

Mound House Tourism & Environmental Programs: Thursday, April 7 Through Saturday, April 16, 2022

By Gary Mooney
thewritestuff25@gmail.com

Tourism season on Fort Myers Beach winds down throughout April, so before your family, visitors or you leave us for the summer, make that last trip 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. 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 tourism and environmental programs, including for kids.

The highlight for this upcoming week is the next Mound House Lecture, on Tuesday evening, April 12, when Dr. Michelle LeFebvre presents "In Support of Sustainability: The Archaeology of Vertebrate Biodiversity & Native American Harvest Practices in The Florida Keys." Dr. LeFebvre is the Assistant Curator of South Florida Archaeology & Ethnography collections. Her lecture is for adults only, with a wine-&-refreshments reception at 5:30 p.m. and program from 6 to 7 p.m. Due to limited seating, advance registrations are necessary at 239-765-0865; \$7 for Mound House members & \$12 for non-members, with all unvaccinated guests encouraged to wear masks.

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 April 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 April Tuesday, Thursday, & Saturday through April 16, then on Saturdays, April 23 & 30, 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, demonstrating 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 guidelines in place.

Garden Tour

For all ages every April Tuesday & Friday, as well as Saturday, April 16, all 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.

Guided Kayak Tour

For ages 12 & up every April Wednesday through Saturday at 9 a.m., as well as Wednesday, April 13 & Thursday, April 14, both 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 April 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.

Untold Stories Tour

For adults every April Thursday 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 with Social Distancing guidelines in place.

Family Fun Kayak Tour

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Thursday, April 7 & Saturday, April 9, 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.

Sunset Kayak Tour

Ages 12 & up weather permitting on Friday, April 8 & Saturday, April 16, both at 6 p.m.

People travel from all over the nation and world to marvel at Fort Myers Beach sunsets, but few 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.

Mound House Lecture with Dr. Michelle LeFebvre

For adults on Tuesday, April 12: wine-&-refreshments reception at 5:30 p.m.; program from 6 to 7 p.m.

Dr. Michelle LeFebvre presents "In Support of Sustainability: The Archaeology of Vertebrate Biodiversity & Native American Harvest Practices in The Florida Keys." Dr. LeFebvre is the Assistant Curator of South Florida Archaeology & Ethnography collections. Due to limited seating, advance registrations are necessary at 239-765-0865; \$7 for Mound House members & \$12 for non-members, with all unvaccinated guests encouraged to wear masks.

Latino History Tour

For all ages on Wednesday, April 13, 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.

Full Moon Kayak Tour

For ages 12 & up on Friday, April 15, at 6:30 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 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.