

## **Mound House Upcoming Outdoor Nature & Education Events: August 12 Through 21, 2021**

By Gary Mooney

[thewritestuff25@gmail.com](mailto:thewritestuff25@gmail.com)

With kids back in school and offseason traffic light, now is the perfect time to visit the iconic Mound House on Fort Myers Beach! 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 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 unvaccinated guests to wear masks.

The Mound House offers exciting new programs the next two Fridays. To celebrate Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, it hosts the "Spooky Kayak Tour" at 9 a.m. What better way to observe this bewitching day than hearing folklore legends about pirates, mermaids, and other tall tales while experiencing the natural beauty of the mangrove estuary, but leave those broken mirrors and black cats at home! \$45-per-person, with Mound House members at \$15; advance registration necessary at 239-765-0865 or [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org). The Mound House provides all paddling equipment, so come out if you dare!

On Friday, August 20, the Mound House hosts a brand-new "Build & Brew!" This fun Summer evening includes pottery-making along with a local craft beer and tasting. Each "Build & Brew" ticket includes Mound House admission, a tasting and one full craft beer, and a one-hour class on making Native American pottery out of modeling clay, similar to the styles discovered at the Mound House. The interpretive staff will Social Distance guests and the Mound House encourages all unvaccinated visitors to wear masks, with a limit of 15 people. "Build & Brew" tickets are \$40-per-person, with Mound House members \$30; advance registration necessary at 239-765-0865.

The Mound House presents the "Untold Stories Guided Tour" on three separate occasions that focuses on the crazy cast of characters who called the site home, as well as offering three different kayak programs this week and the Mound House's signature event, the "Shell Mound Outside Guided Tour," five times.

The Town of Fort Myers Beach operates the Mound House as a museum complex and cultural and environmental learning center that provides numerous educational programs each month, including for children. 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, please call 239-765-0865 or see [www.moundhouse.org](http://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.

#### **“Garden Outside” Guided Tour**

For all ages on Thursday, August 12, at 11 a.m.; Saturday, August 14, at 1 p.m.; & Tuesday, August 17, 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.

#### **“Shell Mound” Outside Guided Tour**

For all ages on Thursday, August 12, at 1 p.m.; Saturday, August 14, at 11 a.m.; Tuesday, August 17, at 11 a.m.; Thursday, August 19, at 2 p.m.; & Saturday, August 21, 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.

#### **NEW: “Untold Stories” Guided Tour**

For adults on Thursday, August 12, at 2 p.m.; Thursday, August 19, at 1 p.m.; & Saturday, August 21, at 1 p.m.

The Mound House is the oldest standing structure on Fort Myers Beach, with an intriguing cast of characters who called it home, ranging from farmers to casino owners; scientists to developers! Learn about their individual stories along with a good dose of island history on this guided tour through the Mound House Museum, native gardens, and majestic grounds. Adults \$15; Mound House members free.

#### **NEW: “Spooky Kayak Tour”**

For ages 12 & up weather permitting on Friday, August 13, at 9 a.m.

What better way to celebrate Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> than hearing folklore legends about pirates, mermaids, and other tall tales while experiencing the natural beauty of the mangrove estuary, but leave those broken mirrors and black cats at home! \$45-per-person, with Mound House members at \$15; advance registration necessary at 239-765-0865 or [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org). The Mound House provides all paddling equipment, so come on out if you dare!

### **NEW: “Junior Explorers” at Newton Beach Park**

For children 2 to 5 with their adult guardians on Friday, August 13 & Wednesday, August 18, both at 1 p.m.

Your Junior Explorer will investigate Newton Beach Park to learn about the natural environment, culture, and early life skills such as language, numbers, fine motor, and socializing during this 30-minute program, featuring topics like “Counting With Nature,” “Animals of The Estuary,” “Paint Making,” “Calusa Masks,” “Calusa Pottery,” and “Sorting Shells.” \$2-per-child, with adult guardians and Mound House members free; no reservations necessary. Newton Beach Park is mid-island at 4650 Estero Boulevard.

### **“Family Fun Kayak” Tour**

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Saturdays, August 14 & 21, 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 that includes Mound House admission, with advance registrations necessary. The Mound House provides all equipment, with Social Distancing in place.

### **NEW “Cool Calusa Tools”**

For families with children age 6 & older on Saturdays, August 14 & August 21, at 2 p.m.

Learn to hunt, fish, and make masks and pottery, just like the Calusa! The Mound House interpretive staff leads this exciting 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.

### **NEW “Latino History” Outside Guided Tour**

For all ages on Tuesday, August 17, at 2 p.m. and Thursday, August 19, at 11 a.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.

### **“Mangroves by Kayak” Tour**

For ages 12 & up weather permitting on Wednesday, August 18, 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: “Build & Brew!”**

Friday, August 20: \$40-per-person; Mound House members \$30, with advance registrations necessary at 239-765-0865.

Join the Mound House for a fun Summer evening of arts & crafts, along with local craft beer! Each “Build & Brew” ticket includes Mound House admission, one craft beer and tasting, and a one-hour class on making Native American pottery out of modeling clay, similar to the styles discovered at the Mound House. The interpretive staff will Social Distance guests and the Mound House encourages all unvaccinated visitors to wear masks, with a limit of 15 people.