

Dr. Beach Gives Talk at Cape Cod National Seashore

August 13, 2016, Cape Cod Times



Dr. Stephen Leatherman, also known as "Dr. Beach"

TRURO – While this doctor didn't proscribe any treatment, he had a few words to say about beach safety especially the danger of rip currents at surf beaches.

Professor of Earth and Environmental Science at Florida International University Stephen Leatherman, otherwise known as Dr. Beach, appeared Tuesday at Cape Cod National Seashore Friends Gala Fundraiser to commemorate the 100th anniversary of founding of the National Park Service.

The man known for his national "Top 10 Beaches" lists spoke about coastal science and the natural beauty of Cape Cod.

Though Leatherman lives far out of range of Cape Cod in Florida, he said he has studied Cape beaches for years, and has noticed how the Cape keeps its beaches from overdevelopment.

However, he said he is sad to see some residents who live extremely close to beaches have to consider moving their properties. "That's really sad, but the truth of it is, concreting the whole outer Cape wouldn't work either, and it would be ugly," he said.

Dr. Beach also warned that everyone who lives even marginally close to the shore should be prepared for a hurricane. He said most should consider shutters and ensuring buildings are secure against high winds.

Leatherman's top 10 lists have been procured since 1991. He said it all started when a former student of his went into journalism and recommended his former professor as a source for seashore knowledge.

He said he loves studying beaches since mountains are too static in comparison.

"The beach is always changing, we have salt water in our blood and all creatures came out of the sea," he said. "There's something about going back into the sea that I find spiritual, I guess. His 2016 list touted Coast Guard Beach in Eastham at number 5 in the nation.