

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Institute for Water Resources

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The Anacostia: A River on the Mend

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA. Last October, Pamela M. Collins, Ph.D. led a dozen other American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science & Technology Policy Fellows on an expedition to experience the Anacostia River “up close and personal” on a two hour tour in an open skiff from the Washington Navy Yard to Bladensburg, Maryland, and back.

“The Anacostia River needs some love. ... This river does not have a reputation as a space to enjoy greenery, wildlife, and recreation. Rather, it’s been a place you don’t go. ... But things are changing.”

During the excursion, the group saw examples of these positive changes, such as newly-planted wetland vegetation, well-maintained bike trails, and improved canoe docks. They also saw evidence to the contrary, with trash continuing to be a major problem. The whole story, with photos, can be found in a [blog article](#) authored by Dr. Collins and fellow AAAS Fellow Dr. Elizabeth Zeitler (Millennium Challenge Corporation).

Dr. Collins is an environmental scientist with expertise in international relations, science policy, and public outreach. She earned a double major in Ecology and Environmental Studies at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, where she contributed to studies of soil contamination and biogeochemistry with the Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratories (CRREL, a part of ERDC) and did ecological field work in Costa Rica and southern Africa. Her doctoral research brought her to the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne, Switzerland, where her Ph.D. focused on GIS analysis and quantitative modeling of continental-scale vegetation change (and she added French and a bit of German to her Spanish skills).

Between degrees, Dr. Collins volunteered as a Student Conservation Association interpretive ranger in Sequoia National Park in California, and she led the Swiss-American academic relations team at swissnex Boston before joining USACE’s Institute for Water Resources (IWR) as a Fellow in 2015.



As the third AAAS Fellow to serve at IWR in recent years, Dr. Collins provides assistance and subject matter expertise on issues related to aquatic ecosystem restoration, environmental stewardship, and coastal resilience. By organizing events and excursions for her AAAS Fellowship colleagues

hosted at other agencies, she seeks to spread awareness of and appreciation for the challenges and opportunities associated with water resources management.

Each year, the AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowship program matches approximately 150 Ph.D.-trained scientists and engineers with Washington, D.C.-based host offices across the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the federal government. This one- to two-year experiential learning opportunity enables Fellows to contribute their scientific expertise to the policy-making process while learning firsthand about the structure and functioning of the federal government.

Learn More

For more information, visit IWR www.iwr.usace.army.mil

Blog: *The Anacostia: A River on the Mend*: www.aaaspolicyfellowships.org/blog/anacostia-river-mend

Link to AAAS Science & Technology Policy fellow program: www.aaaspolicyfellowships.org