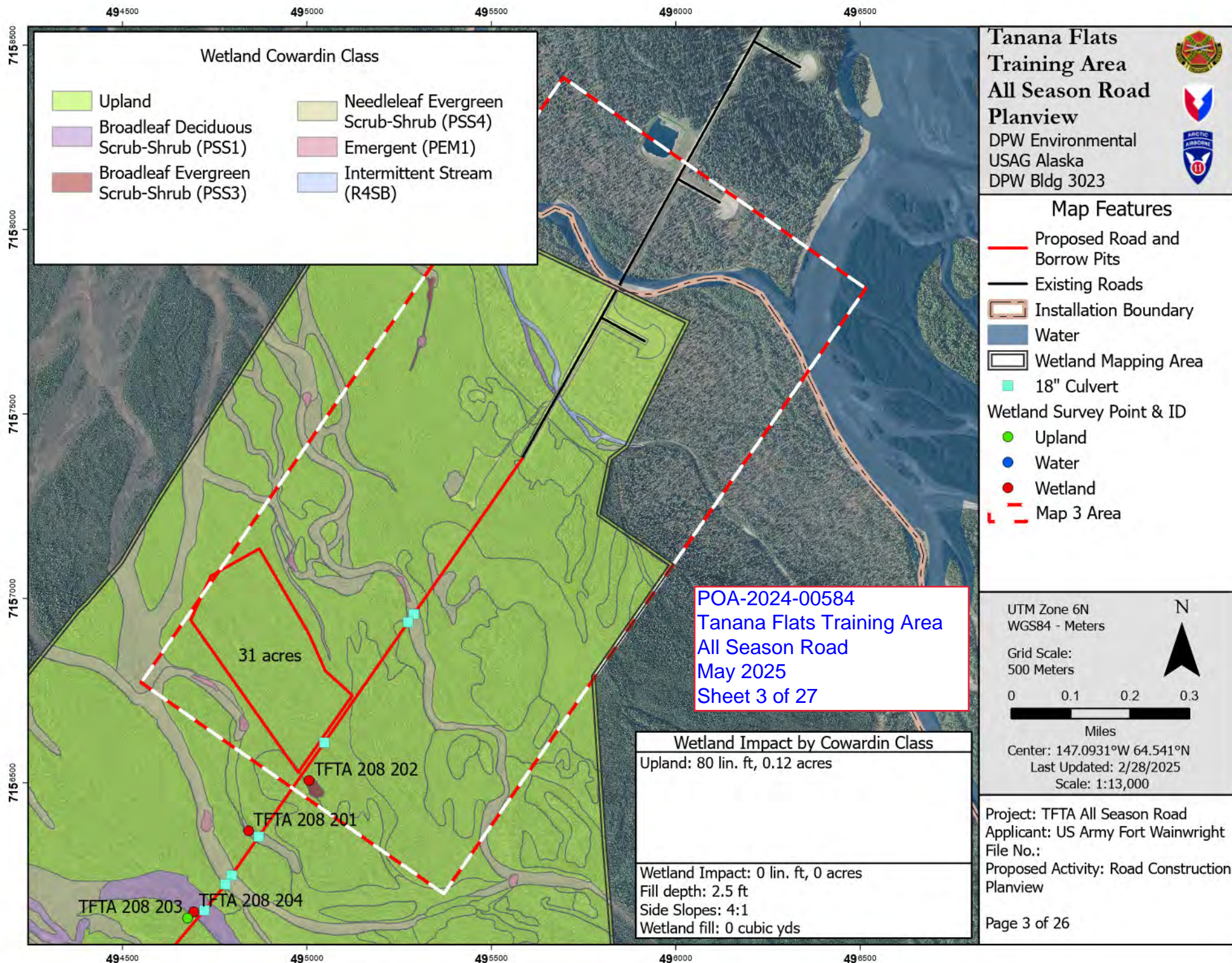
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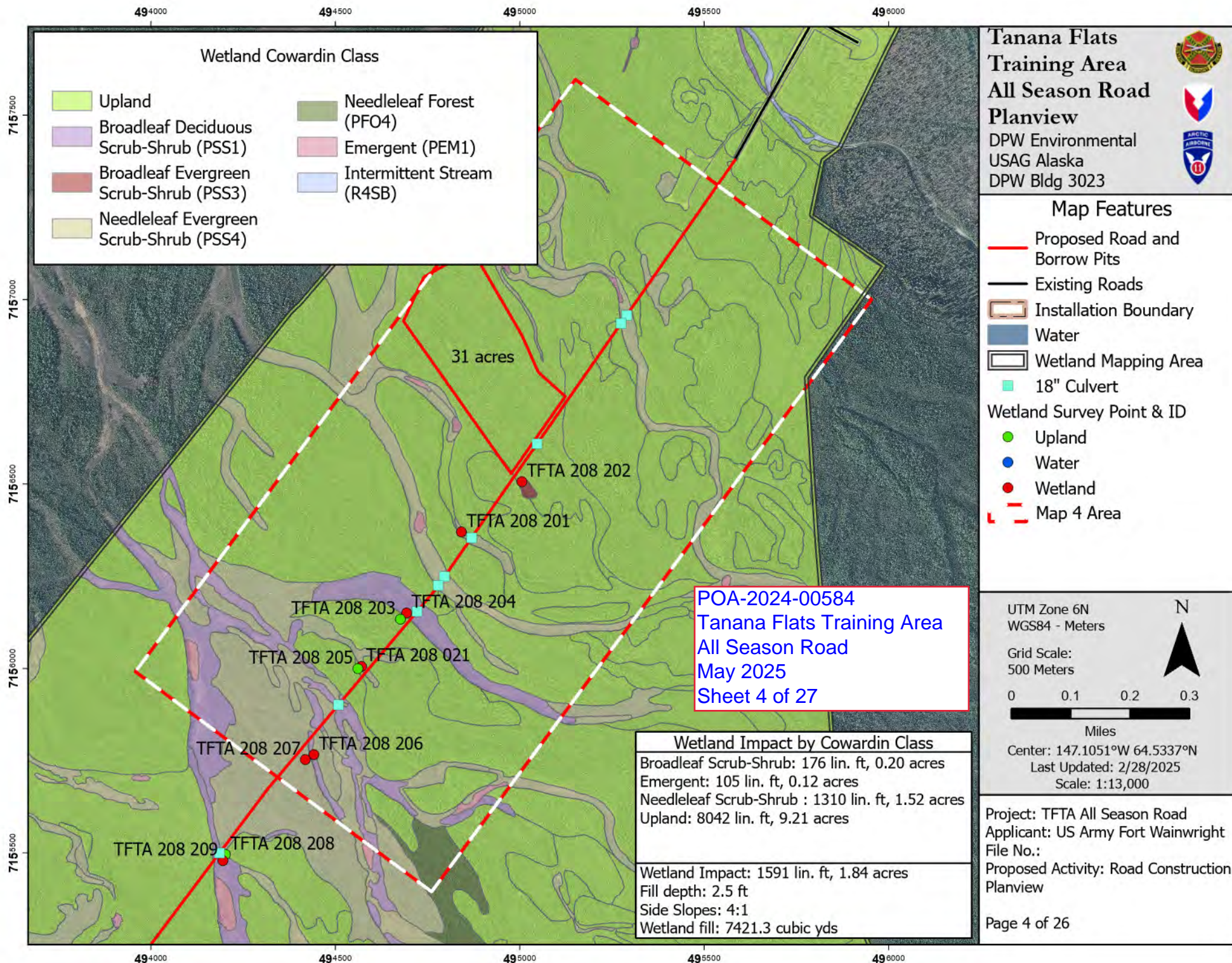
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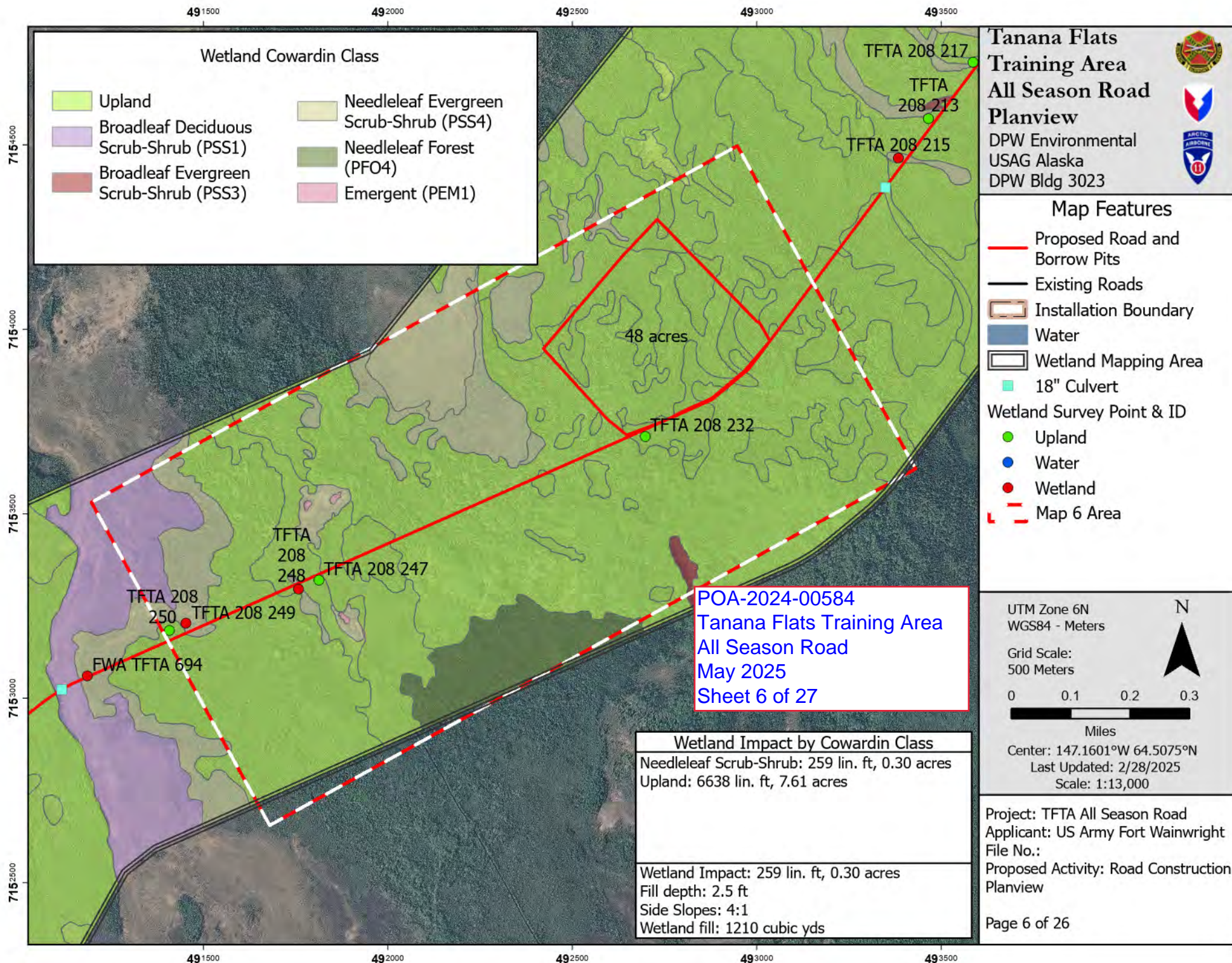
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May 2025
