



The Oxbow Express

A St. Lucie County Environmental Learning Center

OCT. 2008 — JAN. 2009

Oxbow Staff

5400 N.E. St. James Drive
Pt. St. Lucie, FL 34983

(772) 785-5833

Fax 785-5834

oxbow@stlucieco.gov

www.stlucieco.gov/erd/oxbow

Sandra Bogan

Manager

bogans@stlucieco.gov

Jennifer Howard

Program Coordinator

howardj@stlucieco.gov

Veronica Berrones

Senior Staff Assistant

berronev@stlucieco.gov

The Oxbow Eco-Center is dedicated to educational programs that foster an awareness and appreciation of the natural world, an understanding of ecosystems and sustainability, and a sense of stewardship toward Florida and all its inhabitants.

A Season for Change

The Oxbow Eco-Center will start the new season with some exciting changes to the center. Our Discovery Room and Exhibit Hall will both get a new look as renovations and exhibit installations take place this Fall and Winter.



Visitors may look forward to a more interactive Discovery Room, with hands-on activity centers and new “animal condos” for our live exhibits. In the Exhibit Hall, we will complete our story of water as we welcome the sister exhibit to our current St. Lucie River display. This new exhibit will focus on the watershed and will also include a welcome desk for our wonderful volunteers and docents.



Renovations aren't the only changes planned at the Oxbow. We've also added morning and after school programming for the general public. Swamp Tales is a new program to be held every other Tuesday morning at 11:00a.m. This nature-related story time targets children ages 2 to 6 and is free of charge.

On the alternate Tuesdays, visitors will enjoy Critter Chat, an interactive program where participants meet our resident species during feeding time and learn about their role in the environment. Critter Chat takes place every other Tuesday at 3:30p.m., is open to all ages and is free of charge. Please see our enclosed calendar for more details.

And finally, Oxbow bids a fond farewell to our Education Coordinator, Wren Underwood, who is leaving the nest. In her six years of service, Wren spearheaded Oxbow's educational programming, planned public events, trained volunteers and teachers, and has shared her enthusiasm for and knowledge of nature with thousands of area residents and visitors. Through her vast network, Wren reached out to public and private schools, home school organizations, scouts, libraries, fellow-environmental centers, governmental agencies and local businesses to bring environmental education into our communities. We send her off with well wishes and many, many thanks for her enormous contribution toward making the Oxbow a jewel in our community.



Treasure Coast Green Conference Comes to Ft. Pierce

Oct 23rd...see page 2



October 23rd * 8:30am-5:00pm
Havert L. Fenn Center, Ft. Pierce

Enhance your understanding of sustainability and green development at the 2nd Annual Treasure Coast Green Conference in beautiful Fort Pierce on October 23rd. The conference will build on last year's success by bringing nationally-recognized, inspirational speakers who will share ideas and concepts that are taking root around the globe. This engaging conference, hosted by St. Lucie County and the local branch of the U.S. Green Building Council, will offer real-world examples of green development, green building, and emerging economic trends with plenty of opportunity for networking and exchanging ideas. At the conference you can expect to:

- learn about the Cradle to Cradle™ design strategy that is already changing the way business is done on a global scale,
- hear about successful approaches to green building, cost and profitability, and some of the pitfalls to avoid,
- learn how green technologies can strengthen local economies,
- understand how building green can give you the edge in a tough market,
- learn what the new state stormwater rules mean to communities and developers,
- gain knowledge on low impact development, with on-the-ground examples putting these practices into place,
- understand how transportation rules have driven poor community design and how some communities are taking back the reins,
- learn about green products that help you achieve LEED certification.

This conference will have something for everyone, so you won't want to miss it! For more information about the Treasure Coast Green Conference, or to register securely on-line, visit www.treasurecoastgreen.com.

St. Lucie County Change a Light Campaign

Make the commitment to change the world one light bulb at a time by joining the "Change A Light St. Lucie" campaign. Since April 2008, St. Lucie County residents have been changing their light bulbs and going on-line to help track the difference our community is making to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To date, 445 people have pledged to change 1,927 bulbs. This represents an energy cost savings of more than \$50,000 and eliminates almost 800,000 pounds of greenhouse gases.



If you have not changed, ask yourself why. Did you know that a Compact Fluorescent Bulb:

- Requires 75% less energy
- Generates 75% less heat that your air conditioner must work to cool
- Lasts up to 10 times longer
- Saves an average of \$30 or more over its lifetime
- Prevents 450 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions over its lifetime

If you are saying, "I've already switched!", now is the time to stand up and be counted! Visit www.stlucieco.gov/erd/change_a_light.htm to discover how to join "Change A Light St. Lucie."

