

Mound House Upcoming Outdoor Nature & Education Events: October 21 Through 30, 2021

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Start your Halloween celebrations a bit early with a visit to the iconic Mound House on Fort Myers Beach! 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 oldest standing structure on Estero Island, the Mound House is open Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

With rainy season winding down, the Mound House returns its popular "Sunset Kayak Tours," weather permitting, for ages 12 & up every October Friday evening. 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. "Sunset 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 Social Distancing guidelines are in place. Advance registrations are necessary at www.moundhouse.org.

The Mound House continues two new programs in October: 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 three different kayak programs this week, as well as the Mound House's signature event, the "Shell Mound Outside Guided Tour," that it presents 10 times. The Mound House enforces Social Distancing guidelines at all programs and recommends that all unvaccinated visitors wear masks.

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. 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 Thursday, October 21; Friday, October 22; & Saturday, October 23, all at 9 a.m.; Wednesday, October 27, at 9 a.m. & 1 p.m.; and Thursday, October 28 & Friday, October 29, both 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 with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

“Garden Outside” Guided Tour

For all ages on 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.

“Shell Mound” Outside Guided Tour

For all ages on 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: “Untold Stories” Guided Tour

For adults on Thursdays, October 21 & 28, both 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.

“Sunset Kayak Tour”

Ages 12 & up weather permitting on Fridays, October 22 & 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 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.

NEW: “Cool Calusa Tools”

For families with children ages 6 & older on Saturdays, October 23 & 30, both 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.

“Latino History” Outside Guided Tour

For all ages on Tuesday, October 26, 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.

“Family Fun Kayak Tour”

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Saturday, October 30, 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 at www.moundhouse.org. The Mound House provides all equipment, with Social Distancing in place.