

Upham Beach T-Groins

Long Key contains what used to be Pinellas County's most rapidly eroding beach, Upham Beach, on the north end of the barrier island. Upham Beach has been considered a "feeder beach" by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. When Upham was renourished every four years, the sand eroded rapidly and was transported to the south, thereby feeding the beaches along the rest of the island. [Click here](#) to watch a 1-minute movie of the 1996 Upham Beach Nourishment Project.

In an effort to slow the erosion at Upham Beach, the Geotextile T-Head Groin Project began in 2005. The project design included beach fill placement, five geotextile T-head groins, and closing the jetty/breakwater gap on the south side of Blind Pass. The goal of the project was to maintain a 40 ft wide beach while avoiding downdrift erosion of the pre-construction beach. The groins were intended to maintain the beach, increase the interval between nourishment projects, and allow for the use of Blind Pass as the lone sediment source for future nourishment projects. A short [paper](#) describes the project in more detail.

The University of South Florida Geology Department has been monitoring Upham Beach and the performance of the T-Groins following the 2006 renourishment project. Based on 25 months of monthly monitoring, no clear negative impact from the T-groin field to the downdrift beach has been identified. From 2006 to 2008, Upham Beach lost nearly 40% less sand than during the same period of time following nourishment from 2000 to 2002. Thanks to the T-groins, considerably less sand will be required for renourishment in 2009; thereby saving the County significant funds.



Due to the success of the experimental project in slowing erosion and saving money on renourishment, studies are underway to design permanent erosion control structures. The geotubes will be removed and replaced with rock structures as soon as possible given potential permitting constraints.