MERCURY AND CFLs

Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs) contain a tiny bit of mercury sealed within the glass tubing — about 5 mg or the size that would fit on the tip of a pen. Therefore, CFLs are considered hazardous material and must be properly disposed of, by dropping them off at the St. Lucie County Recycling Facility. The good news is that CFLs usually last from 5 to 10 years, so you won't have to go too often.

Mercury is an element found naturally in the environment, however mercury emissions in the air come from both natural and man-made sources. Coal-fired power plants are the largest man-made source, accounting for roughly 40 percent of the mercury emissions in the U.S. So to use CFLs reduces power demand, which helps reduce mercury emissions from power plants.

GREEN TIP

Save money and help the environment by keeping your vehicle tuned up. A poorly maintained vehicle can increase fuel consumption by 50% and emissions by even more.

OXBOW NATURALIST TRAINING

Jan 24 & Jan 31
 12:00 noon—4:00 pm. Cost is only \$30!
 Must be at least 16 years old to attend.

Did you know that Florida has several ‘meat-eating’ plants? Can you name a Florida canine that climbs trees? Is that an insect or a tree frog ‘singing’ in the woods?

Now is your chance to learn about what’s wild and wonderful about the Florida environment. The Oxbow’s Florida Naturalist Training is designed for nature enthusiasts who are interested in learning more about our diverse flora and fauna.

The course covers basic ecological principles, local flora and fauna

and interpretation techniques. The entire training is done on Oxbow property, so participants will become familiar with the diverse habitats and trails of this 225-acre preserve.

The course consists of two Saturday afternoon sessions. Instruction will take place both inside the center and along the trails.

All participants are urged to bring water, a hat and good walking shoes. Space is limited so make your reservations today!

Oxbow's Guided Hikes Begin

Take a hike in nature and learn about our wild lands. Weekly guided hikes are held every Saturday morning at 10:00 am beginning on November 1st. Be sure to bring a hat, water and bug spray. Hikes are FREE.



Wake-Up Call Lecture Series

These lectures are free and open to the public

November 1, 11:00am

A Journey down the St. Lucie River
 Dr. Grant Gilmore

As one of the most diverse rivers in North America, the St. Lucie River is a local and national treasure. Join Dr. Grant Gilmore, a leading expert on the biodiversity of the St. Lucie, as he takes us on a visual journey down the river.

December 6, 11:00am

South Florida Eco-Art Project
 Mary Jo Agerstoun

The rapidly developing practice of eco-art springs from, and combines, aspects of three main contemporary art movements: environmental art, activist art and community engagement or “animation” art. Come learn what it’s all about!

January 3, 11:00am

Green Investing
 Sandra Stiger

Choosing investment strategies can be complicated, and even more so for folks who would like to choose environmentally friendly options. Join Sandra of Merrill Lynch and learn how to be savvy with your money while supporting green business ventures.

Nature at Night



Busch Wildlife Sanctuary will swoop in with their famous owls on January 30th to kick off the Oxbow’s Nature at Night series. This is your chance to learn about these fascinating birds and how they are able to find their prey — even in complete darkness.

It’s also your chance to experience the Oxbow trails at night as we take our feathered friends out on a hike to see if we can call in others of their kind from the wild.

Nature at Night begins at 6:30 pm. Be sure to sign up early as these programs are popular and often sell-out ahead of time. Ticket cost is \$5 per person and must be purchased in advance either on-site or by phone with a Visa or MasterCard. Tickets are non-refundable, but may be transferred to other individuals.



Giving Wildlife a Hand

With St. Lucie County's human populations more than doubling over the past two decades, much of our native wildlife is struggling to find new territory — sometimes in our own backyards. Why not plant native trees, shrubs and ground cover to provide small greenspaces for wildlife? If your property is large, consider putting a conservation easement over part of it and keep it natural.

Most folks have the best intentions to aid displaced or slightly injured wildlife, but often times the animal has a better chance of surviving on its own. Here are some guidelines you can use to determine if an animal needs help:

As in any emergency situation, if you find an animal that seems injured, displaced or in danger, the first thing you should do is survey the area. Put all dogs and cats inside or away from the animal immediately.

If the animal is not obviously injured or in immediate danger, observe it from a safe and non-threatening distance. Be sure the animal needs your help before displacing it. It's better to let an animal find new territory on its own. If you're not sure the animal needs help, call a wildlife rehabilitator.

If it's a baby bird or squirrel, look in the surrounding trees for a nest. Place the bird or squirrel back in the nest if possible. If the nest is too high, you can place the animal in a wicker basket or box with pine needles on a branch as high as you can reach in the same tree. It's okay if the parent sees you touch the baby. Keep observing it to see if its parent returns. Be patient, it may take a while. And remember, young wildlife always fare better when raised by their parents. If the animal seems abandoned, call a wildlife rehabilitator.

