



In an effort to involve students in hands-on science, 7th and 8th graders from the School District of the City of Erie recently spent several days in the Regional Science Consortium (RSC) Labs at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center in Erie, Pennsylvania.

The focus of their visit was water quality; defined as the overall health of a water source.

Using water gathered from Lake Erie, students learned how to plate and incubate *E. coli*, a type of bacteria. *E. coli* can present a human health hazard when found in large quantities in a water source.



"I learned that there are a lot of living things in a little speck of swamp" said one recent visitor to the RSC labs.

Using RSC lab equipment, and materials provided by COSEE Great Lakes, students also learned how to check pH, measure turbidity and used state-of-the-art microscopes to look at the many living things found in Lake Erie water. They summed up their experience like this:

- "I learned a lot of things about bacteria, and organisms and how you would use different instruments to see if it is safe to swim or safe to eat or drink".
- "I learned that our beach water is filled with bacteria, plankton, some things that aren't good for you to swim in and lots more".