

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

US 441, between Paynes Prairie in Alachua County and the Marion County line, offers access to an unusually well-preserved section of Florida's natural and cultural heritage. Among the intrinsic resources along the Corridor are Payne's Prairie State Preserve, the University of Florida's Lake Wauberg recreation area, forested and pastoral countryside interspersed with smaller lakes, prairies, country estates and rural homesteads, and the historic community of Micanopy. The Highway's rural roadside environs offer refuge for the winter migration of Sandhill Cranes, among other signature species.

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, the highway 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.

The Highway serves as an access artery to a network of scenic local roads in Alachua County, affording the opportunity for a number of interpretative loops, including one which passes through historic Cross Creek, one of the most significant sites in Florida's literary history. US 441's relative proximity and easy access to Interstate 75 at both ends of the corridor offers a unique opportunity to promote this corridor as a touristic resource for less hurried travelers. This, in turn, can support the current trend toward contextually appropriate economic development, exemplified by the growing antique and bed and breakfast industries in the roadside communities.