

## **Mound House Upcoming Outdoor Nature & Education Events: October 2021**

By Gary Mooney

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With Fall in full force, 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.

Now that rainy season is winding down, the Mound House returns two evening kayak tours to its monthly schedule. Each October Friday, weather permitting, features the "Sunset Kayak Tour" for ages 12 & up. People travel from all over the nation and world to marvel at Fort Myers Beach sunsets, but not many get to do so by kayak! In addition to catching a breathtaking sunset, explore the tidal creeks and winding mangrove tunnels that extend into the hidden backwaters of Estero Bay while experiencing the estuary's abundant wildlife in the quiet of twilight.

Wednesday evening, October 20, is the return of the "Full Moon Kayak Tour" for ages 12 & up. This unique tour offers kayakers the rare opportunity to experience the backwaters of the Estero Bay by the light of the full moon! Participants explore the estuary's tidal creeks, winding mangroves, and abundant wildlife illuminated by the full moon. The "Sunset Kayak" and "Full Moon Kayak" Tours are \$45-per-person, with Mound House members \$15. The Mound House provides all paddling equipment, with a maximum of 12 people per tour, and Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Social Distancing guidelines are in place. Advance registrations are necessary at [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org).

The Mound House continues two new programs into the Fall: 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 four different kayak programs throughout October, as well as the Mound House's signature event, the "Shell Mound Outside Guided Tour," that it presents 25 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](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.

### **“Mangroves by Kayak Tour”**

For ages 12 & up weather permitting on Friday, October 1, at 9 a.m.; Wednesday, October 6, at 9 a.m. & 1 p.m.; Thursday, October 7, at 9 a.m.; Friday, October 8, at 9 a.m.; Saturday, October 9, at 9 a.m.; Wednesday, October 13, at 9 a.m. & 1 p.m.; Thursday, October 14, at 9 a.m.; Friday, October 15, at 9 a.m.; Wednesday, October 20, at 9 a.m.; Thursday, October 21, at 9 a.m.; Friday, October 22, at 9 a.m.; Saturday, October 23, at 9 a.m.; Wednesday, October 27, at 9 a.m. & 1 p.m.; Thursday, October 28, at 9 a.m.; and Friday, October 29, 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 at [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org) with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

### **“Sunset Kayak Tour”**

Ages 12 & up weather permitting on Friday, October 1; Friday, October 8; and Friday, October 15, all at 5 p.m.; & Friday, October 22 & Friday, October 29, both at 4:45 p.m.

People travel from all over the nation and world to marvel at Fort Myers Beach sunsets, but not many get to do so by kayak! In addition to catching a breathtaking sunset, explore the tidal creeks and winding mangrove tunnels that extend into the hidden backwaters of Estero Bay while experiencing the estuary’s abundant wildlife in the quiet of twilight. The Mound House provides all paddling and safety equipment, with CDC and Social Distancing in place. \$45-per-person; Mound House members \$15, with a limit of 12 paddlers per tour. Advance registration necessary at [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org).

### **“Family Fun Kayak Tour”**

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Saturday, October 2; Saturday, October 16; & Saturday, October 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.

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

For all ages on Saturday, October 2, at 1 p.m.; & Tuesday, October 5; Thursday, October 7; Saturday, October 9; Tuesday, October 12; Thursday, October 14; Saturday, October 16; Tuesday, October 19; Thursday, October 21; Saturday, October 23; Tuesday, October 26; Thursday, October 28; and Saturday, October 30, all at 11 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: “Cool Calusa Tools”**

For families with children ages 6 & older on Saturday, October 2; Saturday, October 9; Saturday, October 16; Saturday, October 23; & Saturday, October 30, all 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 Tuesday, October 5; Thursday, October 7; Saturday, October 9; Tuesday, October 12; Thursday, October 14; Saturday, October 16; Tuesday, October 19; Thursday, October 21; Saturday, October 23; Tuesday, October 26; Thursday, October 28; & Saturday, October 30, all 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, with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

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

For all ages on Tuesday, October 5; Tuesday, October 12; Tuesday, October 19; and Tuesday, October 26, all 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. 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, October 7; Thursday, October 14; Thursday, October 21; & Thursday, October 28, all 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.

### **“Full Moon Kayak Tour”**

For ages 12 & up on Wednesday, October 20, at 5:15 p.m.

This unique tour offers kayakers the rare opportunity to experience the backwaters of the Estero Bay in the quiet of twilight by the light of the full moon! Participants explore the estuary’s tidal creeks, winding mangroves, and abundant wildlife illuminated by the full moon. Weather permitting and reservations required at [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org); \$45-per-person with Mound House members \$15. The Mound House provides all paddling equipment, with a maximum of 12 people per tour, and CDC and Social Distancing guidelines in place.