

## **Pinellas County's Federal Beach Erosion Control Program**

The beaches of Sand Key (from the Clearwater segment of "Sand Key" to N. Redington Beach), Treasure Island, and Long Key (St. Pete Beach) are nourished through a federal program administered by the Jacksonville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Pinellas County acts as the local sponsor for the program. Participation in the beach erosion control program ensures that our beaches are maintained at a sufficient width for recreation, habitat, and storm protection benefits.

Pinellas County's original federal beach erosion control study was published in 1953 under authority of the River & Harbor Act of 1930. This Act authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct shoreline erosion control studies (not construction) in cooperation with local governments. The River & Harbor Act of 1954 authorized the plan recommended in the '53 study. Because 80% of the beaches were privately owned at the time, the recommended federal cost share was only 5%. The plan allowed for federal participation for the 10-yr life of the project, and then the county was required to cover 100% of maintenance costs into perpetuity. The county allowed this particular authorization to expire.

The original 1954 Beach Erosion Control Study recommended federal participation in beach nourishment along portions of the four developed islands: Clearwater, Sand Key, Treasure Island and Long Key, and groin construction at the south end of each island. Because Pinellas County did not adopt this project, the local municipalities constructed the recommended terminal groins on their own.

The 1962 River & Harbor Act increased potential federal cost share to 50% for publicly owned shores. In response, a new Beach Erosion Control study was published in 1966. There was no change to the 10 project life; however, the potential for 50% federal cost share enticed the county into the federal program. The 1966 study recommended nourishment along the same portions of the four developed islands, but it also included periodic renourishment as needed along the *entire* shoreline of all four islands. The groins, having been constructed by local interests, were removed from the federally authorized project. [Click here to see a map of the federally authorized project.](#)

A revised study was published in 1984. The Water Resource Development Act of 1986 increased federal participation in the Pinellas County project (and others) to 50 years. Finally, a Limited Reevaluation Report updated the project economics in 1995 and supported a Project Cooperation Agreement that finally authorized the project in 1995.

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