

Mound House Upcoming Outdoor Nature & Education Events: May 13 Through 22, 2021

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In Southwest Florida, it is April Flowers that bring May Showers! Before the rainy season begins in earnest, visit the iconic Mound House on Fort Myers Beach! One of Southwest Florida's most-beloved historic attractions, the Mound House traces its roots 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.

The Mound House continues three new innovative programs during the upcoming timeframe: the "Advanced Kayak Tour," "Beginner Kayak Tour," and "Latino Outside Guided Tour." There are five different kayak programs this week, highlighted by the always-popular "Sunset Kayak Tour" on Friday, May 21. It presents its signature event, the "Shell Mound Outside Guided Tour," on seven occasions.

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 Center for Disease Control (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. For information, reservations, and a monthly programs schedule, call 239-765-0865 or see www.moundhouse.org.

FREE "Newton Beach Park Guided Beach Walk"

For all ages every Tuesday and Thursday 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. Meet at the thatched hut closest to the beach, with CDC and Social Distancing in place and face masks mandatory. 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.

"Family Outside Adventures"

For adults & children age 6 & older weather permitting on Thursday, May 13; Tuesday, May 18; and Saturday, May 22, all at 10 a.m.

Explore everything fun at the Mound House on this outdoor activity that is perfect for families with children age 6 & up, as the Interpretive Staff leads you through entertaining and educational experiences you will remember a lifetime! Participants must wear

masks, with CDC and Social Distancing guidelines in place. \$2-per-person that does not include Mound House admission; Mound House members free.

“Shell Mound” Outside Guided Tour

For all ages on Thursday, May 13 & Saturday, May 15, at 11 a.m. & 1 p.m.; and Tuesday, May 18; Thursday, May 20; & Saturday, May 22, all at 11 a.m.

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

“Mangroves by Kayak Tour”

For ages 12 & up weather permitting on Friday, May 14, & Wednesday, May 19, both at 9 a.m.; Friday, May 21, at 1 p.m.; and Saturday, May 22, 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 and all participants must wear masks on land.

NEW “Advanced Kayak Tour”

For ages 12 & up weather permitting on Friday, May 14, 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 wearing masks on land.

“Family Fun Kayak Tour”

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Saturday, May 15, at 9 a.m.

Fun for the whole family on a specially-designed Environmental Educator-guided kayak tour for families with children age 6 & up! See birds, dolphins, manatee, and other wildlife while paddling through the Estero Bay mangroves. \$25-per-person ages 13 & up; \$15-per-person ages 6 to 12, with advance registrations necessary. The Mound

House provides all equipment, with CDC and Social Distancing in place; all participants must wear masks on land.

“Garden Outside Guided Tour”

For all ages on Saturday, May 15, and Thursday, May 20, both at 10 a.m.

Stroll through the Mound House gardens to discover how its unique plants conserve water and protect wildlife, while learning how the Calusa and other Native Americans used them in their daily lives.

NEW “Latino Outside Guided Tour”

For all ages on Tuesday, May 18 & Saturday, May 22, both at 1 p.m.

Perfect 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 unearthed clues about this multicultural society. All participants over 6 must wear masks and everyone will observe CDC guidelines, with advance registrations necessary. \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission.

NEW “Beginner Kayak Tour”

For ages 12 & up weather permitting on Wednesday, May 19, at 1 p.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, with advance registrations necessary. CDC and Social Distancing guidelines in place, and all kayakers must wear masks on land.

“Sunset Kayak Tour”

For ages 12 & up weather permitting on Friday, May 21, at 6:30 p.m.

People travel from all over the nation and world to marvel at Fort Myers Beach sunsets, but not many do so by kayak! 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. Advance registrations necessary and all participants wear masks on land. \$45-per-person; Mound House Members \$15, with private tours available.