



**The Oxbow Eco-Center** cultivates knowledge, nurtures a sense of wonder, and inspires stewardship for the natural world through education, artistic expression, collaboration, volunteerism and celebration.



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

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**

Trails: Dawn – Dusk 7 days a week  
Center: Tuesday – Friday 12noon to 5pm  
Saturday 10am to 5pm

**(772) 785-5833**

[www.oxboweco.com](http://www.oxboweco.com)

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# 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.



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## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO ...

- Trails close at dusk and open at dawn.
- Please stay on established trails.
- The trails on this property are **HIKING ONLY**. Please do not use bicycles or motorized vehicles.
- The **SCRUB-JAY TRAIL\*\*** gets muddy and may become unpassable.
- The **OTTER TRAIL\*\*** along the river is a dead end and does not loop back to the Oxbow forest. It has uneven terrain and can be challenging for some.
- Wheelchairs and strollers are welcome. Check with staff for information on our “fat fire” wheelchair.

## RULES OF THE FOREST

- ⚠ It's the **LAW** – Dogs must be kept on a leash **AT ALL TIMES**. You are also required to pick up after your dog. You will lose the privilege of bringing your dog on-site if you do not adhere to this policy.
- ⚠ It's the **LAW** – Do not touch, harass or kill wildlife on this property. Harvesting of animal or plants, including flowers, seeds, and pine cones is prohibited and strictly enforced.
- ⚠ Do not feed wildlife on this property, and **NEVER** feed alligators, as it endangers everyone when you do so.
- ⚠ Visitors use this site at their own risk.

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The Oxbow Eco-Center has a series of trails totaling about 3 1/2 miles. You'll find numbered boxes [#] correlate to numbered posts along the way.