

Mound House Tourism & Environmental Programs: Thursday, March 17 Through Saturday, March 26, 2022

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March is the absolute height of tourism season on Fort Myers Beach. Between residents and Seasonals to Spring Breakers and Spring Training fans, there is always something for everyone on Fort Myers Beach, so while on our 7-mile island, add a visit to the iconic Mound House! One of Southwest Florida's most-beloved historic sites, the Mound House traces its roots to the ancient Calusa of over 2,000 years ago.

Celebrate "Archaeology Month" on Saturday, March 19, as the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society presents "Calusa Coastal Days" at the Mound House! In addition to the Mound House Museum being open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., it offers a "Guided Kayak Tour" at 9 a.m.; "Cool Calusa Tools" at 10 a.m.; "Shell Mound Tours" at 11 a.m. & 1 p.m.; and the "Family Fun Kayak Tour" at 2 p.m. The Kayak Tours require advance reservations at 239-765-0865 or www.moundhouse.org.

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 entertainment and educational programs, including for children. The Mound House 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. 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.

Shell Mound Tour

For all ages every March 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 every March Tuesday, Thursday, & Saturday 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! \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission, with Mound House members free and Social Distancing in place.

Garden Tour

For all ages every March Tuesday & Friday 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.

Latino History Tour

For all ages every March Wednesday 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 Mound House members free and Social Distancing guidelines in place.

Guided Kayak Tour

For ages 12 & up every March Wednesday through Saturday at 9 a.m. as well as Thursday, March 31, at 2 p.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.

Archaeology: Can You Dig It?

For all ages every March Wednesday & Friday 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 and Social Distancing guidelines in place.

Family Fun Kayak Tour

For ages 6 & up weather permitting every March Wednesday & Saturday, as well as Thursday, March 24, all 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.

Full Moon Kayak Tour

For ages 12 & up on Friday, March 18, at 6 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; \$45-per-person with Mound House members \$15. The Mound House provides all paddling equipment, with Social Distancing in place on land.

Sunset Kayak Tour

Ages 12 & up weather permitting on Friday, March 25, at 5:45 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 on land. \$45-per-person; Mound House members \$15, with advance registrations necessary at www.moundhouse.org.