



The Oxbow Eco-Center Mission

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.



5400 NE St. James Drive, Port St. Lucie, FL 34983

HOURS OF OPERATION:

Trails: Dawn – Dusk 7 days a week

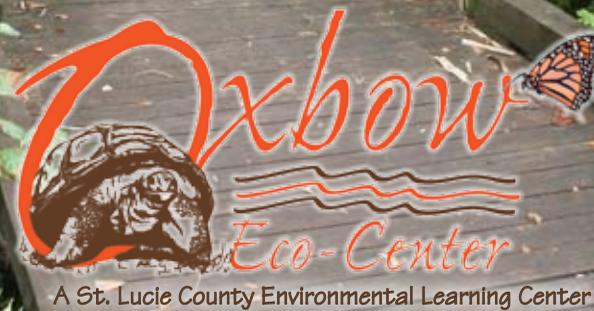
Center: Tues. – Fri. 12 noon to 5 pm

Sat. 10 am to 5 pm

(772) 785-5833

www.stlucieco.gov/erd/oxbow

TRAIL MAP INSIDE



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WELCOME TO THE OXBOW ECO-CENTER

The Oxbow Eco-Center is situated on a 225-acre preserve on the North Fork of the St. Lucie River and offers a rare glimpse of “the real Florida” – a place where the past and the present come alive in the canopy of the floodplain forest, in the sandy soils of the scrub and pine flatwoods, and in the primordial swamps and wetlands.

A St. Lucie County Environmental Learning Center, the Oxbow Eco-Center is a place where young and old alike can discover the mysterious and hidden life of the forest and river. The preserve at the Oxbow is a living laboratory, offering year round educational programs on a variety of nature related subjects. At the Oxbow, you can join a naturalist on

a guided walk through quiet gardens planted and nurtured by Mother Nature herself, or journey on your own through the verdant and wild sanctuary.



In a partnership between St. Lucie County and the South Florida Water Management District, the property was purchased using Environmentally Significant Lands and Save Our Rivers funding respectively. The land is managed and preserved to sustain its native wildlife, utilizing boardwalks, trails,

bridges, and observation towers that allow visitors to fully experience nature without disrupting it. There is no charge to visit the Center, view the exhibits, or hike the trails.

VISITING THE CENTER



The Center houses an Exhibit Hall and Discovery Room, which invite you to use all of your senses ... touching artifacts, listening to bird songs, and seeing some of Florida’s native reptiles up-close.

Our Centerpiece Exhibit takes you on a wondrous journey down the St. Lucie River, one of the most diverse rivers in the state, with more species of fish than any other river in Florida. The life-size exhibit gives you a unique view of this underwater world as you travel from the river’s genesis to the Atlantic Ocean. You’ll encounter dozens of fish species, numerous turtles and crustaceans, and even a life-size manatee with her calf, as you traverse both the freshwater system and the rich estuary.

You’ll also learn about the land and habitat that surround the river as you gaze up through a created water line to view native Florida plants and animals, including nearly a dozen species of birds.

It’s an experience you won’t want to miss! Be sure to check out our website for our calendar of events.



BUILDING GREEN ... BEING GREEN



The Oxbow teaches by example! The Center was constructed using ‘green building technologies,’ and is a model for sustainability. Passive light design, solar panels, recycled and recyclable materials were used in the Center’s construction. In addition, a cistern system captures rainfall to flush the toilets, and the floors are made from salvaged pine trees lost in the St. Johns River in the early logging days. The building is proof that each of us can lighten our load on the planet and protect our precious natural resources for future generations to come.

Know Before You Go ...

RULES OF THE FOREST

- Trails close at dusk and open at dawn.
- Please stay on the established trails.
- The trails on this property are hiking trails only. Please do not use bicycles or motorized vehicles. Wheelchairs and strollers are welcome. Check with staff for information on our “fat tire” wheelchair.
- It is unlawful to harass or kill wildlife on this property. Harvesting of animal or plant life, including flowers, seeds, and foliage, is prohibited.
- Please do not feed wildlife on this property, and NEVER feed alligators.
- Dogs are permitted only if they are picked up after and kept on a leash. Bags are available at the trail head.
- Visitors use this site at their own risk.

SAFETY TIPS

- Hike with good walking shoes, water, a hat, and a map.
- Watch for orange blazes on the “orange” Scrub Jay Trail.
- Wild animals will generally only become aggressive if they feel threatened, including alligators, feral hogs and rattlesnakes. Observe wildlife from a respectful distance.



Printed on Post-Consumer or Tree-Free Paper with soy based inks



The Oxbow has a series of trails totaling about three miles, from the 1/2 mile Gopher Tortoise-Blue Heron Loop to the approximately 1 mile Blue Heron Trail.