

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Scenic US 441 Corridor and the loop/spur roads, totaling approximately 45 miles from SR 331 to the Alachua/Marion County line, offers access to an unusually well-preserved section of Florida’s natural, scenic, recreational, historic and cultural heritage (see Figure 2.1). Among the intrinsic resources along the corridor are Paynes Prairie State Preserve; the University of Florida’s Lake Wauberg recreation area, forested and pastoral countryside interspersed with smaller lakes, prairies, and rural homesteads; and the historic communities of Micanopy, Rochelle, Evinston and Cross Creek. CR 325, and CR 346’s rural roadside environment offers refuge for the winter migration of sandhill cranes and viewing areas of bald eagles. The area along Scenic US 441 and the loop/spur roads offers a plethora of recreational opportunities, including bicycling, camping, bird watching, canoeing, hiking, and equestrian activities.



The highway enjoys a rich historical legacy and has already been honored as the Bartram Trail and the Chiles Trail, for its role in two of the most famous walks in Florida’s history. Place names such as Wacahoota, Tuscawilla, and Micanopy suggest the region’s rich Native American tradition. The place name of Orange Lake attests to the region’s former role in the production of Florida’s most valued cash crop. In addition, Scenic US 441 represents one of the more well- preserved sections of Florida’s pre-interstate highway system, with vestiges of stately palm-lined medians still remaining along some sections of the road.



Scenic US 441 is the backbone of a network of local scenic county roads, affording the opportunity for a number of interpretative loops and spurs. CR 325 passes through historic Cross Creek, one of the most significant sites in Florida’s literary history. CR 225 and SE 185 Avenue connect to historic Evinston and provide views of Orange Lake. The remnant stands of longleaf

pine and red oaks south of Orange Lake and into the horse country display hints of a past landscape dominated by hardwood forests and sandhill communities. The patches of forest that remain hint of a past landscape form that demonstrates the larger concept of landscape patterns within the region; namely a transition from a more karst topography in the northern part of the corridor to a more dry and upland habitat in the southern part of the corridor.

Another scenic loop road, CR 234, passes through historic Micanopy, the oldest inland town in the State of Florida. Micanopy, a former Seminole town, once called Cuscowilla and visited by William Bartram, was settled in 1821 as Wanton’s town. It suffered under Indian attacks during the Seminole War and later



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“Old Florida
Heritage Highway”

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experienced a citrus boom in the 1880s. Today, Micanopy is a haven for artists and is filled with antique shops and historic and archaeological sites.

One of the scenic spur roads is CR 18, Wacahoota Road, which borders Paynes Prairie on the west side of the preserve. Wacahoota Road includes vistas of live and red oaks, cattle grazing, and swampy woodlands. The Stardust Ranch, owned and operated by Jeanette Chitty can be seen from the roadway as well as a historic Jewish Community site. CR 18, like many of the loop and spur roads, is a popular route for bicycling enthusiasts.

Scenic US 441 and the loop and spur road's relative proximity and easy access to Interstate 75 at both ends of the corridor offer a unique opportunity to promote this corridor as a tourist resource for less hurried travelers. This, in turn can support the current trend toward contextually appropriate economic development, and ecotourism exemplified by the growing number of antique and bed and breakfast industries along the roadside communities.

