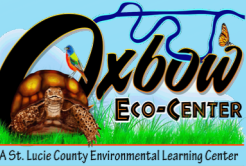


OUT & ABOUT



- Let's pick up after each other. If everyone picked up a few pieces of trash during their daily routine, we would have a much cleaner landscape for ourselves and wildlife to enjoy. Take it a step further and work with Adopt-a-Road and other local organization to participate in a clean up event!
- Florida has an average of 1.6 dogs per household. That is a lot of poop getting into our rivers, lakes and oceans if we don't pick up after them. Be a responsible pet owner to help keep excess nutrients and disease out of our waterways!
- 65% of cigarette butts are left on the ground, and they are not biodegradable! Find a nearby ash tray or trash can to keep them away from wildlife.
- Bring a reusable container when you eat out or ask for aluminum! Styrofoam takes a lot of water and energy to make, is not accepted by most recycling facilities, goes straight to the dump after a single use, and does not biodegrade.
- Ask your favorite restaurants to be a part of educating the public and ending one-time use materials made from plastic. Instead of automatically handing out straws, ask them to place signs that straws are available upon request. This can save them money and highlight their business ethic of supporting a healthy community.



How will YOU become a St. Lucie WATER CHAMPION?

I pledge to...

- ... keep my yard clippings out of the road and away from storm drains!
- ... pick up my pet's waste!
- ... plant more native plants in my yard!
- ... pick up litter I see on the ground!
- ... turn off my sprinklers during the wet season (May-September)!
- ... follow local fertilizer ordinances!
- ... sign up for a St. Lucie County **Water Champions Training** at the Oxbow Eco-Center!

Signature _____

Take The Pledge! BECOME A ST. LUCIE WATER CHAMPION

26 Ways to Help Our Water



Just because it disappears,
doesn't mean it goes away!

The Oxbow Eco-Center
5400 NE St. James Drive
Port St. Lucie, FL 34983
(772) 785-5833
oxbow@stlucieco.org
www.oxboweco.com



Easy Ways to Help Our Water!

OUR HOMES

Dispose of Waste Properly

- Fat from cooking or any other type of fat, oil, or grease should not be poured down the drain. Let it cool and place it in the trash.
- Household chemicals or cleaning agents should not be poured down the drain. These chemicals are difficult to filter out of drinking water and can be harmful to aquatic life. Contact the County Solid Waste Dept. to learn more, or save it for the city's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day.
- The same goes for medications! They're also difficult to filter from our drinking water. When disposing of them in the trash, ensure they are securely contained. Many police stations will also dispose of them for free!
- Fiber reinforced cleaning products like many tissues, wrappers, and dust cloths are also not meant to be flushed. They can clog up both septic and sewer systems and are best thrown in the garbage.

Use Less Water & Detergents

- In the US, we are lucky to have easily accessible water. It is pumped up from our aquifer and cleaned to make it suitable for human consumption. Many people around the world don't have it so easy. They must transport all the water they need in buckets. So, the next time you turn on the faucet, cherish, save and reuse water as if you had to carry it yourself!
- Run the dishwasher or clothes washer only when you have a full load. These are both major consumers of water in our household.
- Upgrade your toilet to an energy efficient one. In the meantime, you can put a brick or 1/2 gal container in the standard toilet tank to reduce water use per flush.
- Use the minimum amount of detergent and/or bleach when you are washing clothes or dishes to keep these chemicals out of our waterways. Shop for phosphate free soaps and detergents.

Get to Know Your Septic System

- Septic systems that are not maintained properly can leak nutrients and bio-hazards into our ground water. Remember to have your septic system pumped annually to minimize seepage.
- If you're on centralized sewer, there's still an impact to the environment. Sewer systems have a byproduct – called bio-solids or sludge – that creates another set of issues for our water resources.

OUR WASTE

Eliminate Plastics

- Plastic has become a major problem in the environment, especially our waterways. They can take up to 1000 years to break down! Even when they do, small particles of plastic – called micro-plastics – remain in the water column, are consumed by aquatic wildlife, and end up in our seafood.
- Find reusable alternatives to single use plastics (SUPs). These products are used only once, and are typically not easily recycled. Refuse that straw! Bring your own shopping bag! With a little forethought, we can easily reduce our use of SUPs!
- Glitter and confetti are also single use plastic that are not recyclable. They are almost impossible to clean up. Look for organic, sustainable alternatives!
- Hold onto your balloons! Things that go up must come down and usually end up in our oceans and natural areas. They can trap and entangle wildlife, making balloon releases less magical than in the movies.

Use Your Purchasing Power

- Consider before you buy: Where was it made? What is it made out of? How long will it last? Is it a one-time use? Do I really need it?
- Challenge yourself to see how LITTLE trash you create each week, including recycled materials. Recycling is important, but not creating waste is better!

OUTDOORS

Don't Work So Hard In Your Yard

- Minimize or eliminate fertilizers & pesticides in your landscaping. Anything we put on the ground will make its way to our waterways. Use them according to the label, follow local fertilizer laws, and plant a buffer zone between your yard and nearby water bodies.
- Go Native! Native plants are adapted to our local climate and soils. They look great and require little maintenance, water, fertilizer and pesticides. They help attract native birds, butterflies, and other wildlife!
- Keep grass clippings away from the road and storm drains. Spread them on your lawn as a natural fertilizer!

Be Green In the Garage

- Keep your car tuned up and the tires aligned and balanced. Not only will you save on gas and serious maintenance, you'll put less pollution on our roads and in the atmosphere.
- Green-up your boat! Keep your boat tuned up, take care in pumping out sewage, and contain any litter created during your fun day on the water. Use absorbent pads or donuts to contain oil and gas leaks around bilges, under engines and when fueling. Let's keep our coastal waters clean for everyone to enjoy.