

## **Mound House Education & Nature Programs: December 23 Through January 1**

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Christmas Week means that Fort Myers Beach and Southwest Florida are brimming with seasonals, vacationers, and out-of-town guests, so ring out the old and ring in the new with a visit to 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 Mound House enforces Social Distancing guidelines and recommends that all unvaccinated visitors wear masks.

The oldest standing structure on Estero Island, the Mound House is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., though it closes December 23 through 25 & December 30 through January 1 for the Holidays. 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 Fort Myers Beach residents receiving a 50% museum admission discount. For information, reservations, and a monthly programs schedule, call 239-765-0865 or see [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org).

### **FREE: Newton Beach Park Guided Beach Walk**

For all ages on Tuesday, December 28, 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 – walk roughly a half-mile down the beach and back, discussing whatever you find that 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.

### **Cool Calusa Tools**

For families with children ages 6 & older on Tuesday, December 28, at 10 a.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, with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

### **Shell Mound Tour**

For all ages on Tuesday & Wednesday, December 28 & 29, at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

If you dig archaeology, the Mound House's signature program is for you! Tour the one-of-a-kind 2,000-year-old underground 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.

### **Garden Tour**

For all ages on Tuesday, December 28, at 2 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.

### **Mangroves by Kayak Tour**

For ages 12 & up on Wednesday, December 29, at 9 a.m.

Explore the winding mangrove creeks and hidden waters of the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve! 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; 45-per-person; Mound House members \$15 that includes Mound House admission. Advance reservations at [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org) with Social Distancing in place on land.

### **Archaeology: Can You Dig It?**

For all ages on Wednesday, December 29, at 10 a.m.

Learn what it takes to be an archaeologist! Handle real artifacts and discover how archaeologists study past cultures in a program perfect for families. \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission, with Mound House members free.

### **Family Fun Kayak Tour**

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Wednesday, December 29, at 2 p.m.

Perfect fun for families with children ages 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. The Mound House provides all padding equipment, with Social Distancing in place on land. Advance registrations necessary at [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org).