

## **Mound House Upcoming Outdoor Nature & Education Events: February 11 to 20, 2021**

By Gary Mooney  
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With Valentine's Day right around the corner, if your beloved is sweet on history, take him or her to the historic Mound House on Fort Myers Beach! Even if history is not their passion, the gardens on the 2.77-acre Mound House estate, right on the scenic Estero Bay, are the ideal setting for that hand-in-hand romantic stroll!

The Mound House debuts a new family outdoor adventure program, the "Fishing Rancho Outside Guided Tour," on Tuesday, February 16, at 2 p.m. Other highlights include the free Caloosa Carvers Woodcarving Demonstration on Tuesday, February 16, from 9 a.m. to Noon and "Sunset Kayak Tour" on Friday, February 12, at 4:30 p.m.

One of Southwest Florida's most iconic historic attractions, the Mound House traces its roots back to the ancient Calusa of over 2,000 years ago. The Town of Fort Myers Beach operates the Mound House as a museum complex and cultural and environmental learning center that offers numerous educational programs each month, including for children, with Center for Disease Control (CDC) precautions." For more information on the above events as well as a complete monthly programs schedule, call 239-765-0865 or see [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org).

The oldest standing structure on Estero Island, the Mound House is open Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. All visitors must wear masks, with CDC and Social Distancing guidelines in place. It is at 451 Connecticut Street with overflow parking at 216 Connecticut. Admission is \$10 for ages 13 & up, \$8 for students with IDs, \$5 ages 6 to 12, and 5 & under free, with Town residents receiving a 50% discount.

### **Thursday, February 11: FREE "Newton Beach Park Guided Beach Walk":**

All ages weather permitting at 9 a.m.

This twice-weekly free outdoor nature program is different every single time, as the "Guided Beach Walks" have a simple premise – the groups walk roughly a half-mile down the beach and back, discussing whatever you find that particular morning, with the wind and waves dictating what comes up each day. Meet at the thatched hut closest to the beach, with CDC and Social Distancing in place and face masks mandatory. In addition to your face mask, bring sunscreen, shoes to get wet, sunglasses, and hat. No reservations necessary; while free, parking is \$3-per-hour, with one hour generally enough. Newton Beach Park is mid-island at 4650 Estero Boulevard.

### **Thursday, February 11: "Shell Mound" Outside Guided Tour, all ages at 11 a.m.**

If you dig archaeology, this program is for you! Tour the 2,000-year-old Calusa Indian Shell Mound led by the Mound House Interpretive Staff as you explore the archaeology of the site while unearthing clues about this ancient society. All participants over the age

of 6 must wear a mask. \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission; Mound House members free.

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**Friday, February 12: “Mangroves by Kayak Tour”:**

Ages 12 & up weather permitting at 9 a.m.

Explore the winding mangrove creeks and hidden waters of the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve as only a kayaker can on this Environmental Educator-guided tour of the ancient realm of the Calusa! Witness birds, fish, manatee and dolphins as you paddle through the natural beauty of Estero and Hell Peckney Bays in a tandem kayak. All paddling & safety equipment provided, with kayak tours in accordance with Florida Society of Ethical Ecotourism guidelines. \$45-per-person; Mound House members \$15. Advance reservations necessary; private tours available. CDC and Social Distancing guidelines in place & all participants must wear a mask on land. 8 paddlers per tour.

**Friday, February 12: “Sunset Kayak Tour”:**

Ages 12 & up weather permitting at 4:30 p.m.

People travel from all over the nation and world to marvel at Fort Myers Beach sunsets, but not many get to do so by kayak! In addition to catching a breathtaking sunset, explore the tidal creeks and winding mangrove tunnels that extend into the hidden backwaters of Estero Bay while experiencing the estuary’s abundant wildlife in the quiet of twilight in accordance with the Florida Society for Ethical Ecotourism guidelines. The Mound House provides all paddling and safety equipment, with CDC and Social Distancing in place; all participants must wear masks on land. \$45-per-person; Mound House Members \$15. A maximum of 8 paddlers per tour, with private tours available.

**Saturday, February 13: “Mangroves by Kayak Tour”:**

Ages 12 & up weather permitting at 9 a.m.

