

Oxbow Park

The over 620 acres of Oxbow Park offer almost any outdoor enthusiast a chance to pursue his or her favorite activity. Park facilities include 4 different picnic areas, 6 separate picnic shelters, and playground equipment. All of the picnic shelters are available on a first come, first served basis. Reservations are not required and there is no rental fee for using a shelter.

Nearly eight miles of developed trails wind through the meadows and wooded hills of Oxbow Park providing visitors with a variety of options for hiking. Oxbow Park is renowned for its splendid beauty and natural history. A hike during any time of the year promises to be a delightful experience. These trails are well maintained and marked for your convenience. Trail head maps are posted, and additional maps can be picked up at the nature center.



Campers can enjoy a weekend or weekday at the Oxbow campground. This semi-primitive area has 29 campsites available, running water, restrooms, and showers. There are 10 electrical sites, 3 of these are ADA accessible. The campground also has playground equipment. Youth groups can utilize Oxbow's group camp for overnight and day camp activities for a nominal fee (inquire at park office).

Due to the potential threat of disease associated with an insect called the Emerald Ash Borer, Olmsted County Parks can no longer allow firewood to enter park property. As a result, all firewood must be purchased on the premises. We apologize for any inconvenience this might cause. Our obligation is to protect your park environment!

Please contact a staff member if you are interested in learning more about this serious threat to our Ash Tree population.



Zollman Zoo and Animal Shelter

The Dr. Paul E. Zollman Zoo houses over 30 native Minnesota animal species, including mammals, birds of prey, and reptiles. Most of these animals are permanently injured or are surplus from other facilities, and therefore can never be released to the wild. These beautiful creatures provide countless opportunities for learning and personal enjoyment, and are utilized in Oxbow's environmental education program. The zoo was named in honor of Dr. Paul E. Zollman, in recognition of his dedication to Olmsted County parks and his help in the care of the animals.

Zollman Zoo has become the center of Oxbow's education program. Thousands of students visit the zoo each year and participate in lessons offered by the park staff and volunteers. Public programs are offered on weekends and evenings throughout the year, and provide nature lovers with a wide selection of activities. Topics and activities vary from season to season but all of them allow guests the opportunity to learn more about the natural world. A schedule of these activities is always



available at the nature center, or one may call the park for the latest program information.

Across the road from the zoo proper lies the Gordon Yeager Memorial Area. The Yeager area features the zoo's large hoofed stock, which includes bison, elk, and white-tail deer. A restored prairie, pioneer home, and antique farm implement display offer guests a glimpse into our region's past.

The zoo offers children and adults alike a chance to observe at close range some of the native animals of this area and to see, perhaps for the first time, some of the less common species. There is no fee required to visit the zoo, and many folks come out to "their" zoo time and time again. Each visit promises a new sight, a new experience!

Oxbow Nature Center

Completed in December, 1981, Oxbow Nature Center offers expanded educational and recreational programs and activities. School groups now participate in structured environmental education programs during each season of the year, covering not only animal life, but natural history, outdoor recreation skills, and ecology. The building includes a class area, an exhibit of some of the more common snakes of the region, and displays and artifacts associated with our natural world. The expanded experiences provided by the addition of this building to existing park facilities allows groups and individuals more ways to enjoy the natural world.





History and Development of Oxbow Park

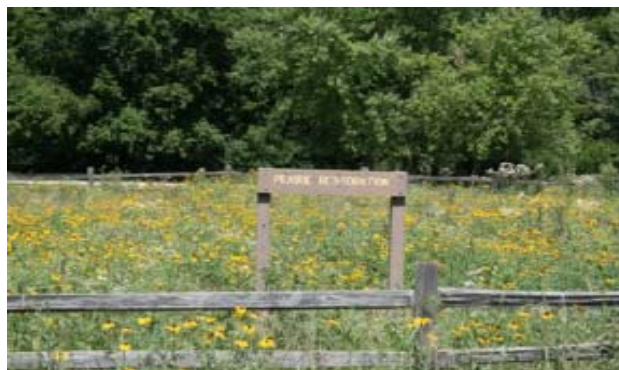
The idea of a new park for Olmsted County was fostered by the Olmsted County Park Board and residents of the park area. The initial 465 acres of land were purchased in 1967. Located in the Zumbro River Valley, the area offered ideal recreational opportunities. A large bend in the river, called an “oxbow” because of its resemblance to an ox yoke, gave the park its name. This “oxbow” has been preserved through bank stabilization and now surrounds the main picnic area.

During the years since 1967, the park has been transformed from farm fields into a beautifully preserved area. A zoo was established in 1969 with the donation of native Minnesota animals from John Gilbertson, the regional game warden at that time. This zoo is now an integral part of park activities. In 1974, an additional 107 acres north of the park were purchased, protecting the park from future development.

A long time park advocate, Dr. David Donald, donated 52 acres to Oxbow in 1998 bringing the total size of the

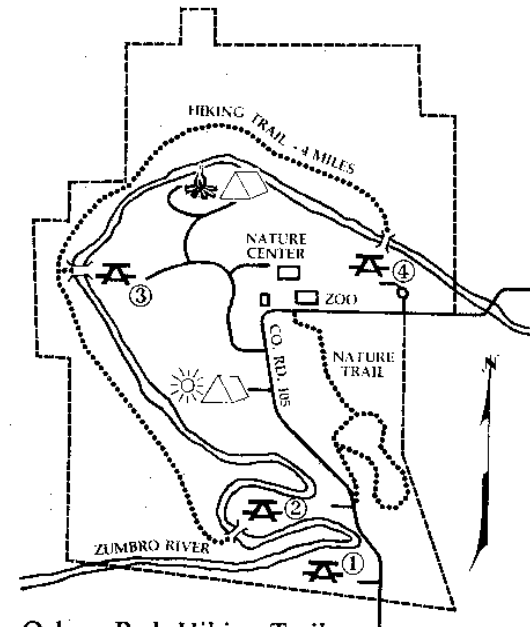
park to 620 acres. A nature center, completed in December, 1981, is located near the zoo. This facility expands both programming potential and work capabilities at the park and offers additional exhibit areas for public use.

The uniqueness of Oxbow Park is found in the amount of public participation and support it has received since its founding. The dedication of park visitors to its well-being has made Oxbow a favorite spot for many in southeastern Minnesota.



Olmsted County's Oxbow Park

Located 3 1/2 miles north of Byron, Minnesota on County Road 105. A unique 620 acre park facility.



Oxbow Park Hiking Trails and Picnic Areas



Park Hours

Open Daily, 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Nature Center & Zollman Zoo Hours

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Closed: Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years and Easter Days

OXBOW PARK

5731 County Road 105 NW
Byron Minnesota 55920
507.775.2451

www.co.olmsted.mn.us

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Olmsted County Public Works Staff

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OXBOW PARK

Byron, Minnesota

Open Year Round!



MISSION STATEMENT OLMSTED COUNTY PARKS

The mission of Olmsted County Parks is to foster an appreciation of the natural world through environmental education, natural resource management, and public participation in the stewardship of our park lands.

VISION

Learning life-long lessons in natural places.

Oxbow Nature Center and Zollman Zoo

Open Daily 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

