

Mound House Upcoming Outdoor Nature & Education Events: March 4 Through 13, 2021

By Gary Mooney

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As March segues into Spring, the historic Mound House on Fort Myers Beach debuts two new family outdoor nature education programs, with the “Beginner Kayak Tour” on Friday, March 5, for ages 12 & up weather permitting at 9 a.m. and the “Advanced Kayak Tour” on Wednesday, March 10, for ages 12 & up weather permitting at 1 p.m. The always-popular “Sunset Kayak Tour” is Friday, March 12, for ages 12 & up weather permitting at 4:30 p.m. Please register in advance for these programs.

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 and a complete monthly programs schedule, call 239-765-0865 or see www.moundhouse.org.

The Mound House, the oldest standing structure on Estero Island, 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, March 4: 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, March 4: “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.

Thursday, March 4: “Shell Mound Outside Guided Tour”

All ages at 2 p.m.

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Friday, March 5: “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, March 5: NEW “Beginner Kayak Tour”

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

For newbies who want to kayak at their own pace! Participants on this 2-hour informative and scenic tour learn kayaking basics while marveling at the unique Estero Bay and Matanzas Pass environments. \$45-per-person, with Mound House members at \$15 that includes paddling equipment and instruction. CDC and Social Distancing guidelines in place, and all kayakers must wear masks on land. A maximum of 8 paddlers per tour.

Saturday, March 6: “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.

Saturday, March 6: “Shell Mound Outside Guided Tour”

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Saturday, March 6: “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.

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Tuesday, March 9: FREE “Newton Beach Park Guided Beach Walk”

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Tuesday, March 9: “Family Adventures” Outdoors Program

Adults & children age 5 & older weather permitting at 10 a.m.

Explore everything fun at the Mound House on this outdoor activity, as the interpretive staff leads families through entertaining and educational experiences you will remember for a lifetime! All participants must wear a mask with CDC and Social Distancing

guidelines in place. \$2-per-person that does not include Mound House admission; Mound House members free.

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Wednesday, March 10: NEW “Advanced Kayak Tour”

Ages 12 & up weather permitting at 1 p.m.

For kayakers who want a new 3-hour challenge of exploring areas of the Estero Bay where few get to venture, including the Hell Peckney Bay’s mangrove isles! \$55-per-person; Mound House members \$25 that includes all paddling & safety equipment. Advance reservations necessary, with CDC and Social Distancing guidelines in place and all participants must wear a mask on land. A maximum of 8 paddlers per tour.

Thursday, March 11: FREE “Newton Beach Park Guided Beach Walk”

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Friday, March 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

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