Explore the winding mangrove creeks and hidden waters of the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve as only a kayaker can on this Environmental Educator-guided tour of the ancient realm of the Calusa! Experience birds, fish, manatee and dolphins as you paddle through the natural beauty of Estero and Hell Peckney Bays in a tandem kayak. All paddling & safety equipment provided, with kayak tours in accordance with Florida Society of Ethical Ecotourism guidelines. \$45-per-person that includes Mound House admission; Mound House members \$15. Advance reservations necessary; private tours

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**Saturday, February 13: “Family Fun Kayak Tour”:**

Ages 6 & up weather permitting at 1 p.m.

Fun for the whole family on a specially-designed Environmental Educator-guided kayak tour! See birds, dolphins, manatee, and other wildlife while paddling through the Estero Bay mangroves. Your family must have children between the ages of 6 to 11 to qualify, with advance registration necessary. \$25-per-person age 13 & up; \$15-per-person ages 6 to 12 that includes Mound House admission. The Mound House provides all equipment, with CDC and Social Distancing in place; all participants must wear a mask on land. Maximum of 8 people per program.

**Saturday, February 13: “Shell Mound” Outside Guided Tour**, all ages at 2 p.m.

If you dig archaeology, this program is for you! Tour the 2,000-year-old Calusa Indian Shell Mound led by the Mound House Interpretive Staff as you explore the archaeology of the site while unearthing clues about this ancient society. All participants over the age of 6 must wear a mask. \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission; Mound House members free.

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**Tuesday, February 16: FREE “Caloosa Carvers” Woodcarving Demonstrations:**

All ages weather permitting from 9 a.m. to Noon.

Join the “Caloosa Carvers” on the Mound House grounds for free woodcarving demonstrations featuring several Calusa culture replica artifacts.

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**Tuesday, February 16: NEW “Fishing Rancho Outside Guided Tour”:**

All ages at 2 p.m.

The perfect program for Florida history buffs! Learn about the Latino fishing village known as a “Rancho” that existed on the shell mound between the ancient Calusa and Anglo-Pioneer eras. Explore the site’s archaeology and history through the unearthed clues about this multicultural society. All participants over the age of 6 must wear masks and everyone will observe CDC guidelines. \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission.

**Wednesday, February 17: “Mangroves by Kayak Tour”:**

Ages 12 & up weather permitting at 9 a.m.

Explore the winding mangrove creeks and hidden waters of the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve as only a kayaker can on this Environmental Educator-guided tour of the ancient realm of the Calusa! Witness birds, fish, manatee and dolphins as you paddle through the natural beauty of Estero and Hell Peckney Bays in a tandem kayak. All paddling & safety equipment provided, with kayak tours in accordance with Florida Society of Ethical Ecotourism guidelines. \$45-per-person; Mound House members \$15. Advance reservations necessary; private tours available. CDC and Social Distancing guidelines in place & all participants must wear a mask on land. 8 paddlers per tour.

**Thursday, February 18: FREE “Newton Beach Park Guided Beach Walk”:**

All ages weather permitting at 9 a.m.

This twice-weekly free outdoor nature program is different every single time, as the “Guided Beach Walks” have a simple premise – the groups walk roughly a half-mile down the beach and back, discussing whatever you find that particular morning, with the wind and waves dictating what comes up each day. Meet at the thatched hut closest to the beach, with CDC and Social Distancing in place and face masks mandatory. In addition to your face mask, bring sunscreen, shoes to get wet, sunglasses, and hat. No reservations necessary; while free, parking is \$3-per-hour, with one hour generally enough. Newton Beach Park is mid-island at 4650 Estero Boulevard.

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**Friday, February 19: “Mangroves by Kayak Tour”:**

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**Saturday, February 20: “Mangroves by Kayak Tour”:**

Ages 12 & up weather permitting at 9 a.m.

Explore the winding mangrove creeks and hidden waters of the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve as only a kayaker can on this Environmental Educator-guided tour of the ancient realm of the Calusa! Witness birds, fish, manatee and dolphins as you paddle through the natural beauty of Estero and Hell Peckney Bays in a tandem kayak. All paddling & safety equipment provided, with kayak tours in accordance with Florida Society of Ethical Ecotourism guidelines. \$45-per-person that includes Mound House admission; Mound House members \$15. Advance reservations necessary; private tours available. CDC and Social Distancing guidelines in place & all participants must wear a mask on land. 8 paddlers per tour.

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