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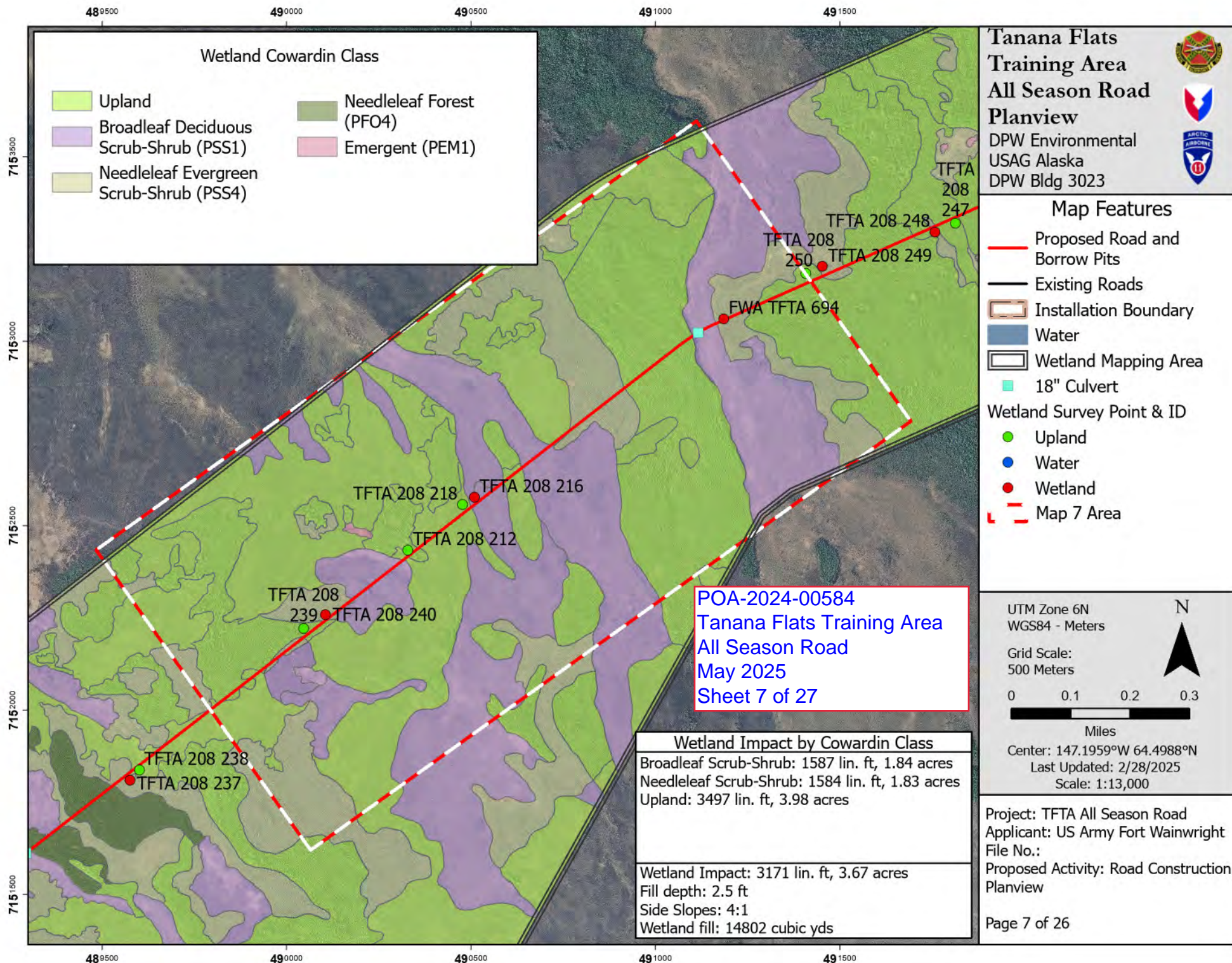
Project: TFTA All Season Road
Applicant: US Army Fort Wainwright
File No.:
Proposed Activity: Road Construction
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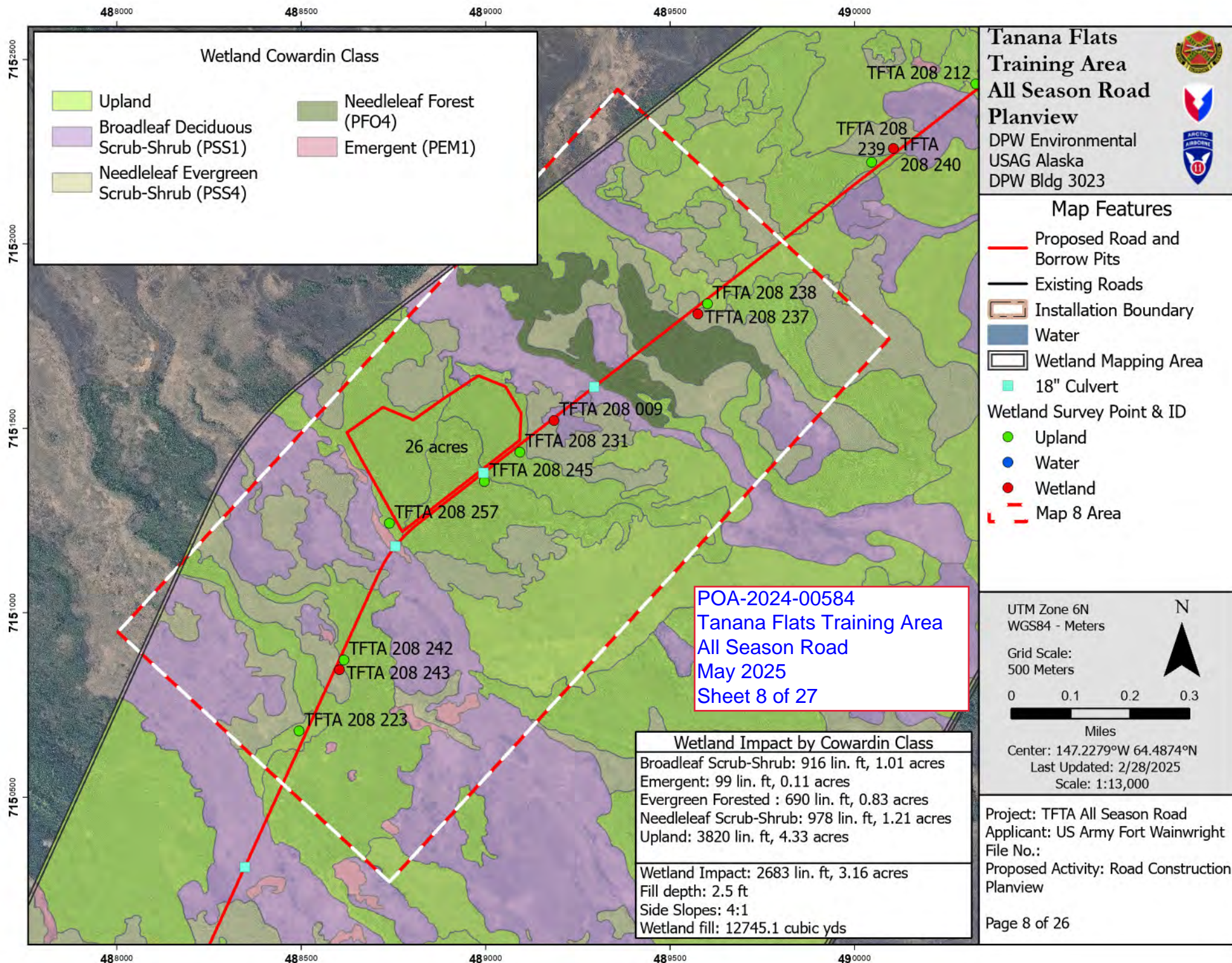


