

## Beth Prior's Gold Award: Health of Local Waterways

Beth Prior's Take Action Project educated the public and faculty at Auburn University about the health of local waterways, focusing on Parkerson Mill Creek. In addition to her Gold Award, Beth's project earned her a \$500 Earth Day Award from the National Society of High School Scholars. She was one of 10 recipients of the award, out of a field of 315 applicants.

Beth has been a Girl Scout since kindergarten, and has earned her Bronze and Silver Awards. She has traveled to Peru on an international Girl Scout destinations trip.



She recently graduated from Auburn High School and has enrolled at Auburn University, majoring in civil engineering. Her parents are Judy and Stephen Prior of Auburn.

***Please give an overview of your Gold Award Project and the steps you took to complete it.*** My Gold Award project focused on bringing awareness to the public and Auburn University about the issues of Parkerson Mill Creek: high fecal counts, erosion and litter. With the help of Alabama Water Watch, I evaluated erosion and bacteria at six different sites. I also presented my findings to Auburn University's Facilities Department in a report and in Google Earth. I set up informational tables at three major events in my town in order to reach the public.

***How did you come up with your idea?*** I had seen several newspaper articles and online articles about Parkerson Mill Creek.

***Were you intimidated by the scale of the project?*** Yes, at first. But, once I explained what I needed for the project to my project advisor, she helped me write a plan of tasks and objectives. That helped a lot.

***How did you keep up the momentum for the project?*** I like to finish anything that I start. Plus, it was a race against time since the deadline was September of 2015.

***Were you ever discouraged? If so, what did you do to overcome that?*** Sometimes when I made a to-do list for the project, I would feel overwhelmed. I just kept working. That is the only way to make the list smaller.

***Can you tell us a little story about some part of your project that was special to you?*** Probably the hardest part of the project was organizing the pictures to the right GPS coordinates for the Google Earth virtual map. One time the GPS coordinates were all wrong because I forgot to refresh the GPS. I had to go back out and redo all of the GPS coordinates.

***How will people benefit from this?*** Hopefully, my project will educate the citizens of Auburn on their local waterways. Mostly everyone thinks that Parkerson Mill Creek is just a drainage ditch. Many people do not realize that there are fish, turtles and other creatures that live in it.

***How did you feel after you finished?*** I felt like I still had to do something else.

***What advice would you give to other girls considering a Gold Award?*** Explain everything to your project advisor and then make an organized and detailed plan.

***Your Gold Project made a change for the better in your community. Did it change you?*** My project definitely exposed me to a different side of civil engineering (I plan to major in civil engineering). I got to explore the more environmental side of civil engineering. Maybe I will do something with erosion and water quality in the future.