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# MEET THE RIVER MONDAY

## Spencer Stone

*Revenue Manager Lighthouse Inn/Armchair Economist/ Dennis Climate & Coastal Resiliency Advisory Committee Acting Chair/Dennis Tourism Board Member/ Dennis Chamber of Commerce Board Member/Dennis Zoning Board of Appeals Member/Fiancé/ Dog Dad/Skier*



**What do you/did you do for a living?**

As I started my career I worked in hospitality in front desk, food & beverage and hotel supply roles on a Dude Ranch in Arizona, in Colorado, in Key Largo and eventually back on Cape Cod.

Currently I am the Revenue Manager for The Lighthouse Inn. During the season I act as a Controller and in the Winter the job entails looking at our value proposition, analyzing the competitive landscape and thinking about how we can improve our short term and long-term value proposition. I am also involved in the long-term planning and marketing side of the business. We are blessed to be on the waterfront and are considered a laid back, casual family friendly resort. It's a place where young families can relax, play, and live their best life.

**How long have you been on the river?**

I grew up here with my parents on Weir Creek. My great-grandparents, Everett & Gladys Stone bought the Bass River Light property and started The Lighthouse Inn in 1938.



**An old post card of the Bass River Lighthouse (now the Lighthouse at The Lighthouse Inn) courtesy of the Lighthouse Inn archives.**

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**Favorite memory on the river**

I once paddle boarded from Boaters Beach at the mouth of the river up Weir Creek to Loring Avenue, walked my paddle board over the bridge and back in the water. Then I paddled all the way up to the Sand Bar. It was so peaceful and dead quiet as I got further up into Weir Creek. As I got closer to the Sand Bar, I started to hear the chatter of people talking and eating, and then pointing and cheering as I got closer to the Sand Bar. It really illustrates how wild the river can be, even when immediately abutting a busy bar and restaurant.



**An aerial view of The Lighthouse Inn and Weir Creek courtesy of The Lighthouse Inn archives.**

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### **Indispensable item you have when you are on/in the river**

For me it is something that nobody has to buy, and everyone should practice. That is situational and environmental awareness. Otherwise known as being aware of one's surroundings. As someone buried in financials and computers, it is important for me to pick my head up and pay attention on the river, or I will miss something. For me to watch a heron fish, see an osprey dive and watch a crab walk along the sandy bottom of the river is priceless. I try to be in tune with what is around me. I have to have that awareness on the river, otherwise how else will I enjoy it!

### **Favorite place on the river**

The lighthouse at The Lighthouse Inn. From the top, the views of the river, Weir Creek and Nantucket Sound and the peace, tranquility, and history of this lighthouse makes it so special. My favorite George Bernard Shaw quote is "I can think of no other edifice constructed by man as altruistic as a lighthouse. They were built only to serve". In 1850 the federal government appropriated \$4,000 to build the lighthouse near the breakwater of the mouth of the Bass River (Rock Island) to mark the entrance to the Bass River. (The river was dredged at a point in time, the mouth of the river was moved to its current location and West Dennis beach was created.)

In 1854, construction began on the light. Oxen were used to drag materials over the salt marshes and dunes. The light was lit on May 1, 1855 and continued to be in service until 1880, when the Lighthouse Service decided the Bass River Light was no longer necessary since a new light had been built at Stage Harbor in Chatham. One year later, the government changed its mind and decided to relight the Bass River Light. The light continued on until 1914, when it was decommissioned after the Cape Cod Canal opened. It stayed vacant until 1917 when Harry Noyes of the Noyes Buick Company in Boston bought it, enlarged the main house, built several buildings, and used the property as a private estate. The lighthouse beacon shines seasonally from May to October and is officially recognized as a private beacon by the Coast Guard.



**Spencer gazing up at the energy efficient lantern within the Lighthouse.**



**Spencer sharing some of the artifacts, memorabilia and the old Lighthouse lantern (which has been replaced by a more efficient one) in the museum room at The Lighthouse Inn**

### **Last book you read**

I just finished 1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus by Charles C. Mann about North America before Columbus. It is fascinating to me to read about the

coastal resiliency and climate. An interesting primary account of the first settlers who thought they were coming to the new world seeing clouds of passenger pigeons (clouds that blacked out the sky in the 1500s, extinct by 1920) that would black out the sky, and explosions of pest populations started breaking out. All this after smallpox killed 90% of the population. The Native Americans were in tune with living with the natural world around them, and without their tending, the environment on this continent suffered major, centuries-long disruption.



Another view from The Lighthouse Inn looking towards West Dennis Beach and the mouth of the Bass River.

### **How has life along the river changed**

It was not out of ordinary to see only flooding at astronomical high tides typically once or twice per year in the past. Now all winter, frequently at high tide there is 6" of water coming across our road. This is killing salt intolerant plants and hastening coastal bank erosion without roots to hold the soil in place. As a member of the Dennis Climate & Coastal Resiliency Advisory Committee our goals include mitigation, adaptation, flood prevention, emergency management response, and ways to address issues relating to climate change, to limit waste, and to decrease our carbon footprint.

At The Lighthouse Inn we have also focused on that by installing solar on three of our buildings to increase energy efficiency, including a system that heats our pool water by the sun, and planting drought and salt tolerant and 100% native plants on the property. We use drip irrigation lines and try to conserve our limited, valuable resources here.



**Solar panels were installed on three buildings at the Lighthouse Inn. View looking westward towards West Dennis Beach.**

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### **What must we be mindful of/what keeps you up at night**

What keeps me up at night, is this place that I grew up and have loved my whole life may not be habitable for my children. I call on these dear readers to get involved. You don't need a lot of resources, education, or time to get involved. I started volunteering on the town tourism committee and it snowballed from there to other committees and boards.

Everyone can contribute in their own ways! We need as many people to get involved as possible, bringing as many skills and differing perspectives as possible. I didn't think I had anything to offer such a complex set of problems but couldn't help but feel like I had to. I learned about myself that I am good at getting people together, to facilitate conversations and to get people who can solve these problems talking to each other. It has been hard since the pandemic, and with all the big global issues it is easy to get frustrated. We must act locally and get involved on the town and state levels. We have to help preserve beautiful places like this for future generations to enjoy. All these climate and natural resources organizations are here for a reason; we have a vital resource in the river, and it is a great place to visit and live!



**Spencer is showing the “cold patch” covering the hole in the road where the high tide comes up and has degraded the asphalt there. What used to be only an astronomical high side event is now regular occurring.**

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**Would you like to be interviewed for our Meet the River series?  
Do you know someone who has a connection to Bass River who we  
should meet?**

**WE WOULD LOVE TO TALK!**

**CONTACT US**



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