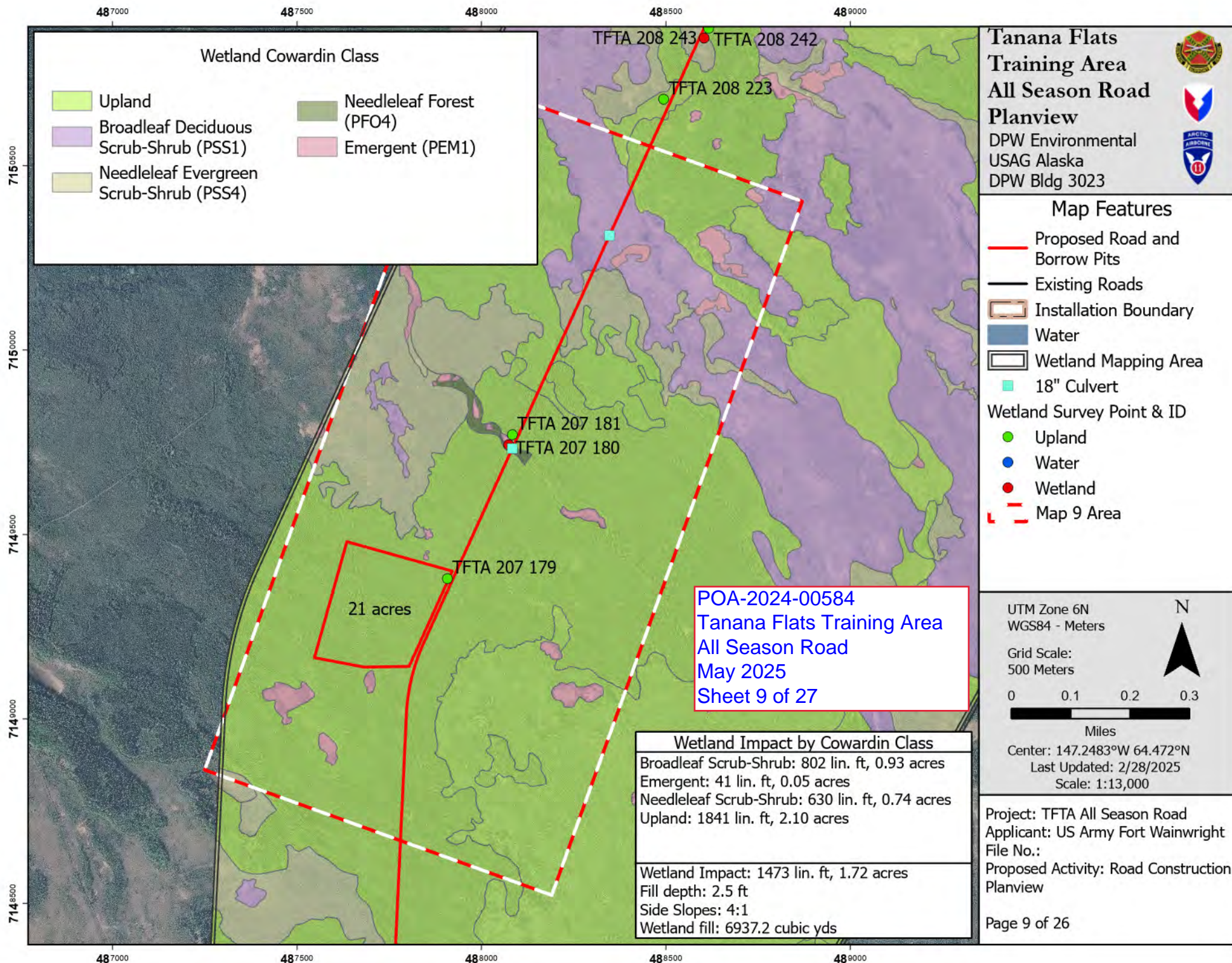


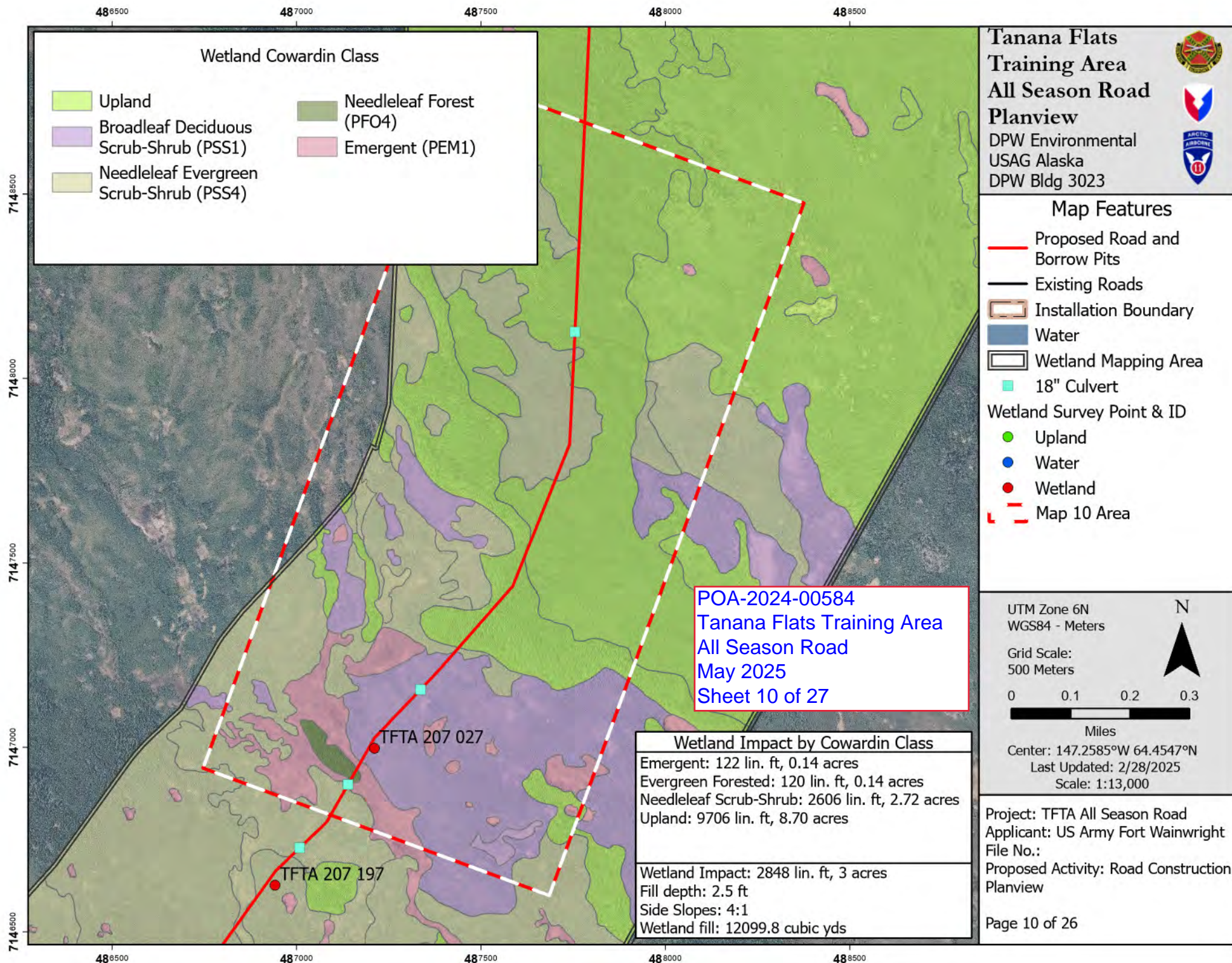


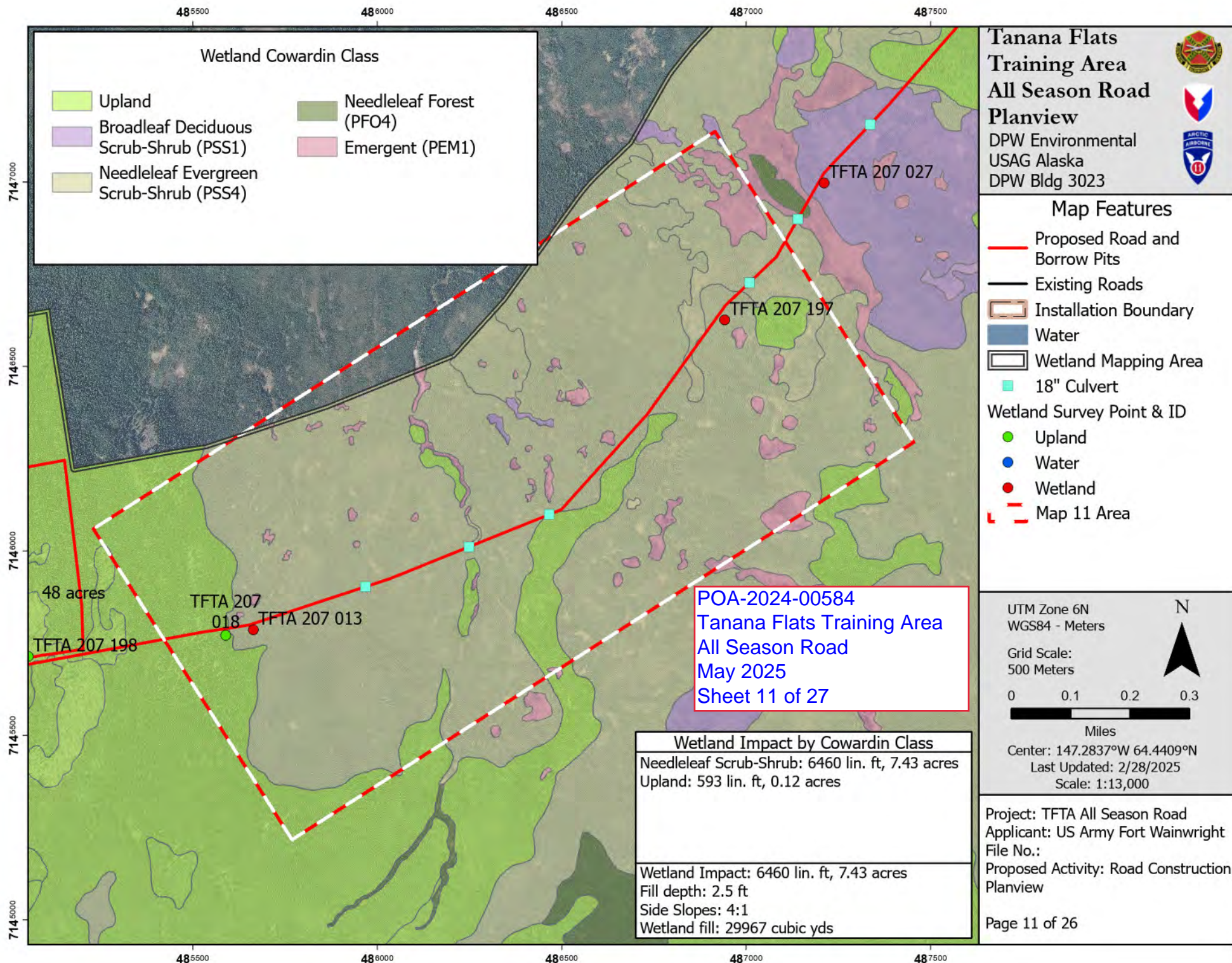


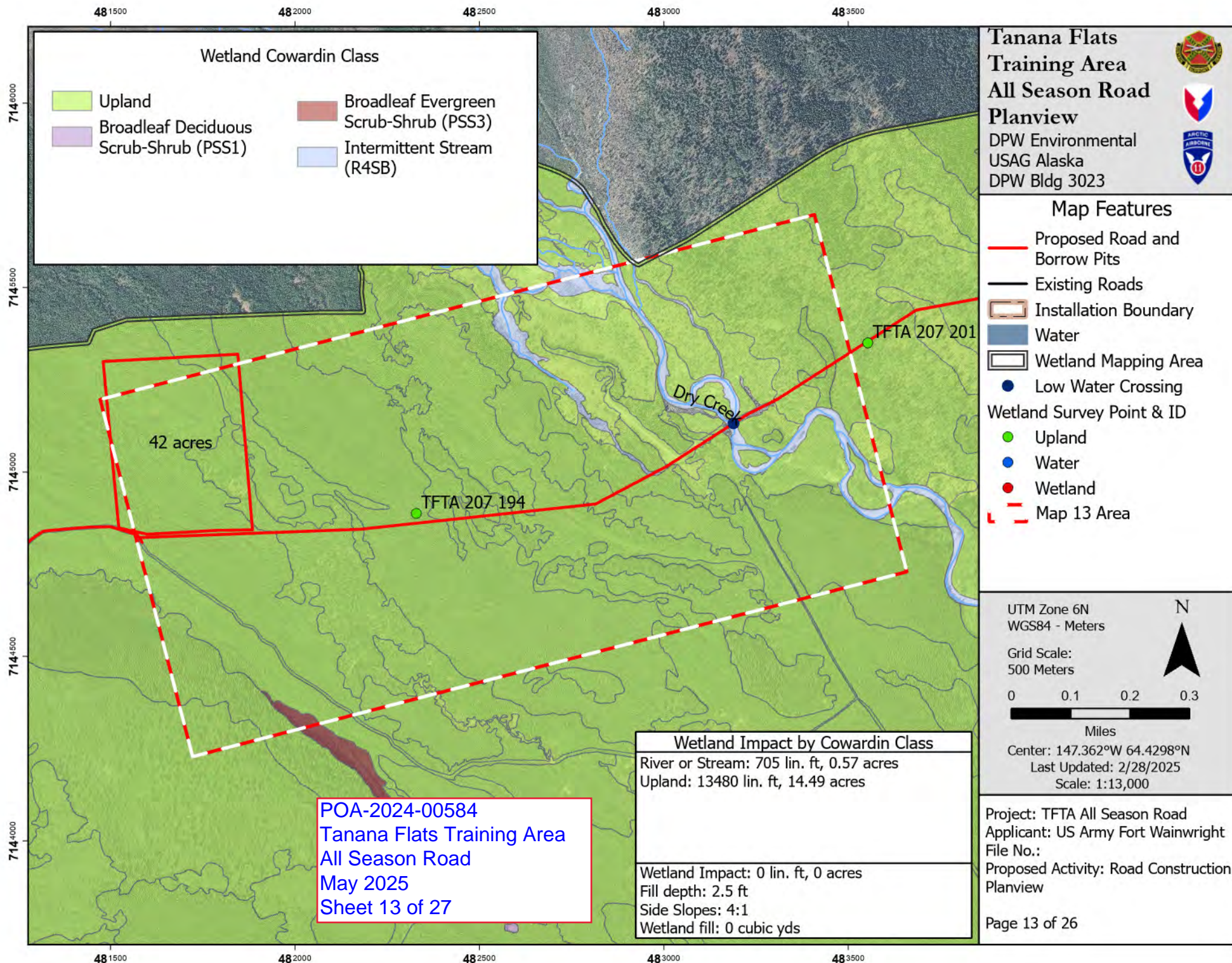


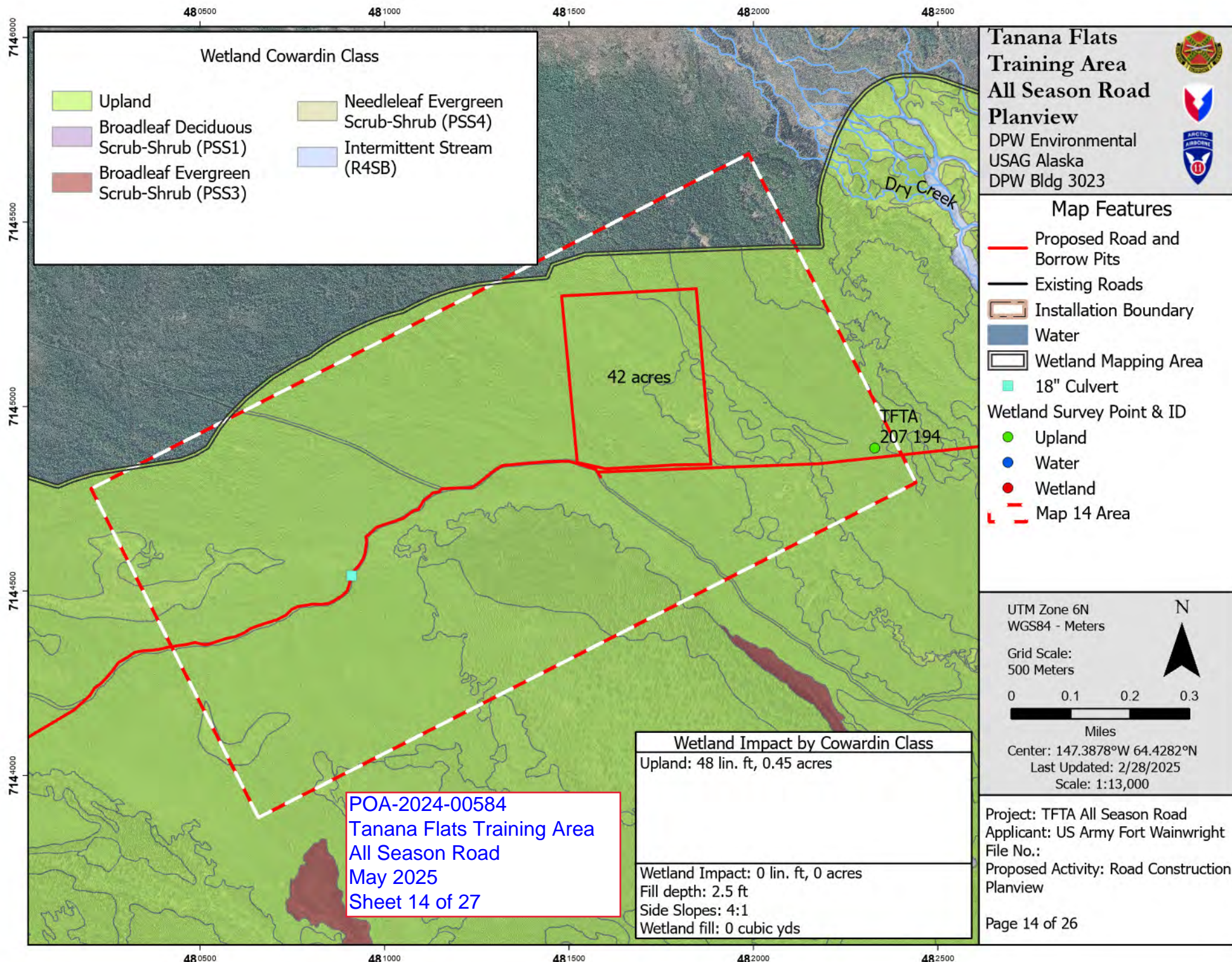


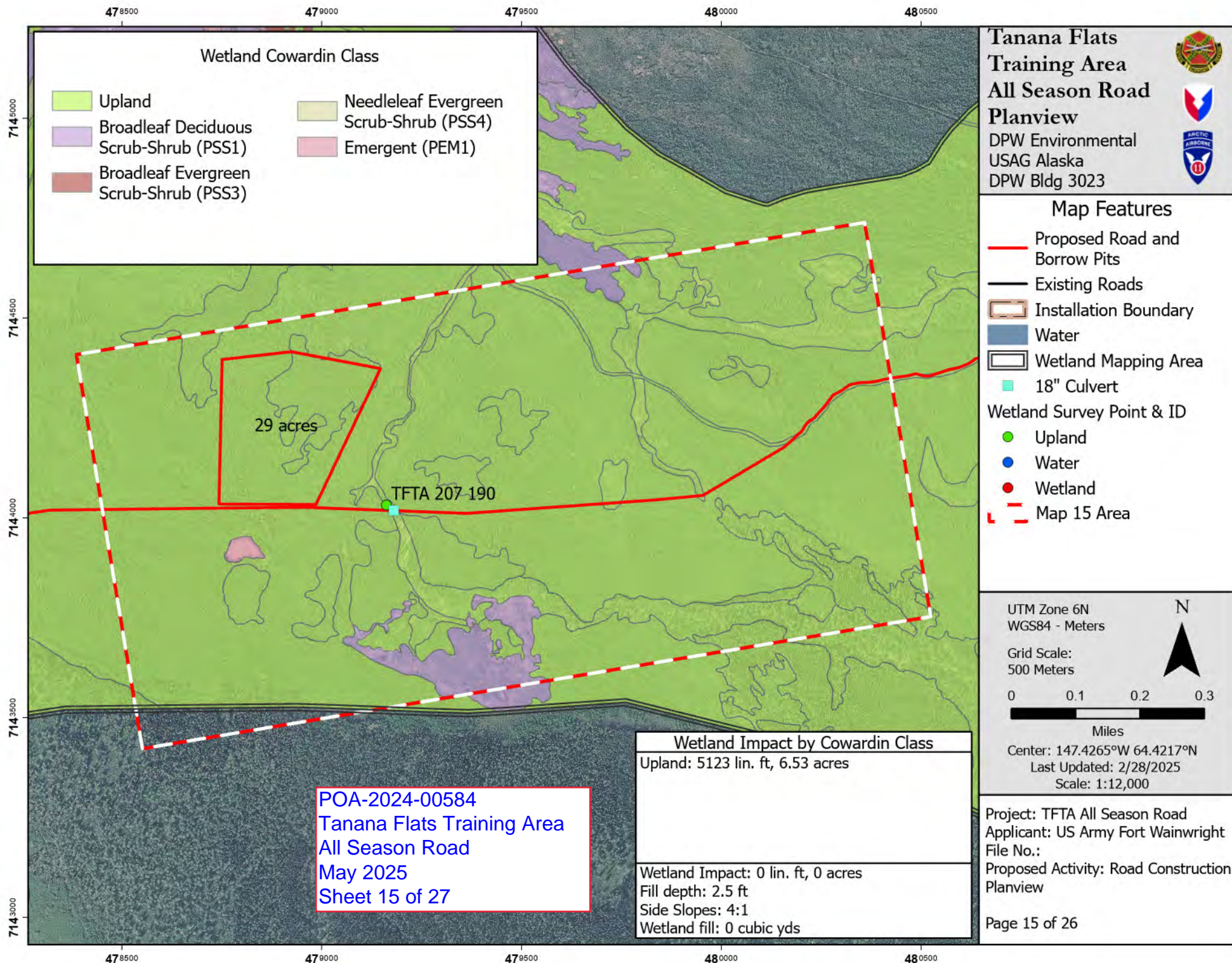


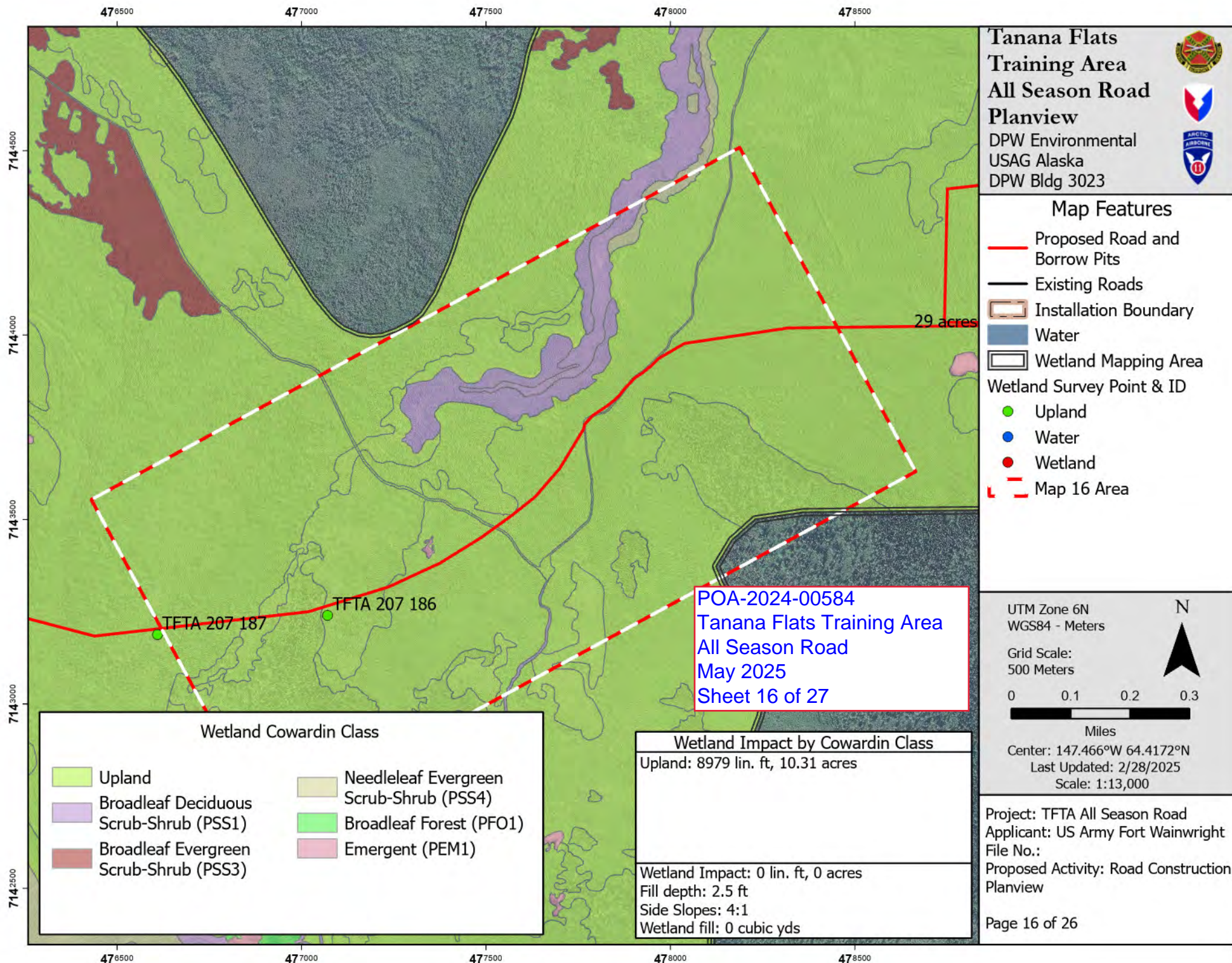


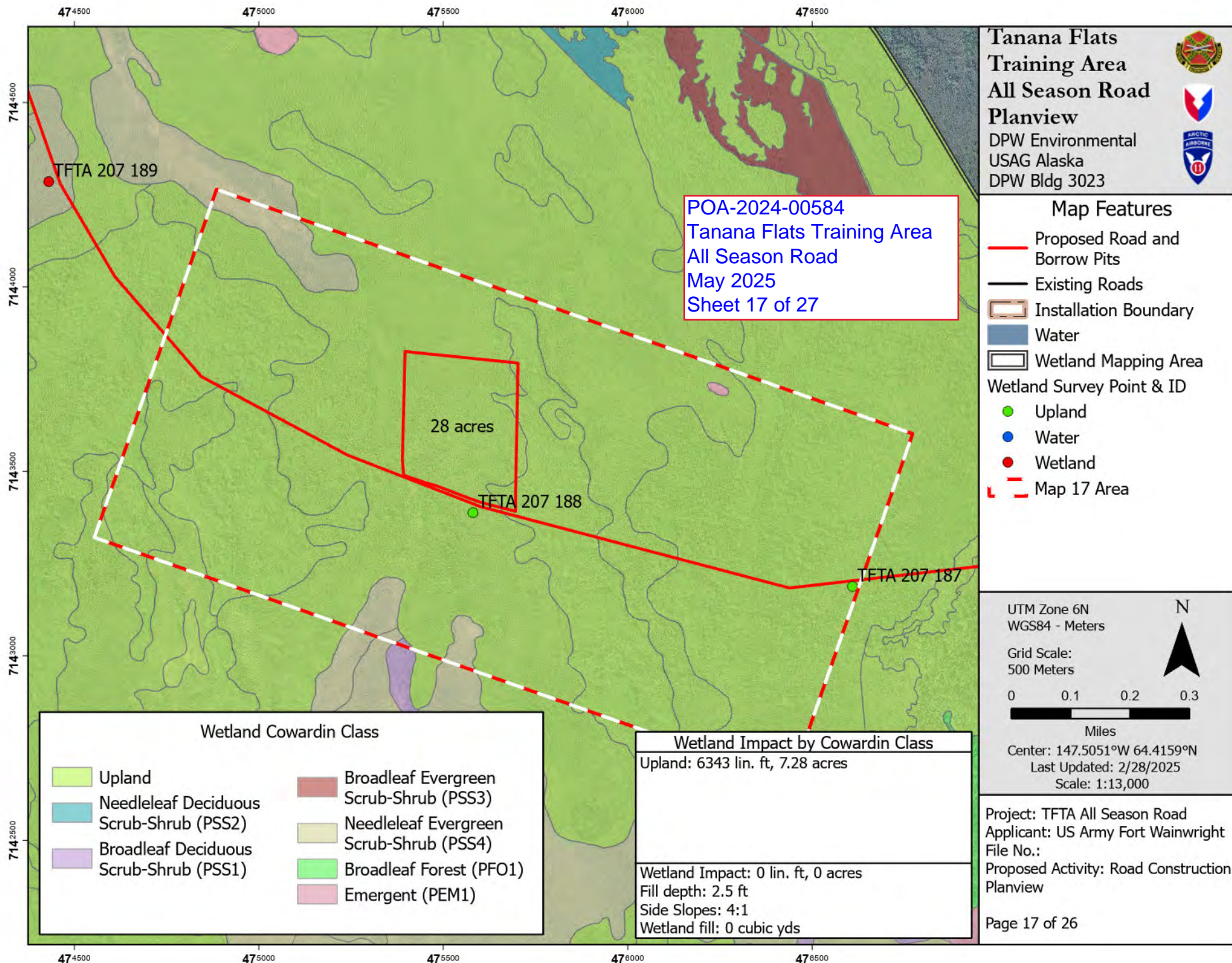


