

Mound House Tourism & Environmental Programs: Thursday, June 9 Through Saturday, June 18, 2022

By Gary Mooney
thewritestuff25@gmail.com

Now that Southwest Florida's first tropical storm is in our collective rearview mirrors, this is the perfect time to visit the iconic Mound House on Fort Myers Beach! One of our region'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 next Mound House Lecture is Tuesday, June 14, when Kelly Sloan presents "Sea Turtles: New Research," for adults only, with a wine-&-refreshments reception at 5:30 p.m. and program from 6 to 7 p.m. Kelly, the Sea Turtle Program Coordinator for the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation since 2013, has her Master's degree in Environmental Science & Policy, with her thesis on barnacle growth as a Debilitated Turtle Syndrome indicator in loggerhead sea turtles. 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., offers 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 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.

Untold Stories Tour

For adults every 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.

Guided Kayak Tour

For ages 12 & up on Thursday, June 9; Friday, June 10; Wednesday, June 15; Thursday, June 16; & Saturday, June 18, 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.

Cool Calusa Tools

For families with kids 6 & older on Thursday, June 9, at 10 a.m.; Saturday, June 11, at 2 p.m.; and Tuesday, June 14 & Thursday, June 16, both 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.

Latino History Tour

For all ages on Friday, June 10, at 10 a.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.

NEW: Calusa Masks

For families with kids age 12 & older on Friday, June 10, at 2 p.m.; Saturday, June 11, at 10 a.m.; & Friday, June 17, at 2 p.m.

Learn all about the culture of Calusa masks and then make a replica. \$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 Saturday, June 11 & Friday, June 17, 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

Ages 12 & up on Tuesday, June 14, at 2 p.m.; Friday, June 17, at 10 a.m.; and Saturday, June 18, at 2 p.m.

Pottery was more than just household decorations to the Calusa! Discover its cultural significance, then make one of your own. \$5-per-person that does not include Mound House admission, with Mound House members free and Social Distancing in place.

Mound House Lecture on “Sea Turtles: New Research” with Kelly Sloan

For adults on Tuesday, June 14

Wine-&-refreshments reception at 5:30 p.m.; program 6 to 7 p.m.

Kelly Sloan presents “Sea Turtles: New Research” on Tuesday, June 14! Kelly, the Sea Turtle Program Coordinator for the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation since 2013, has her Master’s degree in Environmental Science & Policy, with her thesis on barnacle growth as a Debilitated Turtle Syndrome indicator in loggerhead sea turtles. 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.

Archaeology: Can You Dig It?

For all ages on Wednesday, June 15 and Saturday, June 18, both 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.

NEW: Turtles of Southwest Florida

Ages 12 & up on Thursday, June 16, at 1 p.m.

Learn about the various Southwest Florida turtle species and what we can do to protect them. "Turtles of Southwest Florida" is at Newton Beach Park mid-island at 4650 Estero Boulevard. \$5 per person with Mound House members free & Social Distancing guidelines in place.