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**RIPARIAN AND WETLAND RESTORATION IN AN ABANDONED
GRAVEL MINING PIT IN NORTHERN COLORADO**

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ABSTRACT: The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Department manages numerous properties along the Cache la Poudre River that were previously mined for gravel. The remaining open-water pits, while providing opportunities for ecological restoration, also present significant challenges such as the legacy of past land use; river dams and diversions; development; environmental, floodplain, and water-rights regulations; and competing demands for valuable funding. By taking a corridor-wide planning process, the City was able to prioritize potential projects and develop conceptual ecological restoration plans that were useful for leveraging additional funding. One such project underwent construction in the spring and summer of 2011. It involved the excavation of upland around a gravel pit to elevations able to support approximately 3 acres of cottonwood/shrub woodland. The excavated material was used to fill parts of the pond and create approximately 3 acres of various wetland communities, from willow shrubland to emergent wetland. The construction was carried out as a design-build project, with the designer teaming with equipment operators and plant installers to complete the work. The design process included a half-day workshop that involved key city staff along with the design firm; some of the design elements continued to evolve up to and throughout construction as additional information, including subsurface and hydrological conditions, were better understood. Approximately 30,000 cubic yards of material were moved and over 24,000 plants installed. Construction of Phase 1 was completed in June 2011.