

## What did we start with?

- 1976: Oso Diversion changed seasonal flows
- Impacted floodplain and riparian area
  - Cobble berms, low water table, weeds
- Existing river restoration structures in channel
- Declining cottonwood gallery- regen dying off
- Nesting Lewis's woodpeckers
- Excited and motivated landowner

Existing floodplain conditions



Where?  
**Lower Rio Blanco River**  
Archuleta County, CO

## Objectives

- Restore soil moisture in floodplain
- Enhance Lewis's woodpecker habitat by restoring cottonwood gallery and riparian vegetation
- Create shallow water habitat for wetland species

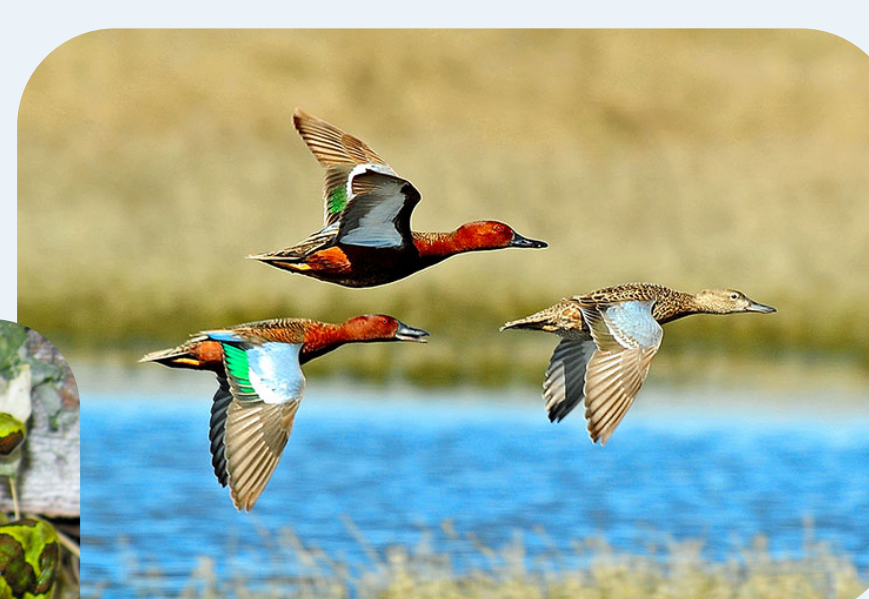


Lewis's woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)



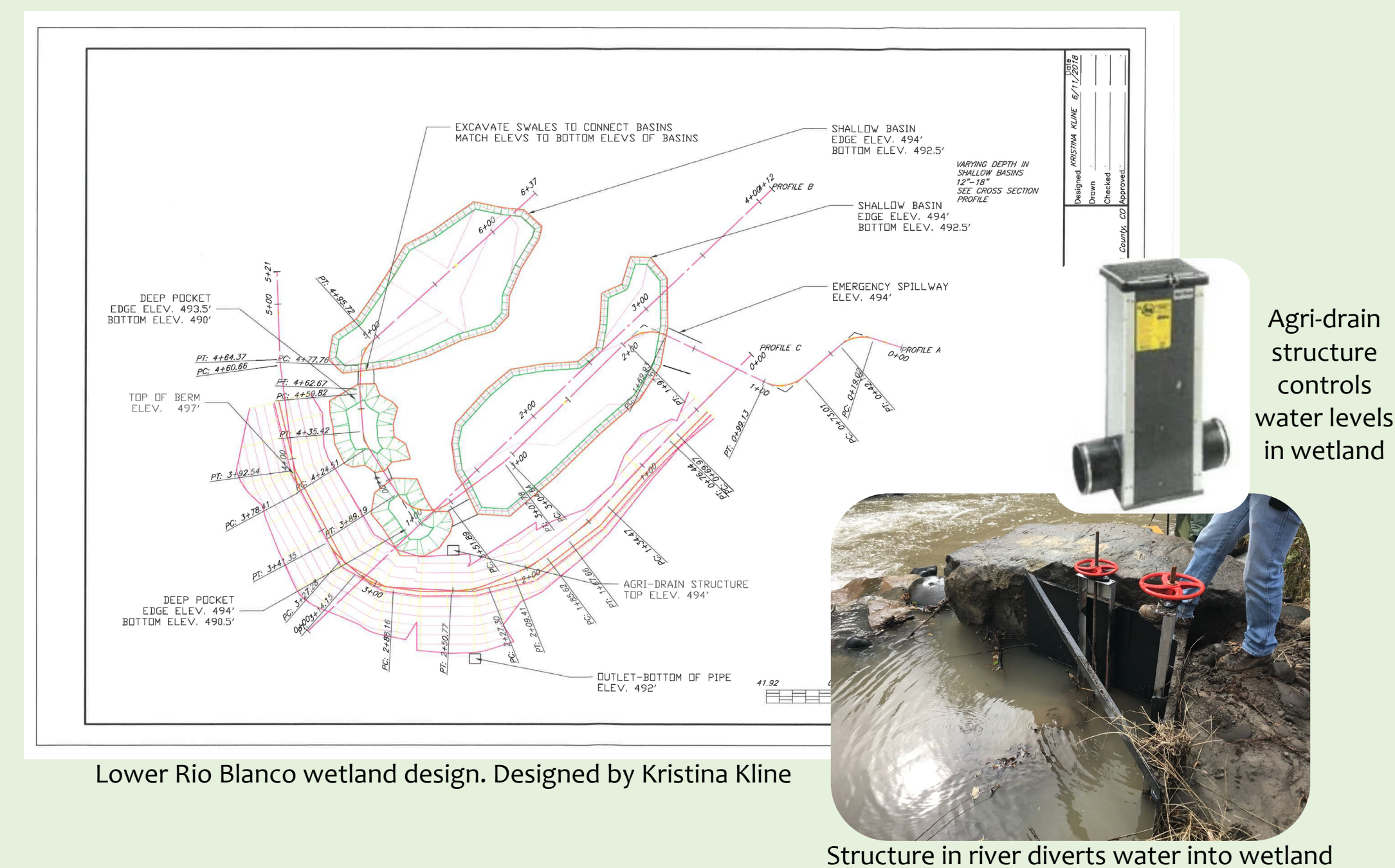
Northern leopard frog (*Lithobates pipiens*)

## Target Species



Cinnamon teal (*Anas cyanoptera*)

## What did we do?



Lower Rio Blanco wetland design. Designed by Kristina Kline

Structure in river diverts water into wetland



Aerial view of wetland basins as they were filling for the first time in Oct 2018. Drone photo credit: Herb Grover

- Built diversion off existing structure in river
- Connected existing cobble berms for wetland dam
- Designed to meander through cottonwoods
- Excavated basins, varying depths: 6in – 3ft
- Installed water control structure



## What do we have now?



Northern shallow basin, the spring (2019) after construction



High flows brought in sediment and wetland vegetation

- 1.5 acre floodplain wetland w/diversity of depths
- Elevated water table, increased soil moisture
- Willows have exploded with the moisture
- Now approaching suitable SW willow flycatcher habitat, which wasn't originally considered
- Total cost \$25,000- Landowner, CPW, NRCS



After a drying out, cattails, rushes and important duck foods are starting to take hold



Willow response to increased moisture



Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*)

## Restoration Bonuses

- Restored landowner's water well
- Very high flows- first season flooded, then a drying out allowed aquatic vegetation to establish quickly
- Educational video
- Future landowner workshop



Scan me to see video