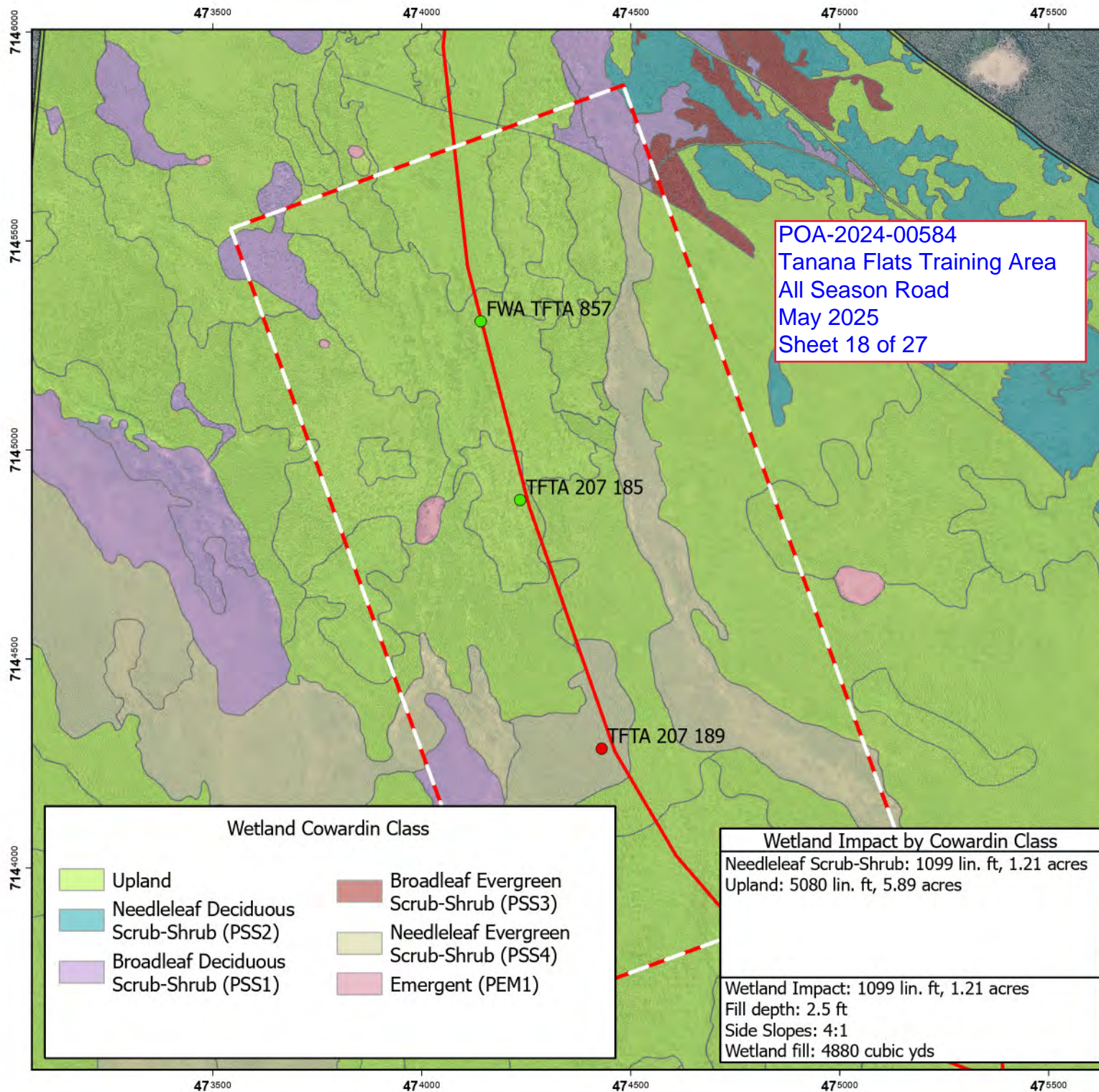












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Tanana Flats Training Area
All Season Road
May 2025
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Tanana Flats
Training Area
All Season Road
Planview

DPW Environmental
USAG Alaska
DPW Bldg 3023



Map Features

Proposed Road and
Borrow Pits

Existing Roads