While raccoons are nocturnal animals, you may see a mother raccoon out during the day in search of food. Observe the animal to see if it is acting strangely or has a discharge from its eyes or nose. If so, it may be rabid. Call 911 for animal control. Remember, raccoons have razor-sharp claws and teeth, so let trained professionals trap the animal for testing.

If the animal is in immediate danger or obviously injured, consider helping it. Call a rehabilitator for advice. It's of utmost importance for you to keep yourself safe ... injured animals will often display erratic behavior and are frequently aggressive due to pain and fear.



WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS AND EMERGENCY NUMBERS:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC)

Emergency Wildlife Alert

Hotline # 888-404-3922

www.floridaconservation.org

If you see any listed species (e.g. gopher tortoise, Sandhill Crane, etc.) that is injured or in danger, call the FFWCC Hotline immediately.

Busch Wildlife Sanctuary

561-575-3399

www.buschwildlife.com

2500 Jupiter Park Dr.

Jupiter, FL 33458

Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital

772-286-6200

www.tcwh.org

8438 SW 48th Ave.

Palm City, FL 34990

Wildlife Rehabilitation and Refuge Center

772-221-1231; pager: 772-335-6606 (Palm City)

Creature Safe Place

772-468-6616 (Ft. Pierce)

St. Lucie County Animal Control

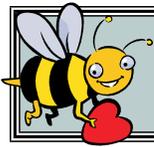
772-871-5042

Martin County Animal Control

772-287-1656

Also Check out:

[Http://www.wildliferehabber.org](http://www.wildliferehabber.org)



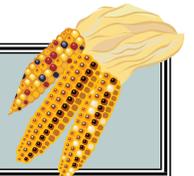
October 2008



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Monthly Theme: Pollinators ~ Wildlife Tip ~ When encountering stinging insects like bees and wasps, remain calm and move slowly away to avoid a painful sting!			1	2 Audubon 7 pm	3	4 Oxbow Naturalist Training Volunteers Only
5	6	7 Swamp Tales 11:00 am	8 Volunteer BROWN BAG LUNCH <i>The Garden Buzz</i> 11:30 am	9	10	11 Nature for Families Pollinators 12:30 pm - \$3
12	13	14 CRITTER CHAT 3:30 pm	15	16	17	18 <i>River Kayak</i> 9:00 am - \$15
19	20	21	22	23 Treasure Coast Green Conference at Fenn Center RSVP	24	25 New Volunteer Orientation 3-4 pm
26 	27	28 Swamp Tales 11:00 am	29	30	31 	



November 2008

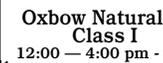
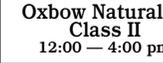


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Monthly Theme: Survival ~ Wilderness Tip ~ Always carry water & stay hydrated when hiking in the Florida heat.						1 Nature Hike 10:00 am Lecture Series 11:00 am
2 	3	4 CRITTER CHAT 3:30 pm	5 	6 Audubon 7 pm	7	8 Nature Hike 10:00 am Nature for Families <i>Lost in the Woods</i> 12:30 pm - \$3
9	10	11 Veteran's Day County Offices Closed	12 Volunteer BROWN BAG LUNCH <i>Geocaching</i> 11:30 am	13	14	15 Nature Hike 10:00 am <i>River Kayak</i> 9:00 am - \$15
16	17	18 Swamp Tales 11:00 am	19	20	21	22 Nature Hike 10:00 am New Volunteer Orientation 3-4 pm
23 30	24	25 CRITTER CHAT 3:30 pm	26	27 Happy Thanksgiving County Offices Closed	28 County Offices Closed	29 Nature Hike 10:00 am

December 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2  Swamp Tales 11:00 am	3	4 Audubon 7 pm	5	6 Nature Hike 10:00 am  Lecture Series 11:00 am
7	8	9  CRITTER CHAT 3:30 pm	10 Volunteer BROWN BAG LUNCH Natural Gifts 11:30 am	11	12	13 Nature Hike 10:00 am  Nature for Families Holiday Crafts 12:30 pm - \$3
14	15	16  Swamp Tales 11:00 am	17	18	19	20 Nature Hike 10:00 am River Kayak 9:00 am - \$15 
21	22  Hanukkah	23  CRITTER CHAT 3:30 pm	24	25  Christmas County Offices Closed	26  Kwanzaa County Offices Closed	27 Nature Hike 10:00 am  New Volunteer Orientation 3-4 pm
28	29	30  Swamp Tales 11:00 am	31  New Year's Eve	Monthly Theme: 'Tis the Season ~ Green Tip ~ Did you know 80% of the things we buy end up in the landfill within 6 months? Be good to the Earth and recycle your wrapping paper.		

