

Mound House Upcoming Outdoor Nature & Education Events: May 27 Through June 5, 2021

By Gary Mooney
thewritestuff25@gmail.com

The Memorial Day Holiday Weekend is the unofficial start of summer, so with most kids out of school and light traffic on Fort Myers Beach, visit to the iconic Mound House! Whether it be beach walks, garden tours, kayaking adventures, the “Latino Outside Guided Tour,” or its signature event, the “Shell Mound Outside Guided Tour,” the Mound House offers fun, educational, and exciting programs for all ages! With rainy season right around the corner, all Mound House programs conclude by mid-afternoon.

One of Southwest Florida’s most-beloved 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.

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 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.

“Garden Outside Guided Tour”

For all ages on Thursday, May 27 and Saturday, June 5, 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. \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission; Mound House members free.

“Shell Mound” Outside Guided Tour

For all ages on Thursday, May 27, at 11 a.m. & 1 p.m.; Saturday, May 29, at 11 a.m.; Tuesday, June 1, at 2 p.m.; Thursday, June 3, at 11 a.m.; and Saturday, June 5, at 11 a.m. & 2 p.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 28; Wednesday, June 2; and Friday, June 4, all 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 wear masks on land.

“Family Adventures Outside Program”

For adults & children age 6 & older weather permitting on Saturday, May 29 and Thursday, June 3, both 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.

NEW “Latino Outside Guided Tour”

For all ages on Thursday, June 3, at 2 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.

“Family Fun Kayak Tour”

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Saturday, June 5, 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.