Installation Boundary

Water

Wetland Mapping Area

Wetland Survey Point & ID

Upland

Water

Wetland

Map 18 Area

UTM Zone 6N
WGS84 - Meters

Grid Scale:
500 Meters

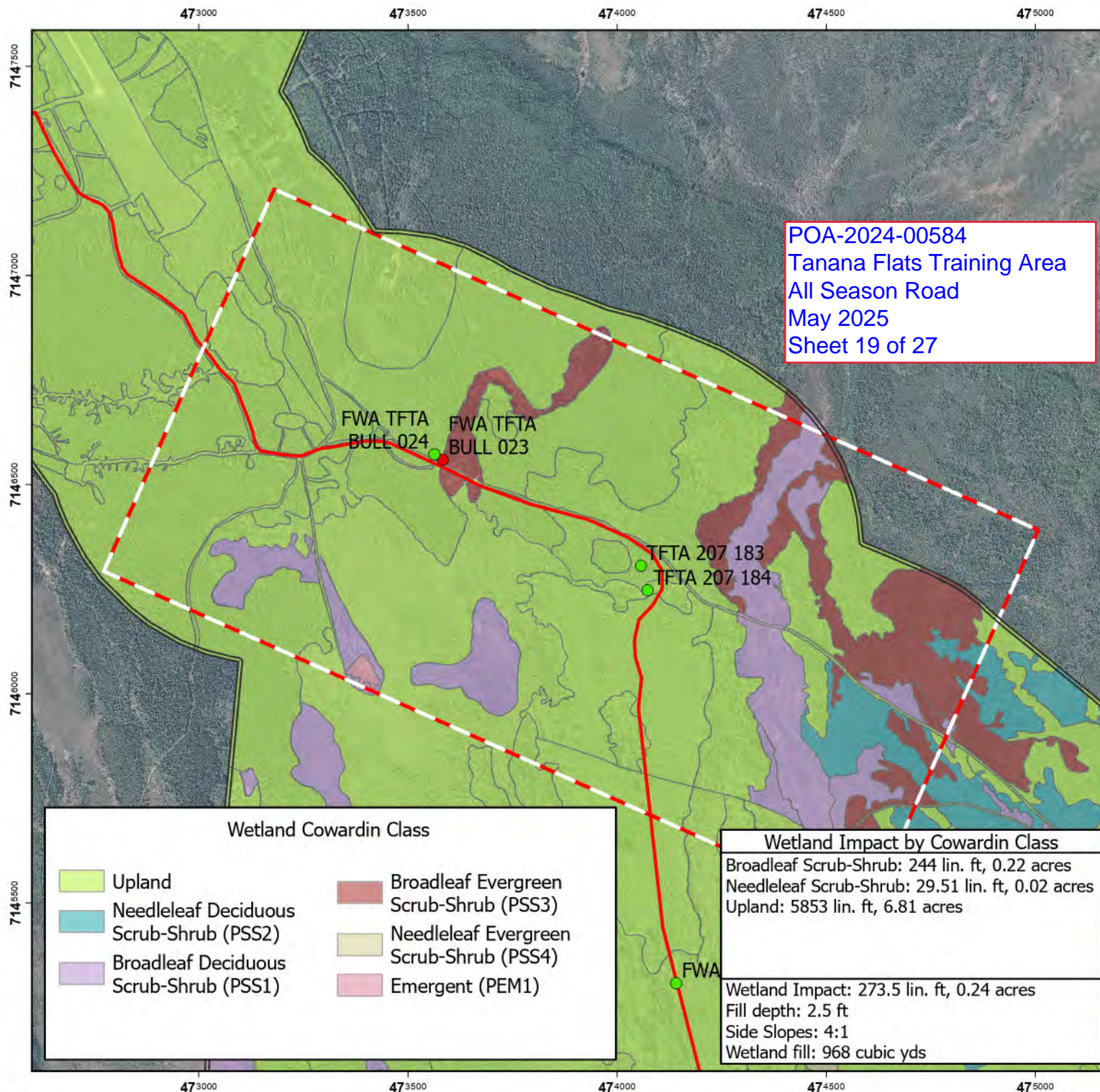
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**Tanana Flats
Training Area
All Season Road
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Map Features


