

Mound House Upcoming Outdoor Nature & Education Events: September 2021

By Gary Mooney

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With children back in school and Summer giving way to Fall, this is the slowest time of year on Fort Myers Beach and the ideal time to visit the iconic Mound House! 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 kids.

One of the Mound House's most unique and well-attended events each year is its annual partnership with the Fort Myers Beach Film Festival to present the FREE family outdoor "Movie On The Mound" for all ages on Friday evening, September 17, at 8 p.m. The FMB Film Festival is keeping the movie title to itself for now but rest assured it is appropriate family fare. Bring your own blankets and lawn chairs to enjoy this outdoor movie, with the Mound House employing Center for Disease Control guidelines; no coolers please as refreshments will be for sale with all proceeds benefitting The Friends of The Mound House. For information, call 239-765-0865 or see www.fmbfilmfest.com. The flick starts at 8:15 p.m., with no advance registration necessary, so c'mon out as there is nothing like catching a free family film under a starlit night!

If you like to combine a healthy breakfast while expanding your natural and environmental knowledge about Fort Myers Beach, attend the new "Conservation Café" for all ages on Wednesday, September 15, at 9 a.m. The Mound House educational staff provides an entertaining program on Fort Myers Beach while you savor a light breakfast including coffee and juice. \$20-per-person; Mound House members \$10, with advance registration necessary at 239-765-0865.

The Mound House continues two new programs in September: the "Untold Stories" Guided Tour focuses on the crazy cast of characters who called the Mound House home over its long history, while "Cool Calusa Tools" shows you how to hunt, fish, and make masks and pottery, just like the Calusa! There are two different kayak programs this month, as well as the Mound House's signature event, the "Shell Mound Outside Guided Tour," that it presents 15 times. The Mound House enforces Social Distancing guidelines at all programs and recommends that all unvaccinated visitors wear masks.

The oldest standing structure on Estero Island, the Mound House is open Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 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.

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.

“Mangroves by Kayak Tour”

For ages 12 & up weather permitting on Wednesday, September 1; Friday, September 3, Wednesday, September 8; Friday, September 10; Saturday, September 11; Wednesday, September 15; Thursday, September 16; Saturday, September 25; & Wednesday, September 29, 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 with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

“Family Fun Kayak Tour”

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Thursday, September 2; Saturday, September 4; Thursday, September 9; Saturday, September 18; Thursday, September 23; & Thursday, September 30, all 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.

“Latino History” Outside Guided Tour

For all ages on Thursday, September 2, at 10 a.m.; Thursday, September 9, at 2 p.m.; Tuesday, September 14, at 10 a.m.; Thursday, September 16, at 11 a.m.; Thursday, September 23, at 1 p.m.; Saturday, September 25, at 1 p.m.; and on Tuesday, September 28, 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.

“Shell Mound” Outside Guided Tour

For all ages on Thursday, September 2, at 11 a.m.; Saturday, September 4, at 2 p.m.; Tuesday, September 7, at 11 a.m.; Thursday, September 9, at 10 a.m.; Saturday, September 11, at 2 p.m.; Tuesday, September 14, at 11 a.m.; Thursday, September 16, at 2 p.m.; Saturday, September 18, at 1 p.m.; Tuesday, September 21, at 11 a.m.; Thursday, September 23, at 10 a.m.; Saturday, September 25, at 11 a.m.; Tuesday, September 28, at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.; & Thursday, September 30, at 10 a.m. and 1 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: “Untold Stories” Guided Tour

For adults on Thursday, September 2, at 1 p.m.; Saturday, September 4, at 1 p.m.; Tuesday, September 7, at 2 p.m.; Saturday, September 11, at 1 p.m.; Tuesday, September 14, at 1 p.m.; Thursday, September 16, at 1 p.m.; Tuesday, September 21, at 2 p.m.; Thursday, September 23, at 2 p.m.; & Thursday, September 30, 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.

NEW: “Cool Calusa Tools”

For families with children ages 6 & older on Thursday, September 2, at 2 p.m.; Saturday, September 4, at 10 a.m.; Tuesday, September 7, at 10 a.m.; Thursday, September 9, at 1 p.m.; Saturday, September 11, at 10 a.m.; Tuesday, September 14, at 2 p.m.; Saturday, September 18, at 2 p.m.; Tuesday, September 21, at 1 p.m.; & Saturday, September 25, 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.

“Garden Outside” Guided Tour

For all ages on Saturday, September 4, at 11 a.m.; Tuesday, September 7, at 1 p.m.; Thursday, September 9, at 11 a.m.; Saturday, September 11, at 11 a.m.; Thursday, September 16, at 10 a.m.; Saturday, September 18, at 10 a.m.; Tuesday, September 21, at 10 a.m.; Thursday, September 23, at 11 a.m.; Saturday, September 25, at 10 a.m.; Tuesday, September 28, at 10 a.m.; & Thursday, September 30, 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, September 15, at 9 a.m.

What is 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, with advance registration necessary at 239-765-0865.

NEW & FREE: “Movie On The Mound!”

For all ages on Friday, September 17, at 8 p.m.

Lights; Camera; Action – right on the historic Mound House grounds! The Mound House partners with the Fort Myers Beach Film Festival to present a FREE family movie for all ages, but we cannot quite yet reveal the motion picture’s title! Bring your own blankets and lawn chairs to enjoy this outdoor movie with the Mound House employing Center for Disease Control guidelines; no coolers please as refreshments will be for sale with all proceeds to The Friends of The Mound House. The flick starts at 8:15 p.m., with no advance registration necessary, so c’mon out as there is nothing like catching a free family film under a starlit night!