

**“DR. BEACH” RANKS CALADESI ISLAND AMONG BEST BEACHES OF 2007**  
*Pristine Gulf island takes #2 spot two years running*

ST. PETERSBURG/CLEARWATER, FL ( June 8, 2007) – For the second consecutive year, Caladesi Island, one of the last untouched barrier islands on Florida’s Gulf Coast, was named the country’s #2 beach by Dr. Stephen Leatherman, a Florida International University coastal geologist better known as “Dr. Beach.” Leatherman unveiled his list of America’s Best Beaches for 2007 this morning.

“Dr. Beach recognizes that the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area consistently has some of the best beaches in the United States,” said DT Minich, executive director of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. “Caladesi Island State Park is a treasure that everyone should experience.”

Accessible only by boat, Caladesi Island State Park sits out in the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico, more than a mile offshore from Dunedin, one of 24 Pinellas County communities that make up the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area. Rated among the country’s top five beaches for the last four years and a recipient of the Blue Wave Award for environmental management, the park offers a dune-fringed, sandy expanse on the Gulf side and mangrove bays on its east side, where kayak trails wind through labyrinthine mangrove tunnels. Virgin pine flatwoods and live oak hammocks occupy much of the pristine interior, and 375 species of birds---from monk parakeets to eastern brown pelicans---flourish among the vegetation. Visitors can explore nature trails, take ranger-guided tours, or simply take advantage of the location’s peerless opportunities for swimming, fishing, shelling, boating and relaxation.

The island offers a 108-slip marina, picnic shelters, bathhouses, a ranger station and concession stand, and boardwalks provide beach access while protecting the fragile ecosystem that thrives in the dunes and sea oats. Caladesi Connection, a ferry service that operates from nearby Honeymoon Island, offers roundtrip transportation for \$9 for adults and \$5.50 for children ages 4-12. The park is open daily from 8 until sunset.

Leatherman named another St. Petersburg/Clearwater standout, Fort DeSoto Park, America’s Best Beach in 2005.

**MEDIA CONTACT: David Downing, St. Petersburg/Clearwater Convention & Visitors Bureau; 800-822-6461 or 727-464-7213; david@floridasbeach.com**

*The St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is the countywide tourism management and marketing organization responsible for developing and promoting the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area as a leisure, business, convention, conference, sports and film production destination. The St. Petersburg/Clearwater area is the leading destination on Florida's Gulf coast, drawing more than five million overnight visitors annually. The area is best known for record-breaking sunshine and 35 miles of spectacular beaches, including Fort De Soto Park, named America's Best Beach 2005 by Dr. Beach and Caladesi Island State Park named the # 2 Beach in America in 2006. A variety of attractions, world-class museums, sporting activities and nature-related experiences are also readily available. For more information about the area visit [www.FloridasBeach.com](http://www.FloridasBeach.com).*

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