

Mound House Upcoming Outdoor Nature & Education Events: July 29 Through August 7, 2021

By Gary Mooney

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With July turning to August and the start of another school year right around the corner, take your kids and grandkids to visit the iconic Mound House on Fort Myers Beach before they march back to their classrooms! 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 Mound House presents its exciting new program, "Cool Calusa Tools," for families with children ages 6 & older on three occasions, where you learn to hunt, fish, and make masks and pottery, just like the Calusa! History buffs of all ages will enjoy the "Latino History Outside Guided Tour" on Thursday, July 29, at 1 p.m. To marvel at the magnificent Mound House gardens and grounds, attend the "Garden Outside Guided Tour" on Tuesday, August 3, at 1 p.m.; Thursday, August 5, at 11 a.m.; & Saturday, August 7, at 1 p.m. There are two different kayak programs this week, as well as the Mound House's signature event, the "Shell Mound Outside Guided Tour," seven times.

The Mound House, the oldest standing structure on Estero Island, is open Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It practices Social Distancing guidelines and encourages all nonvaccinated guests to wear masks. 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 Social Distancing in place. 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.

"Shell Mound" Outside Guided Tour

For all ages on Thursday, July 29, at 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Saturday, July 31, at 1 p.m.;

Tuesday, August 3, at 11 a.m.; Thursday, August 5, at 1 & 2 p.m.; & Saturday, August 7, 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. \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission; Mound House members free, with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

“Latino History Outside Guided Tour”

For all ages on Thursday, July 29, 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. Advance registrations necessary at \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission, with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

“Family Fun Kayak Tour”

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Friday, July 30 & Friday, August 6, both 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 Social Distancing in place.

“Mangroves by Kayak Tour”

For ages 12 & up weather permitting on Saturday, July 31; Wednesday, August 4; & Saturday, August 7, 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, with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

NEW “Cool Calusa Tools”

For families with children ages 6 & older on Saturday, July 31; Tuesday, August 3; & Saturday, August 7, all at 2 p.m.

Learn to hunt, fish, and make masks and pottery, just like the Calusa! The Mound House interpretive staff leads the exciting and hands-on tour of the Mound House grounds where they demonstrate Calusa tools and artifacts, then help you make Calusa-inspired artwork where your imagination runs wild! \$2-per-person that does not include Mound House admission. The Mound House enforces Social Distancing guidelines and recommends that all unvaccinated visitors wear masks.

“Garden Outside Guided Tour”

For all ages on Tuesday, August 3, at 1 p.m.; Thursday, August 5, at 11 a.m.; & Saturday, August 7, at 1 p.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, with Social Distancing guidelines in place.