

Mound House Upcoming Outdoor Nature & Education Events: August 19 Through 28, 2021

By Gary Mooney

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With the hectic Labor Day Holiday Weekend rapidly approaching, take advantage of the slower pace and lighter traffic on Fort Myers Beach right now to experience the iconic Mound House! 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.

Highlighting this week's activities is the new "Build & Brew" for adults only on Friday, August 20, at 6 p.m. This fun Summer evening includes pottery-making along with a local craft beer tasting and full serving from Coastal Dayz Brewery of Fort Myers. Each "Build & Brew" ticket includes Mound House admission, the tasting and one 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.

New this week as well is the debut of the "Conservation Café" for all ages on Wednesday, August 25, at 9 a.m. Is there anything better than combining a healthy breakfast with expanding your natural and environmental knowledge about Fort Myers Beach? Join the Mound House educational staff as they provide an entertaining program while you savor a light breakfast including coffee and juice. \$20-per-person; Mound House members \$10; advance registration necessary at 239-765-0865.

The Mound House presents the "Untold Stories" Guided Tour on four separate occasions that focuses on the crazy cast of characters who called the Mound House home. If gardening is more your style, attend the "Garden Outside" Guided Tour for all ages on Tuesday, August 24, at 1 p.m. or Thursday, August 26, at 11 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. It is \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission, with Mound House members free and Social Distancing guidelines in place. In addition to these events, there are two different kayak programs this week, along with the Mound House's signature event, the "Shell Mound Outside Guided Tour," six 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 unvaccinated 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.

“Latino History” Outside Guided Tour

For all ages on 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.

NEW: “Untold Stories” Guided Tour

For adults on Thursday, August 19, at 1 p.m.; Saturday, August 21, at 1 p.m.; Tuesday, August 24, at 2 p.m.; & Thursday, August 26, at 2 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.

“Shell Mound” Outside Guided Tour

For all ages on Thursday, August 19, at 2 p.m.; Saturday, August 21, at 11 a.m.; Tuesday, August 24, at 11 a.m.; Thursday, August 26, at 1 p.m.; & Saturday, August 28, 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. \$5-per-person that

does not include Mound House admission; Mound House members free, with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

NEW: “Build & Brew!”

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

Join the Mound House for a fun Summer evening of arts & crafts, along with local craft beer from Coastal Dayz Brewery of Fort Myers! Each “Build & Brew” ticket includes Mound House admission, 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.

“Family Fun Kayak Tour”

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Saturday, August 21, 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 ages 6 & older on Saturday, August 21, at 2 p.m.; & Saturday, August 28, at 1 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.

“Garden Outside” Guided Tour

For all ages on Tuesday, August 24, at 1 p.m. and Thursday, August 26, at 11 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, with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

NEW: “Conservation Café”

For all ages on Wednesday, August 25, at 9 a.m.

There is nothing better than combining a healthy breakfast with expanding your natural and environmental knowledge about Fort Myers Beach! Join the Mound House educational staff as they provide an entertaining program on Fort Myers Beach while you savor a light breakfast including coffee and juice. \$20-per-person; Mound House members \$10; advance registration necessary at 239-765-0865.

“Mangroves by Kayak Tour”

For ages 12 & up weather permitting on Wednesday, August 25; Friday, August 27; & Saturday, August 28, 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.