



Article

Inspiring women in the AEC industry: Amy Murphy, LSRP

Women are making gains working in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields but are still underrepresented, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. As of 2019, in the [U.S. women represented 27% of STEM workers, yet 48% of all workers.](#)

At Haley & Aldrich, we've made considerable strides over the past decade in gender diversity. In fact, according to a recent Environmental Financial Consulting Group HR survey, Haley & Aldrich was ranked in the top 10% of architecture, engineering, and construction (AEC) organizations with respect to gender diversity. Although we're proud of that progress, we recognize the importance of staying focused on the vital role of women in the workplace and women working in STEM. We believe that should be celebrated every month. And that's why, as Women's History Month comes to a close, Haley & Aldrich is doing just that. Each month we'll share an inspiring story about a woman working in the AEC industry.-

To start, [Amy Murphy](#), LSRP, shares a story that was a game changer in her career and how that helped her "confidence diamond" shine bright.

How many years have you been in the remediation

field and what led you to pursue this career path?



I have 22 years of experience as an environmental consultant, the last 11 of which I have also been a New Jersey Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP). I became interested in environmental work during my childhood as part of a 4-H club that adopted stretches of highways, conducted Delaware River cleanups, and tagged black bear cubs for the National Forest Service. Through that 4-H club, I also went to summer camps devoted to ecology, reforestation, and land management. It seemed a natural progression to focus on an associate's degree in biology at community college and continue to earn a bachelor's degree in environmental science at university.

Which project was the “game changer” in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years? Why?

As an LSRP, I am responsible for overseeing and certifying the investigation and remediation of contaminated sites in New Jersey. I had been an LSRP for about five years when I encountered a challenging situation with a project that was a “game changer” for me.

For this project, a difference of opinion in guidance document interpretation with regulators was holding up the last major step in soil [remediation](#) and preventing my client from selling the property. To try to resolve that, we had several in-person meetings with the regulators, including out-of-state flights for the client and team members, and multiple conference calls.

During all of the interactions, I was aware I was the only woman on the team, but in this instance, I was the one leading. As I went toe-to-toe with the regulators advocating for my client, and putting my reputation on the line, I knew I had the backing of my team, including a senior Haley & Aldrich professional who had twice as much experience as I did. I also knew that our team had armed me with a solid technical argument based on New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) guidance.

After we resolved the situation to the satisfaction of all parties, the senior team member said it was a "trial by fire" and I had "earned my battle scars." That experience taught me the difference between being knowledgeable about regulations versus applying the knowledge under pressure. In that moment, the support of my team plus being armed with a sound technical argument gave me the confidence I needed to positively influence the outcome. Not only was my client able to proceed with the final step in the soil remediation process and sell the property, as a result our efforts and my leadership, regulatory guidance documents and NJDEP forms have since been modified. Ever since, my own personal "confidence-diamond" has shined brighter.

How do you see the remediation field changing in the years to come with respect to gender diversity?

I have seen the industry change dramatically over the past two decades and I have great hopes for more gender equity and inclusion in the future. The environmental consulting field was male dominated when I first started out, but now I work with teams that are mostly, if not wholly, female, and who are just as qualified and experienced as our male counterparts.

In part, my hope for the future comes from comparing two situations 20 years apart. Right out of undergrad, I worked for another consulting firm and managed a seasoned field crew. Every day, I had to deal with misogyny, condescension, and/or sexual harassment without any guidance and not feeling that I could talk to my project manager about what I was dealing with. Two decades later, I can now contrast that experience with the complete opposite: my reminding a junior staff member that she had Stop Work Authority if the rumors about a subcontractor turned out to be true. I knew I had the full support of Haley & Aldrich behind me while empowering her to be able to control the situation if she was uncomfortable.

Today, we see women confident in our abilities and not afraid to let our voices be heard while working for companies that are willing to listen and adapt to benefit all.

Check out our other "Inspiring women in the AEC industry"

blog posts with:

- [Elizabeth Bishop](#)
- [Sarah Van Glubt](#)