January 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Monthly Theme: Flying Predators ~ Wildlife Tip ~ Start the year by thinking of ways you can make a home for wildlife in your yard. Use native plants and add bird boxes and bird baths.				1  New Years Day County Offices Closed	2	3 Nature Hike 10:00 am  Lecture Series 11:00 am
4	5	6  CRITTER CHAT 3:30 pm	7 Volunteer BROWN BAG LUNCH Owls 11:30 am	8	9	10 Nature Hike 10:00 am  Nature for Families Adaptations 12:30 pm - \$3
11	12	13  Swamp Tales 11:00 am	14	15	16	17 Nature Hike 10:00 am River Kayak 9:00 am - \$15 
18	19	20  CRITTER CHAT 3:30 pm	21	22	23	24 Nature Hike 10:00 am  Oxbow Naturalist Class I 12:00 — 4:00 pm - \$30
25	26	27  Swamp Tales 11:00 am	28	29	30  Nature at Night Owls 6:30 am - \$5	31 Nature Hike 10:00 am  Oxbow Naturalist Class II 12:00 — 4:00 pm



This year, the Oxbow will provide field excursions for school groups in three themes: Watershed, Ecology, and Fauna. Your excursion will start with an introduction to the Oxbow, and will be followed by a one-hour program. Depending on your topic, programs may be taught outdoors or in the center.

School Field Trips

After your program, teachers are welcome to take students on a hike through the forest. Teachers will receive a trail orientation prior to the hike. However, to ensure a high comfort level, we



recommend that, prior to their field trips, teachers join one of our weekly guided hikes held every Saturday morning at 10:00am. Group visits must be pre-arranged, with a chaperone to student ratio of 10 to 1. For more information on field trips, check our website at www.stlucieco.gov/erd/oxbow or e-mail oxbow@stlucieco.gov.



VOLUNTEER CORNER

Become an Oxbow Volunteer

Volunteers are the heart of the Oxbow Eco-Center, acting as docents and trail guides, teaching programs, maintaining our trails, promoting the center at offsite events, and much more!



Volunteers receive training about the center's exhibits and resident animals and learn about our natural lands. As a volunteer, you're also invited to our numerous "volunteer only" events and outings. Join the Oxbow family and become a volunteer today!

New Volunteer Orientation

New this year: every fourth Saturday at 3:00 p.m. the Oxbow will hold an Orientation for new volunteers who have submitted their application and

been approved by the County. At this mandatory orientation, volunteers will receive a 'toolkit,' a behind the scenes tour of the center, and the background information needed to get started. Contact Jen Howard at howardj@stlucieco.gov or (772) 785-5842 for more information.



Brown Bag Lunch!

Bring your lunch and open your mind at our volunteer brown bag lunches, held on the second Wednesday of each month from 11:30am — 12:30pm. Enjoy the company of fellow volunteers and Oxbow staff as a new topic is presented each month to build your environmental I.Q.

Thank you Volunteers!

Thanks to all volunteers who helped with summer weekend coverage and programs. Our Junior Naturalist Camp, Nature Art Camp, Nature for



Families, and Creature Features for local youth were a huge success! A special thanks to volunteer extraordinaire

Joe Richards who modified our turtle enclosure so that Squirtle the Box Turtle can now play outside! Be sure to check out her new playpen next time you stop by.

A special thanks also to Elaine Zuniga for her commitment to lead our monthly programs for mentally challenged adults.





A St. Lucie County Environmental Learning Center

NEWSLETTER & CALENDAR OCT 08 thru JAN 09

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Port St. Lucie, FL 34983



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Nature for Families

Family time where learning and
fun go together

Please register in advance

Sensational Seeds

October 11th, 12:30pm

An acorn contains all the potential of a majestic oak. In this way, seeds are like tiny packages of magic! Come learn all about these small wonders and plant some of your own to take home. Appropriate for all ages. \$3/participant.

Lost in the Woods

November 8th, 12:30pm

Join us as we learn some survival skills in the Oxbow woods. All participants need to be accompanied by an adult. We will be spending all of our time outside so please be prepared for all that the weather has to offer. Appropriate for ages 8 and up. \$3/participant.

Eco-Holiday Crafts

December 13th, 12:30

Release your crafty side and join us to make some cool holiday crafts. While enjoying your time as an artist extraordinaire, all participants are welcome to help trim the Oxbow tree. Appropriate for all ages. \$3/participant.

Adaptations

January 10th, 12:30

Discover the amazing ways animals and plants are adapted to their environment in this interactive, game-filled program. Appropriate for ages 6 and up. \$3/participant.