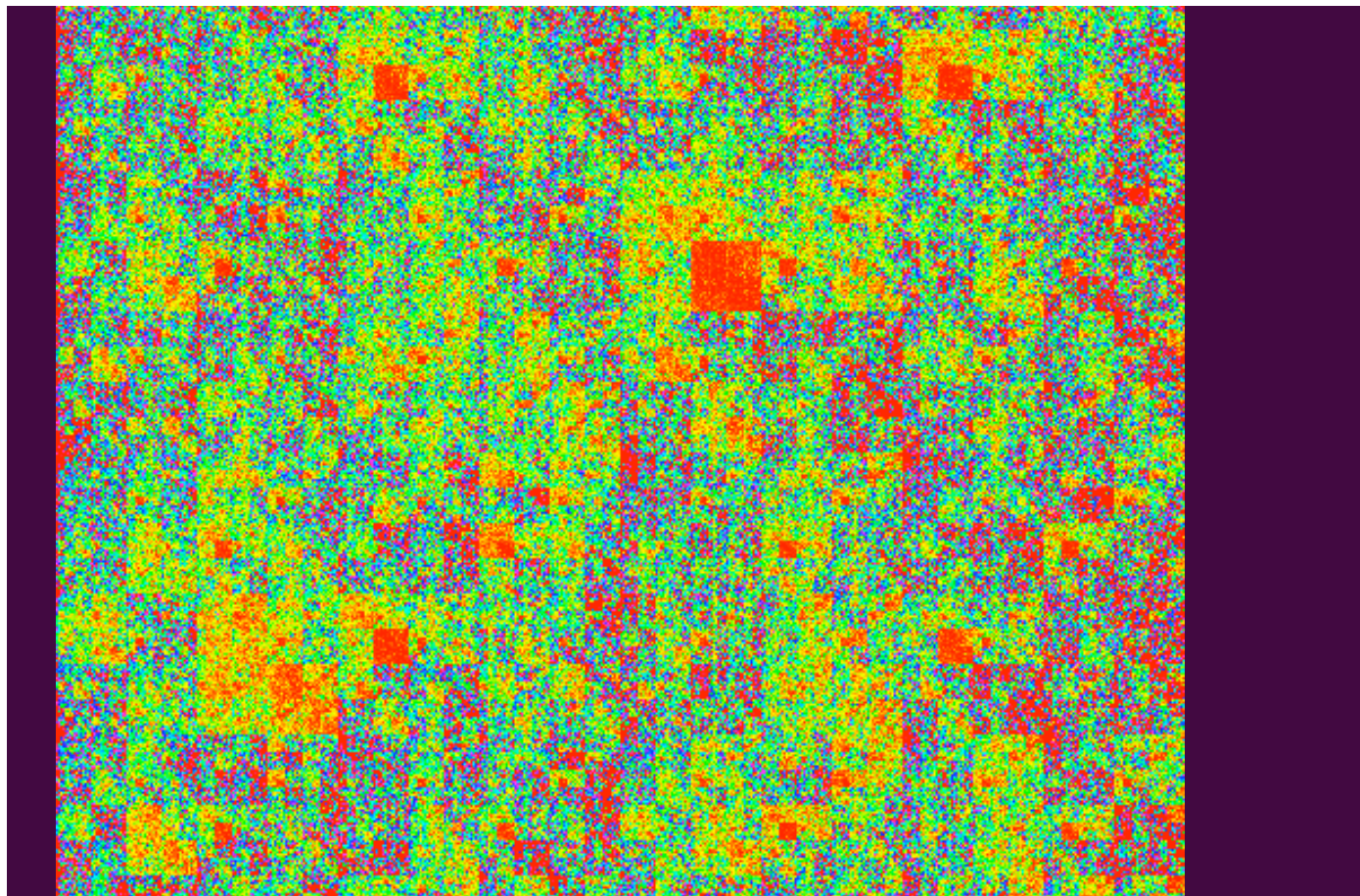


WATER DROP

Feb 2007



Modern Art? Not hardly. Modern Problem is more like it.

What you see in the picture above isn't a famous piece of art hanging in a museum in New York City. No, not at all. Actually it's a gene map of *Escherichia coli*. *E. coli* is one of the main species of bacteria found in the lower intestines of humans and other animals. It's used as an indicator organism for fecal contamination. You'd think this bacteria was a celebrity by the way it keeps popping up in the news recently.

I know. What's that have to do with your drinking water? Well believe it

or not, we are required to test for *E. coli* in the Raw Water of Drakes Creek every month.

E. coli is so prevalent, it's staggering: the number of individual *E. coli* bacteria in the feces that a human excretes in one day averages between 100 billion and 10 trillion. That is mind blowing to say the least. *E. coli* has been found in everything from peanut butter to spinach recently. Who would have ever thought *E. coli* would be found in peanut butter? Wow, peanut butter.

The "Presence" of *E. coli* numbers beyond a certain cut-off indicates fecal contamination of water and indicates further investigation into the matter.

Many factors contribute to a high number of *E. coli* in the surface water: Large and heavy rains can cause run-off of fecal contamination from pig and cattle farms and enter the reservoir. An animal can be dumped into the reservoir and contaminate the raw water with fecal. We're not trying to scare anyone, just educate them.

Odds are you have been exposed to *E. coli* and you didn't know it. You just thought you had the stomach flu.

It's extremely important to note here that *E. coli* has never been found in the City's drinking water supply. We take every measure possible to ensure your drinking water's integrity is never, ever compromised.