



**PRINCE WILLIAM WATER**

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## **Prince William Water Honors Outstanding Student Scientists**

WOODBIDGE, Va. (May 13, 2025) — Prince William Water recently recognized 12 middle and high school students from Prince William County, Manassas and Manassas Park for their exceptional water- and wastewater-related projects at the 2025 Prince William-Manassas Regional Science & Engineering Fair.

Each year, Prince William Water partners with Prince William County Schools to evaluate Science & Engineering Fair entries focused on water and wastewater research. Outstanding projects are selected for Prince William Water's Organizational Awards, celebrating student excellence in environmental science and sustainability. This year's winners were honored at the May 8 Prince William Water Board of Directors meeting.

Owen Duriancik, a student at Benton Middle School, won first place in the Middle Division for his project, "The Effect of Hydrogels on Water Use and Plant Growth." His research explores how hydrogels may enhance soil moisture retention, improving plant resilience to water stress and contributing to sustainable agriculture.

In the Senior Division, Belva Fianko, Stuti Aryal and Rutvi Devani from The Governor's School at Innovation Park earned first place for their project, "Simulating Anthropogenic Environmental Stressors to Assess Their Impact on Daphnia Magna and Aquatic Ecosystem Stability." Their research examines how environmental stressors affect freshwater ecosystems, providing valuable insights into ecological stability.

"It is clear to me that the students who earned awards for this year's Science Fair entries have their fingers on the pulse of top water industry concerns and finding potential solutions.," said Prince William Water General Manager and CEO Calvin D. Farr, Jr. "I hope to one day see a few of these future-thinking, environmental stewards walking through the halls of Prince William Water."

Prince William Water remains committed to fostering young scientists and supporting research that advances water conservation and environmental protection.

### **Complete List of Winners:**

#### **Middle Division**

- **First Place:** Owen Duriancik, Benton Middle School  
Project: "The Effect of Hydrogels on Water Use and Plant Growth"
- **Second Place:** Deen Lateef, Benton Middle School  
Project: "Toxic Tides – The Devastating Impact of Heavy Metals on Aquatic Environments"
- **Third Place:** Haley Bishop, Saunders Middle School  
Project: "The Effects of Human Impacts on Water Quality"

**General Manager's Awards:** Jackson Honkus, All Saints Catholic High School  
Project: "The Effect of Chemicals on Minerals in Lake Water"

#### **Senior Division**

- **First Place:** Belva Fianko, Stuti Aryal & Rutvi Devani, The Governor's School at Innovation Park  
Project: "Simulating Anthropogenic Environmental Stressors to Assess Their Impact on Daphnia Magna and Aquatic Ecosystem Stability"
- **Second Place:** Andrew Funk & Sofia Wojcik, The Governor's School at Innovation Park  
Project: "Aerogel as a Water Purifier: A Continuation"
- **Third Place:** Abid Safwan, Osbourn Park High School  
Project: "Accessible Lead Filtration Methods"

**General Manager's Awards:** Rachel Hernandez & Natalie Wise, C.D. Hylton High School

Project: "Water Purification Techniques within the Chesapeake Area and the Importance of Using Proper Filtration"

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*Prince William Water has been providing drinking water and water reclamation services for Prince William County since 1983.*