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Environmental Health

Colorado State University



In the fall of 2006 I will be a senior at Colorado State University majoring in Environmental Health. Like many other Environmental Health students, this summer I have been working as an intern gaining practical knowledge in the field. I currently work for the Environmental Health and Epidemiology sector of the Hennepin County Health Department in Hopkins, MN.

I am one of two interns working on a research grant designed to give a better understanding of bacteria fluctuations in lake waters that result in beach closures during the summer months. My partner and I visit the same nine beaches every week conducting beach surveys and collecting data using a Sonde 650 (pictured). We take readings of pH, turbidity, water temperature, dissolved oxygen, etc. and also take water samples from the same location that are assessed at a lab for E. Coli levels. After data collection and dropping samples off at the lab we spend time in the office putting data into spreadsheets and working on other health related projects.



The completion of this study should allow health professionals to detect warning signs that a beach may be unsafe for the public without having to run E. Coli samples that take 24 hours. Results will be released to the public via brochures and a website that are intended to raise awareness of public beach safety. This internship has been an great experience and I would highly recommend interships before graduation for other Environmental Health majors.