

**Mound House Outdoor Nature & Education Events:
Thursday, January 27, Through Saturday, February 5, 2022**

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During 2021's final three months, the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau fielded over 61,000 visitor inquiries, with the iconic Mound House on Fort Myers Beach ranking as the third-highest Southwest Florida attraction, so learn what all the buzz is about by visiting for yourself! The Mound House traces its roots to the ancient Calusa of over 2,000 years ago. It is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., enforces Social Distancing guidelines and requests that all unvaccinated visitors wear masks.

New in February is the 2nd program of the Mound House's 2022 Lecture Series, as Austin Bell presents "The Nine Lives of Florida's Famous Key Marco Cat" on Tuesday, February 8, at 6 p.m. Bell explores the nine periods of the six-inch-high wooden carving, from its sculpting from shell and shark-tooth tools to if it represented a human / panther god to the Calusa. Preserved pristine in muck for centuries on Marco Island, the Cat journeyed over 12,000 miles while being viewed by millions. Due to COVID-19, this is a virtual lecture, so pre-register at 239-765-0865; \$5-per-person with Mound House members free.

As the oldest standing structure on Estero Island, the Town of Fort Myers Beach operates the Mound House as a museum complex and cultural and environmental learning experience that offers numerous monthly educational programs, including for children. 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, please call 239-765-0865 or see www.moundhouse.org.

Shell Mound Tour

For all ages every January & February Tuesday through Saturday at 11 a.m. & 1 p.m.

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

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 – 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 \$5-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 Thursday, January 27; Saturday, January 29; Tuesday, February 1; Thursday, February 3; & Saturday, February 5; all 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.

Untold Stories Tour

For adults on Thursday, January 27; Thursday, February 3; & Saturday, February 5, 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, from farmers to casino owners; scientists to developers! Learn their fascinating 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.

Archaeology: Can You Dig It?

For all ages on Friday, January 28; Wednesday, February 2; & Friday, February 4, all 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.

Garden Tour

For all ages on Friday, January 28; Tuesday, February 2, & Friday, February 4 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.

Family Fun Kayak Tour

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Saturday, January 29, at 2 p.m.

This specially-designed Environmental Educator-guided kayak tour is 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.

FREE: Calusa Carvers

For all ages on Tuesday, February 1, from 9 a.m. to Noon

Learn more about woodcarving firsthand from a local group of woodcarvers who made some of the Calusa replica artifacts for Mound House exhibits and programs. The Calusa Carvers appear for free on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month through season from 9 a.m. to Noon.

Mangroves by Kayak Tour

For ages 12 & up on Wednesday, February 2, and Saturday, February 5, 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; \$45-per-person with Mound House members \$15 that includes Mound House admission. Advance reservations necessary at www.moundhouse.org with Social Distancing guidelines in place on land.

Latino History Tour

For all ages on Wednesday, February 2, 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. \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission, with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

Sunset Kayak Tour

For ages 12 & up weather permitting on Friday, February 4, at 4:15 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 on land. \$45-per-person; Mound House members \$15, with advance registrations necessary at www.moundhouse.org.