

## **Mound House Tourism & Environmental Programs: Thursday, June 23 Through Saturday, July 2, 2022**

By Gary Mooney  
[thewritestuff25@gmail.com](mailto:thewritestuff25@gmail.com)

As The Fourth of July Holiday Weekend approaches, ring in America's 246<sup>th</sup> Birthday with a bang by visiting the iconic Mound House on Fort Myers Beach! 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.

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. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Mound House 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](http://www.moundhouse.org).

### **Shell Mound Tour**

For all ages every June & July 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, with Mound House members free.

### **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 and 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.

### **Guided Kayak Tour**

For ages 12 & up on Thursday, June 23; Friday, June 24; Thursday, June 30; and Friday, July 1, 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](http://www.moundhouse.org).

### **Cool Calusa Tools**

For families with kids 6 & older on Thursday, June 23, at 10 a.m.; Friday, June 24, at 2 p.m.; and Saturday, June 25 & Tuesday, June 28, 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.

### **NEW: Calusa Masks**

For families with kids age 12 & older on Friday, June 24, at 10 a.m. and Friday, July 1, 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.

### **NEW: Build & Brew**

Ages 21 & older on Friday, June 24, at 7 p.m.

Laugh, Learn, Drink & Repeat! Build a new craft, learn more about the related subject and enjoy one local craft brewery beer. \$25-per-person with Mound House members \$20; reservations necessary at 239-765-0865.

### **Family Fun Kayak Tour**

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Saturday, June 25; Wednesday, June 29; and Saturday, July 2, all 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 advance registrations necessary at [www.moundhouse.org](http://www.moundhouse.org).

### **Archaeology: Can You Dig It?**

For all ages on Saturday, June 25, at 2 p.m.; Wednesday, June 29, at 10 a.m.; and Saturday, July 2, 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.

### **NEW: Shell & Tell**

Ages 12 & up on Saturday, June 25 & Tuesday, June 28, both 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 and \$5 per hour parking.

### **NEW: Calusa Pottery**

Ages 12 & up on Tuesday, June 28, at 2 p.m. and Thursday, June 30, at 10 a.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.

### **Latino History Tour**

For all ages on Wednesday, June 29, at 2 p.m. and Saturday, July 2, 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.

### **NEW: Turtles of Southwest Florida**

Ages 12 & up on Saturday, July 2, at 11 a.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 and \$5 per hour parking.