

Mound House Tourism & Environmental Programs: Thursday, June 30 Through Saturday, July 9, 2022

By Gary Mooney
thewritestuff25@gmail.com

Ring in The Fourth of July Holiday Weekend with a bang by visiting the iconic Mound House on Fort Myers Beach! 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.

On the Mound House event horizon is its Summer Lecture Series. The opening program is "Rancho Reality: Latino History at The Mound House," for adults only on Tuesday, July 12, with a wine-&-refreshments reception at 5:30 p.m. and lecture from 6 to 7 p.m. Mound House Education Coordinator Adam Knight presents the rich history and culture of Cuban fishers, Spanish Indians, and the United States settlers of Estero Island and Southwest Florida during Florida's "Forgotten Century." Due to limited seating, advance registration is necessary at 239-765-0865; \$7 for Mound House members & \$12 for non-members.

The Mound House is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 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 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; 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 on Thursday, June 30, 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.

NEW: Calusa Pottery

Ages 12 & up on Thursday, June 30, at 10 a.m.; Friday, July 8, at 2 p.m.; & Saturday, July 9, 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.

Untold Stories Tour

For adults on Thursday, June 30, at 2 p.m.; Tuesday, July 5 at 10 a.m.; & Wednesday, July 6, 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 and Mound House members free.

Guided Kayak Tour

For ages 12 & up on Friday, July 1; Thursday, July 7; & Saturday, July 9, 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.

NEW: Calusa Masks

For families with kids age 12 & older on Friday, July 1, at 2 p.m.; Friday, July 8, at 10 a.m.; & Saturday, July 9, 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.

Family Fun Kayak Tour

For ages 6 & up weather permitting on Saturday, July 2; Wednesday, July 6; & Friday, July 8, 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.

Latino History Tour

For all ages on Saturday, July 2, at 10 a.m. & Thursday, July 7, 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.

NEW: Turtles of Southwest Florida

Ages 12 & up on Saturdays, July 2 & 9, 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.

Archaeology: Can You Dig It?

For all ages on 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.

Cool Calusa Tools

For families with kids 6 & older on Tuesday, July 5, at 2 p.m. & Wednesday, July 6, 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 they 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: Shell & Tell

Ages 12 & up on Thursday, July 7, at 10 a.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 and Mound House members free, with parking at \$5-per-hour.