

Mound House Tourism & Environmental Programs: Thursday, May 26 Through Saturday, June 4, 2022

By Gary Mooney

thewritestuff25@gmail.com

As May gives way to June and Fort Myers Beach remains firmly in its tourism offseason, this is the ideal opportunity to make that trip to the iconic Mound House! 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 tourism and environmental programs, including for kids. 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 debuts two new programs and a special event this week. "Build & Brew" is for ages 21 & older on Saturday, May 28, at 7 p.m. Build a new craft, learn more about the related subject matter and enjoy one craft beer from the Point Ybel Brewing Company. \$25-per-person with Mound House members \$20; Social Distancing in place with reservations necessary at 239-765-0865. The new programs are "Calusa Masks" for families on Wednesday, June 1 and Friday, June 3, both at 2 p.m. Make and color your own Calusa paper masks while learning more about the Calusa culture. "Calusa Pottery" for families is on Friday, June 3, at 10 a.m. Get your hands dirty as you make your own quick-dry pot to take home while discovering the history of ceramics. Each new program is \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission, with Mound House members free and Social Distancing in place.

The Mound House is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., enforces Social Distancing 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 details, reservations, and a monthly programs schedule, call 239-765-0865 or see www.moundhouse.org.

Shell Mound Tour

For all ages every May & June 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.

Guided Kayak Tour

For ages 12 & up every May Wednesday through Saturday as well as Wednesday, June 1; Thursday, June 2; and Saturday, June 4; all 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.

Untold Stories Tour

For adults every May & June 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.

Cool Calusa Tools

For families with kids 6 & older on Thursday, May 26; Saturday, May 28; Tuesday, May 31; Thursday, June 2; & Saturday, June 4, 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.

Archaeology: Can You Dig It?

For all ages on Friday, May 27, at 10 a.m.; Wednesday, June 1, at 10 a.m.; and Saturday, June 4, at 2 p.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.

NEW: Shell & Tell

For all ages on Friday, May 27, at 11 a.m. and Friday, June 3, at 2 p.m.

The Calusa used shells for over a thousand years in their everyday lives. Learn about the various species of shells you see on the beach, their biology and importance to our ecosystem. "Shell & Tell" is at Newton Beach Park mid-island at 4650 Estero Boulevard. \$5 per person with Mound House members free & Social Distancing guidelines in place.

Garden Tour

For all ages on Friday, May 27 & Tuesday, May 31, both 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.

NEW: Build & Brew

Ages 21 & older on Saturday, May 28, at 7 p.m.

Laugh, Learn, Drink & Repeat! Build a new craft, learn more about the related subject matter and enjoy one craft beer from the Point Ybel Brewing Company. \$25-per-person with Mound House members \$20; Social Distancing in place with reservations necessary at 239-765-0865.

NEW: Calusa Masks

For families on Wednesday, June 1 and Friday, June 3, both at 2 p.m.

Make and color your own Calusa paper masks while learning more about the Calusa culture. \$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 on Friday, June 3, at 9 a.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.

NEW: Calusa Pottery

For families on Friday, June 3, at 10 a.m.

Get your hands dirty as you make your own quick-dry pot to take home while discovering the history of ceramics. \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission, with Mound House members free and Social Distancing in place.