- Proposed Road and Borrow Pits
- Existing Roads
- Installation Boundary
- Water
- Wetland Mapping Area
- Wetland Survey Point & ID
 - Upland
 - Water
 - Wetland
- Map 19 Area

UTM Zone 6N
WGS84 - Meters

Grid Scale:
500 Meters

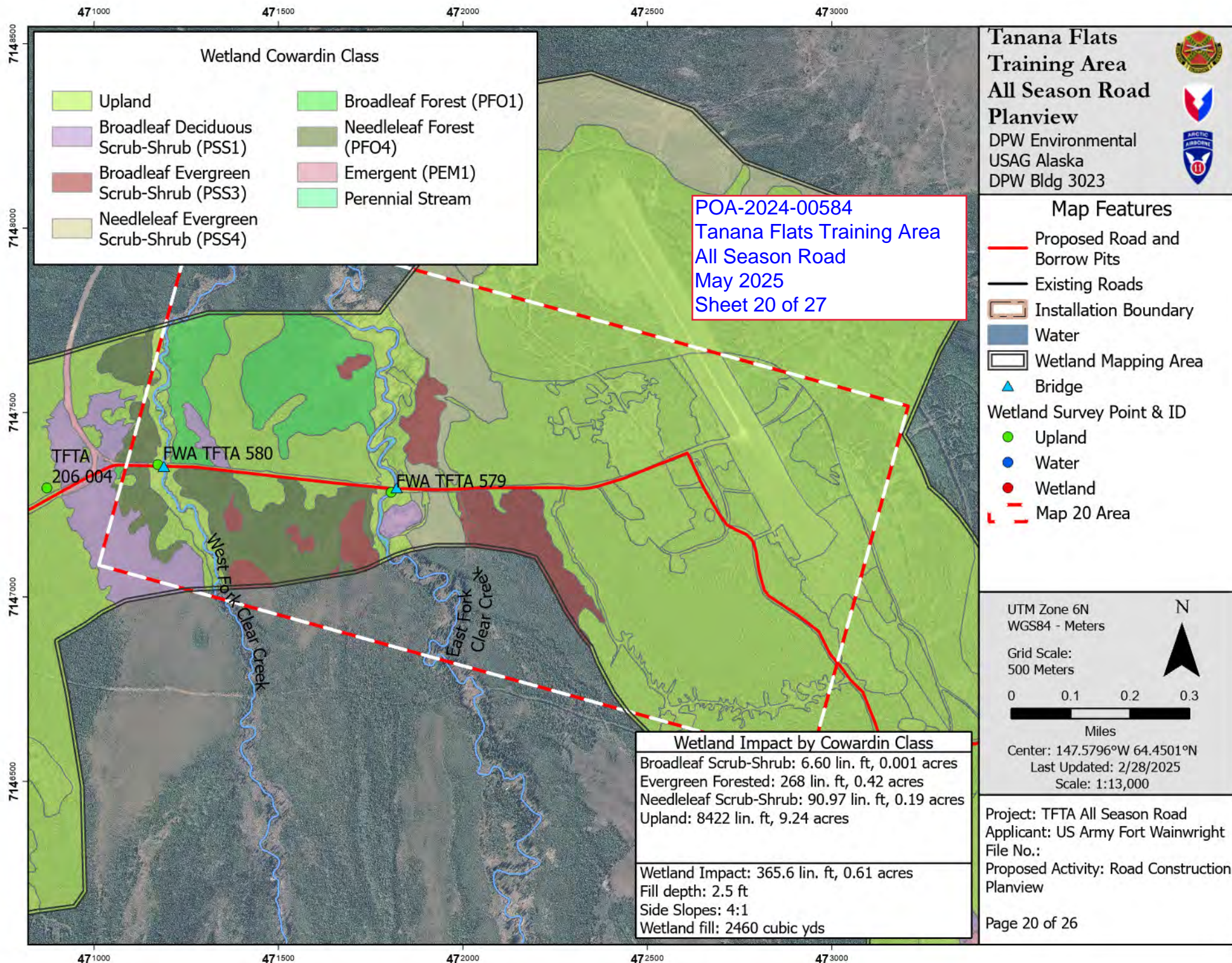
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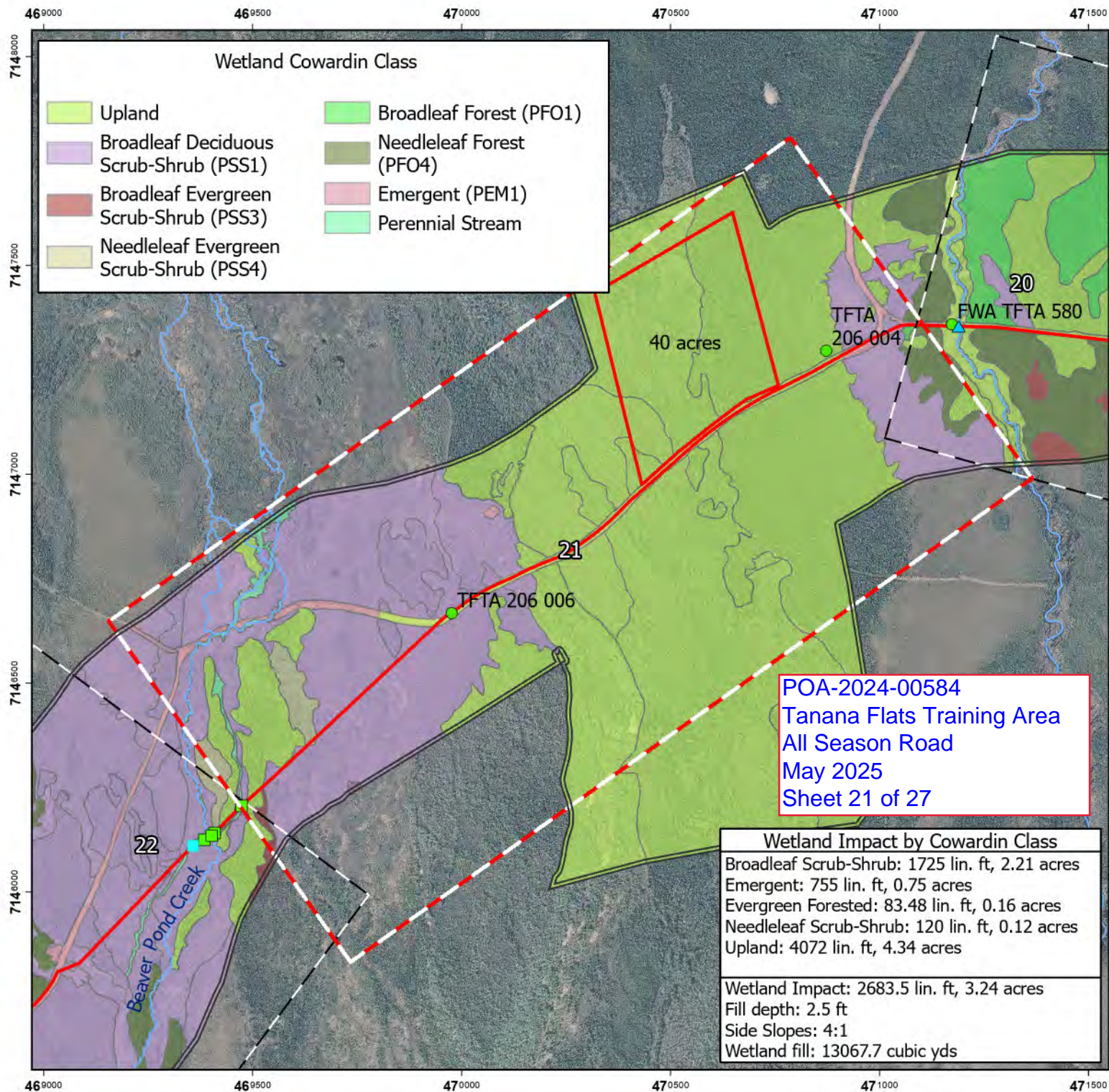
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Project: TFTA All Season Road
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**Tanana Flats
Training Area
All Season Road
Planview**

DPW Environmental
USAG Alaska
DPW Bldg 3023



Map Features

- Proposed Road and Borrow Pits
- Existing Roads
- Installation Boundary
- Water
- Wetland Mapping Area
- 18" Culvert
- Bridge
- 60" Culvert

