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2025 Women in Construction: Allison Drake, DiPrete Engineering

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Allison Drake
Civil Engineer

What is one project or achievement in your career that you are most proud of, and how did it impact your organization or community? My biggest career achievement is becoming a licensed soil evaluator in Rhode Island and Massachusetts — all while raising my four kids. When I was hired, I didn't even know soil evaluation was a profession! But learning about soil morphology and how drainage and septic systems work intrigued me. Earning my license took years of schooling, exams, projects, and balancing family life, but I proved to myself — and my kids — that hard work pays off. This also benefits my organization, as we now have two licensed soil evaluators in RI and MA, allowing us to expand and manage projects in-house.

What trends or innovations do you believe will shape the future of your field, and how are you positioning yourself (or your firm) to be at the forefront? The Environmental Services Department at DiPrete Engineering has been using the Amoozometer, a device that calculates the drainage rate (in inches per hour) of water through soil using the Amoozometer and an auger. I conducted seven tests in Bourne, MA, in half a day, enabling engineers to design drainage ponds faster than with the traditional double-ring infiltrometer. The Amoozometer uses less water, is quicker, more accurate, and can be operated by one person, cutting costs for both our firm and clients. I'm helping our firm lead this innovation for better-designed ponds.

What's your favorite way to recharge or get inspired outside of work? Teaching young hockey players to skate lets me bond with my boys and share my passion for the game.

Who or what has inspired you most in your career, and what advice would you share with the next generation of women entering the A/E/C industry?

My dad has inspired me the most in my career. I grew up watching him work in construction, from owning a golf course reconstruction business to working in asphalt, irrigation, and site utilities. I was always around construction equipment, dirt, and grease. As a kid, I begged for a sandbox for my Tonka trucks — years later, I finally got one! Now, I “play” in the sand, watching life-sized Tonka trucks bring site plans to life. My advice to women entering A/E/C: Get on-site and learn how construction works. Seeing it firsthand helps engineers create better plans and solve problems efficiently.

Do you have a hidden talent or a surprising fact about yourself that most people wouldn't know? I played hockey for URI before shifting focus to my engineering career. Now I teach skating to kids!