Wetland Survey Point & ID


- Upland
- Water
- Wetland
- Map 21 Area

UTM Zone 6N
WGS84 - Meters

Grid Scale:
500 Meters

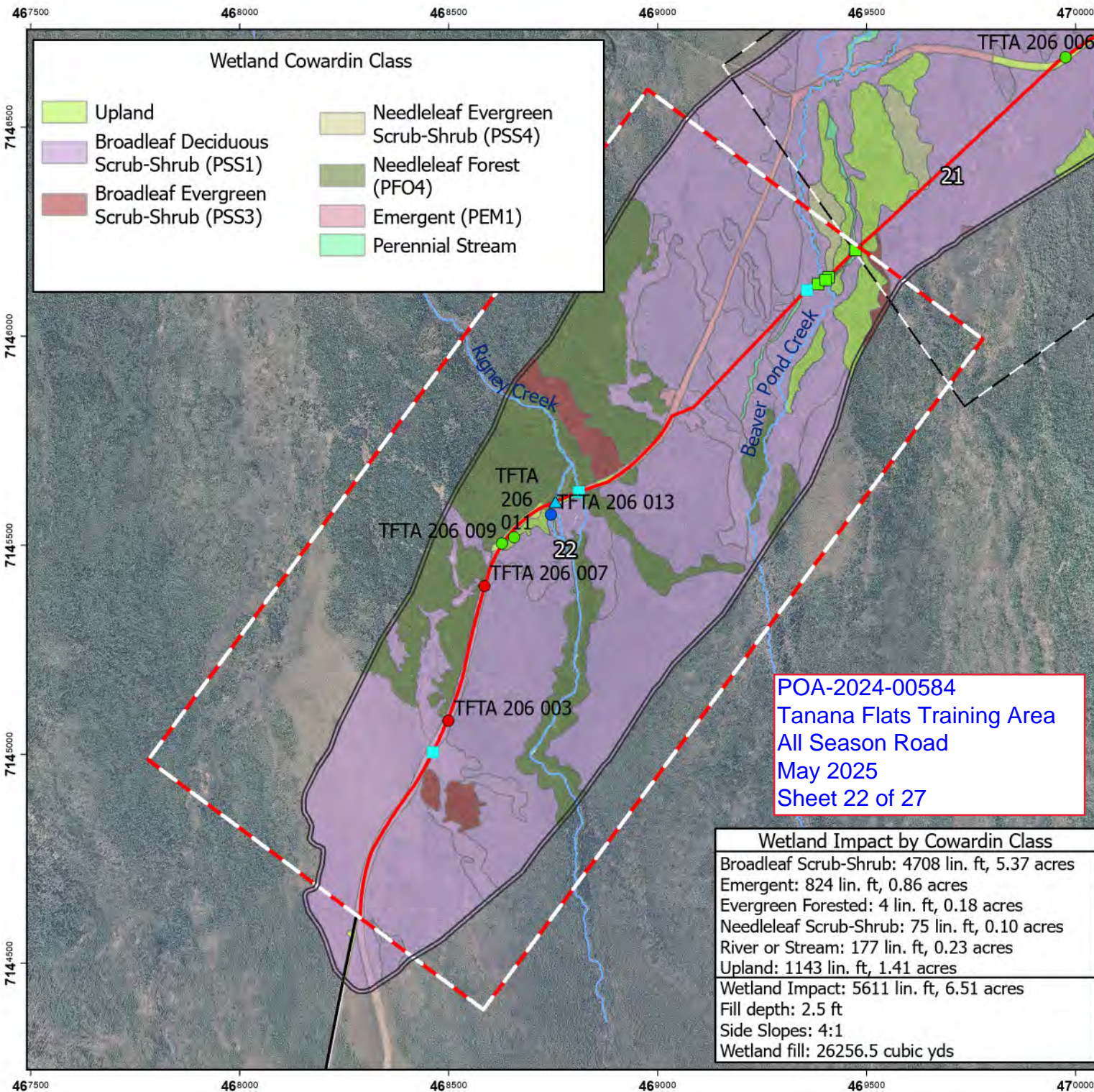
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Project: TFTA All Season Road
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Planview

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Wetland Cowardin Class

- | | |
|--|---|
| Upland | Needleleaf Evergreen Scrub-Shrub (PSS4) |
| Broadleaf Deciduous Scrub-Shrub (PSS1) | Needleleaf Forest (PFO4) |
| Broadleaf Evergreen Scrub-Shrub (PSS3) | Emergent (PEM1) |
| | Perennial Stream |

Tanana Flats Training Area All Season Road Planview

DPW Environmental
USAG Alaska
DPW Bldg 3023



Map Features

- Proposed Road and Borrow Pits
- Existing Roads
- Installation Boundary
- Water
- Wetland Mapping Area
- 18" Culvert
- Bridge
- 60" Culvert
- Wetland Survey Point & ID**
 - Upland
 - Water
 - Wetland
 - Map 22 Area

UTM Zone 6N
WGS84 - Meters

Grid Scale:
500 Meters

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Miles

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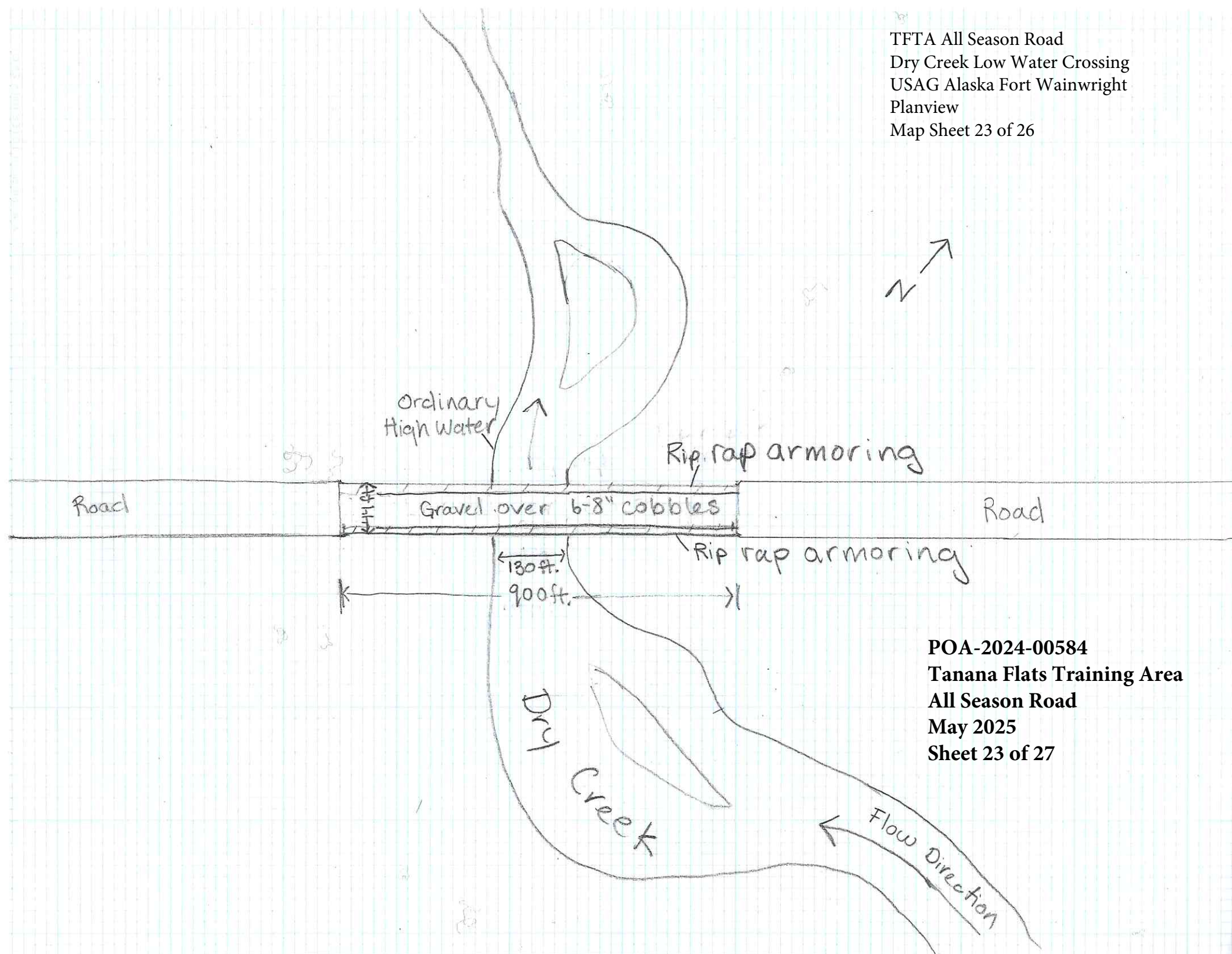
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May 2025
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Wetland Impact by Cowardin Class

Broadleaf Scrub-Shrub: 4708 lin. ft, 5.37 acres
Emergent: 824 lin. ft, 0.86 acres
Evergreen Forested: 4 lin. ft, 0.18 acres
Needleleaf Scrub-Shrub: 75 lin. ft, 0.10 acres
River or Stream: 177 lin. ft, 0.23 acres
Upland: 1143 lin. ft, 1.41 acres
Wetland Impact: 5611 lin. ft, 6.51 acres
Fill depth: 2.5 ft
Side Slopes: 4:1
Wetland fill: 26256.5 cubic yds

Project: TFTA All Season Road
Applicant: US Army Fort Wainwright
File No.:
Proposed Activity: Road Construction
Planview

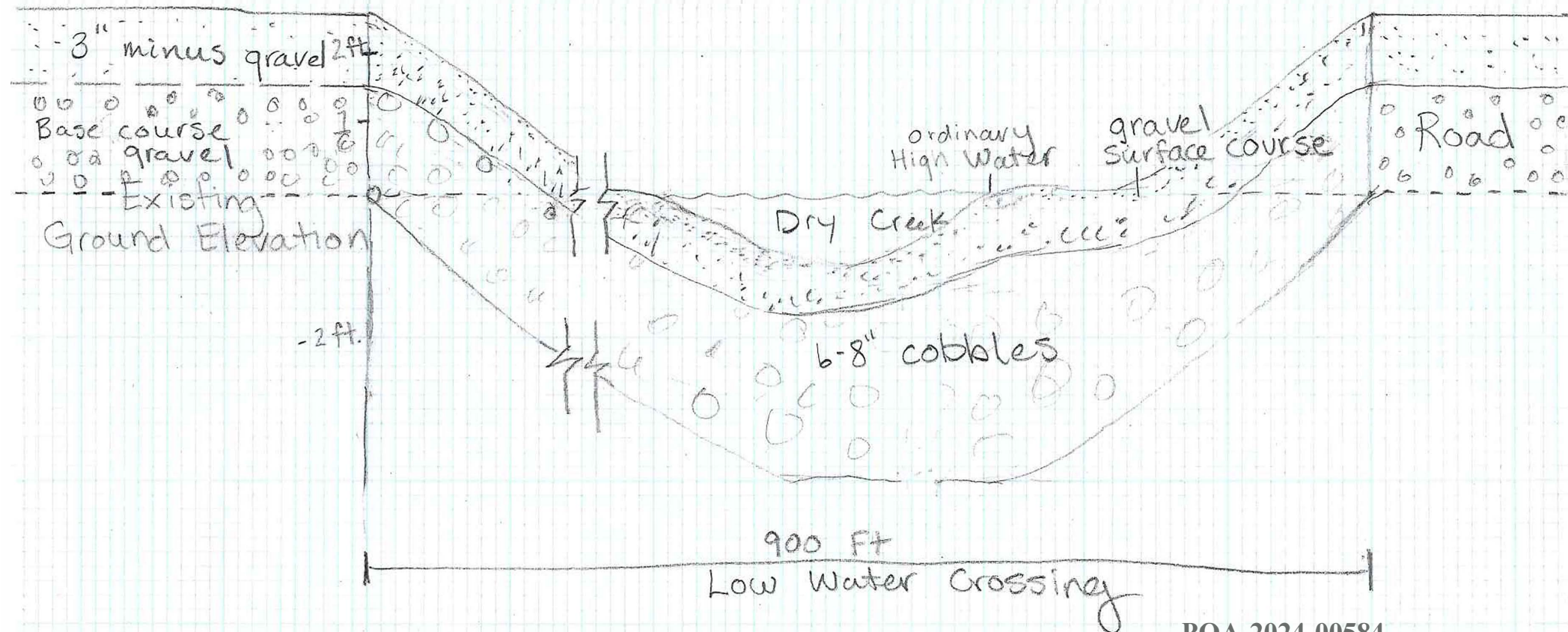
TFTA All Season Road
Dry Creek Low Water Crossing
USAG Alaska Fort Wainwright
Planview
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Tanana Flats Training Area
All Season Road
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Dry Creek Low Water Crossing

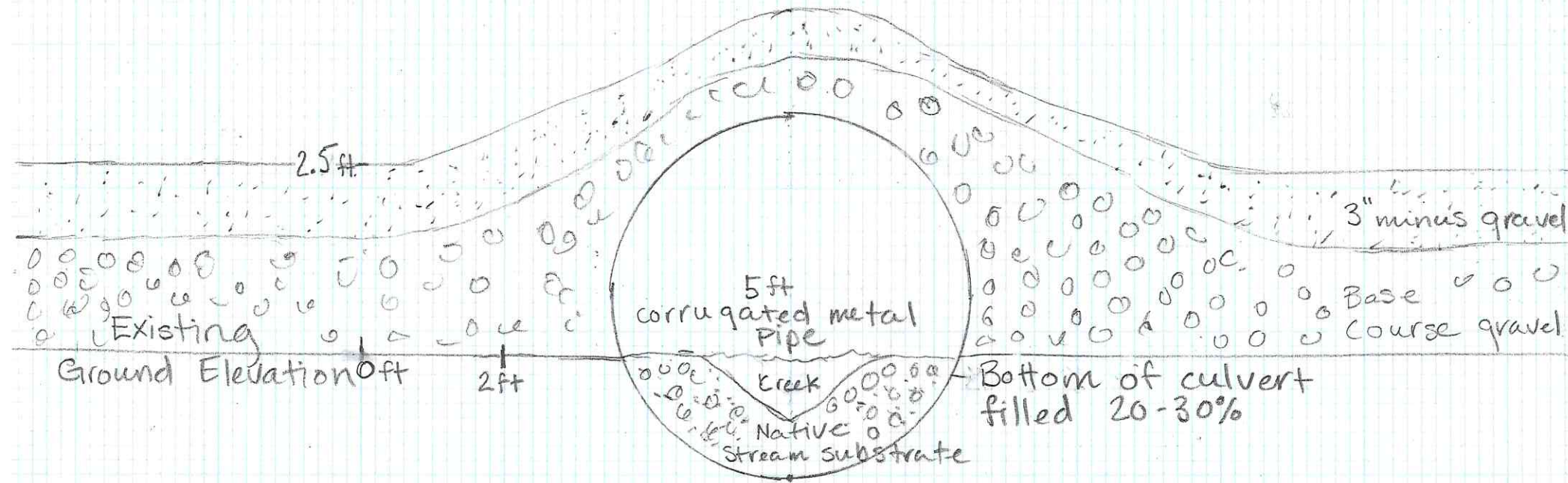
TFTA All Season Road
Dry Creek Low Water Crossing
Elevation View
USAG Alaska Ft. Wainwright
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Tanana Flats Training Area
All Season Road
May 2025
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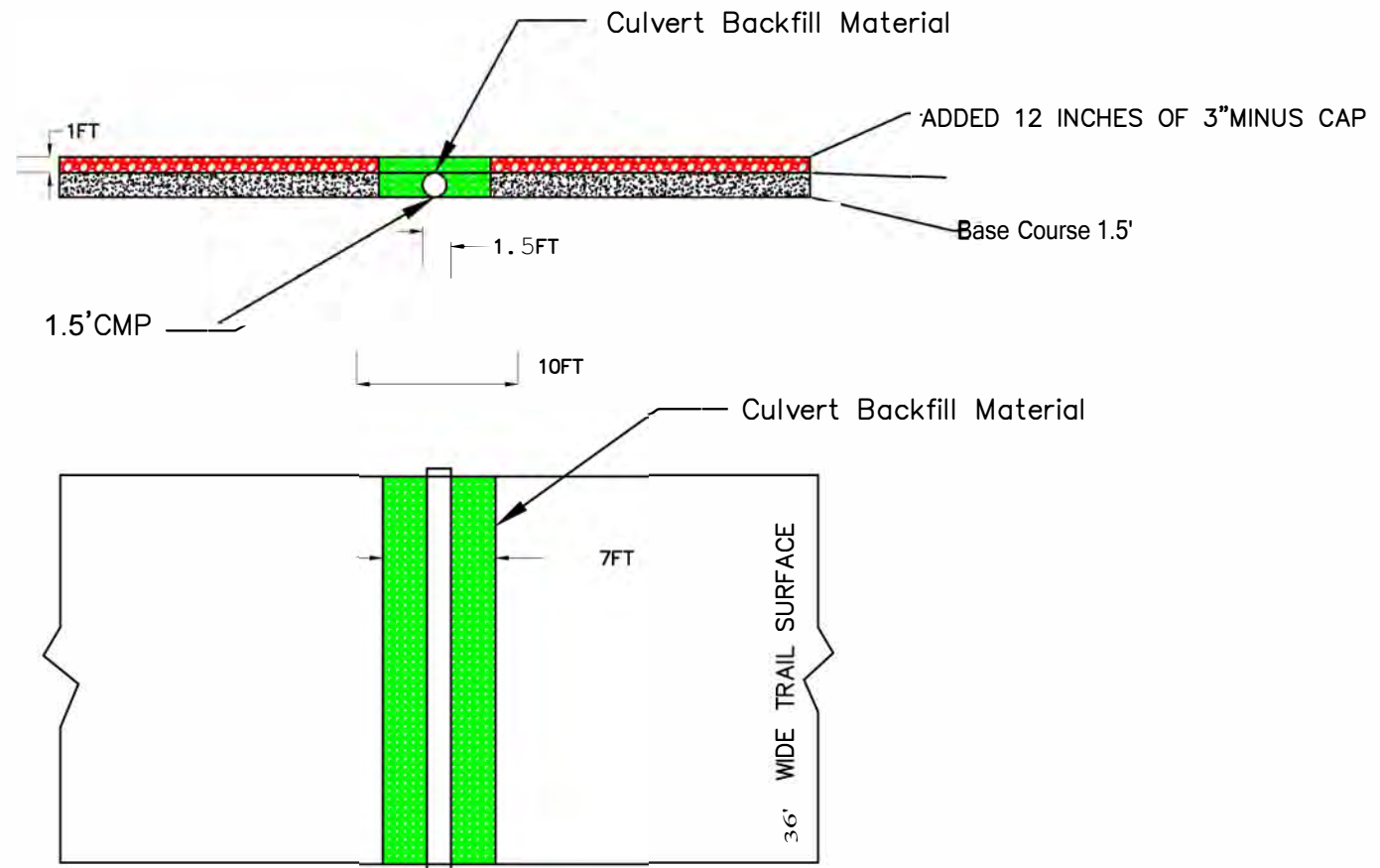
Beaver Pond Creek Culvert

TFTA All Season Road
Beaver Pond Creek Culvert
Elevation View
USAG Alaska Fort Wainwright
Map sheet 25 of 26



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Tanana Flats Training
Area All Season Road
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TFTA All Season Road CMP DETAIL AND ALIGNMENT PROFILE



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Tanana Flats Training Area All
Season Road
May 2025
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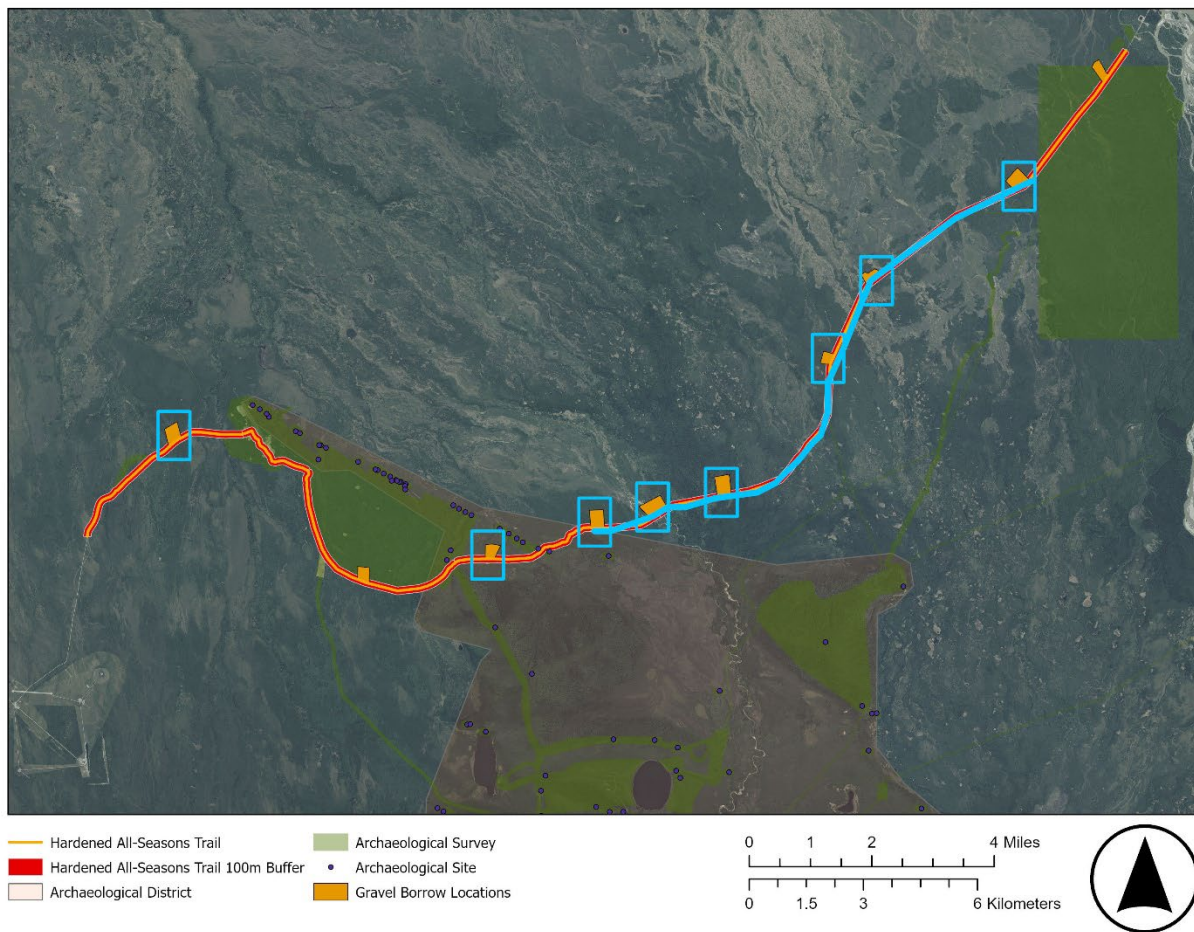


Figure 1. Blue areas indicate where archaeological pedestrian survey will occur in 2025.