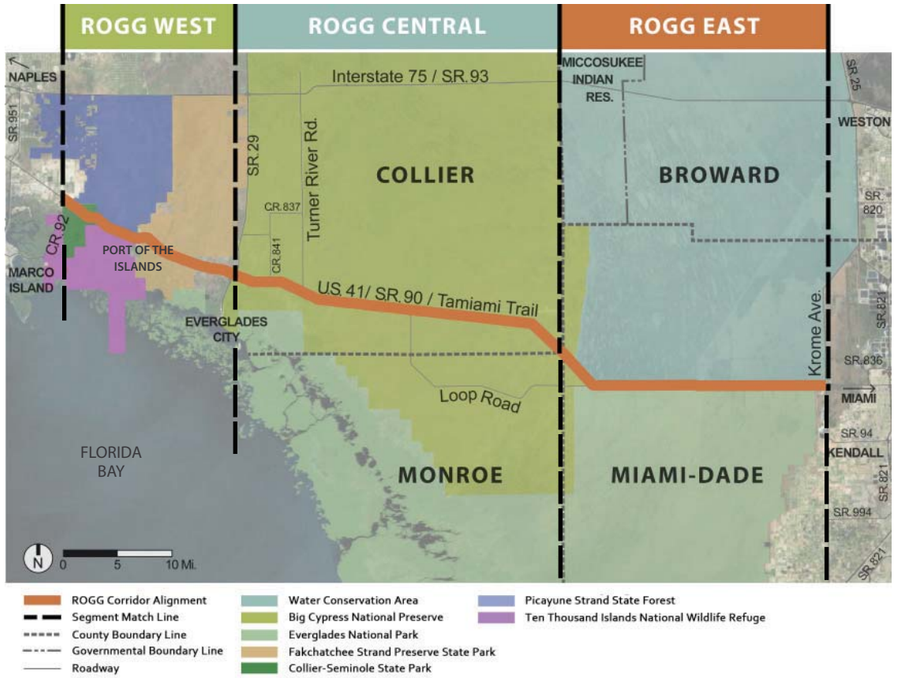
2.2 CORRIDOR EXISTING CONDITIONS



Regional Map defining ROGG West, ROGG Central, and ROGG East segments

Exploring the existing conditions of the ROGG Study Area reveals vast landscapes full of ecological wonders, but also an area full of limitations born from the desire to restore and preserve a landscape that cannot be found anywhere else on earth. Opportunities to explore and sightsee in the Everglades are largely confined to experiences from vehicles or other motorized devises, such as airboats or swamp buggies. A better understanding of the Study Area on a landscape observational level is needed to fully comprehend the complexities of this region as well as the isolation the Everglades provides.

The purpose of this section is to document the conditions and features occurring within the ROGG Study Area and the implications of those conditions and features for the routing, connections, and configuration of the ROGG. To summarize the existing conditions of the Study Area, this section contains five elements:

- *Overview of the ROGG Study Area* – This element summarizes the selection of the Study Area and notes the boundaries of the Study Area's planning segments.
- *Review Methodology* – This element describes the review process utilized by the Project Team to document existing conditions.
- *Existing Conditions* – This element summarizes existing conditions found within each segment of the Study Area.
- *Existing Points of Interest* – This element summarizes the characteristics of existing points of interest and identifies focus areas that present opportunities or challenges.
- *Opportunities and Constraints Summary* - For each Study Area segment, this element summarizes important opportunities and constraints.

2.2.1 Overview of the ROGG Study Area

The portion segment of U.S. 41 identified for the ROGG feasibility study and master plan was selected because it is the southern-most east to west transportation corridor connecting both sides of the Florida peninsula and is the main visitor travel corridor for access to six federal and state public lands including:

- Everglades National Park (ENP),
- Big Cypress National Preserve,
- Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge (NWR),
- Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park,
- Collier-Seminole State Park,
- Picayune Strand State Forest.

General Geographic Description

Located at the southern tip of peninsular Florida, the proposed ROGG would run for approximately 76 miles, from Krome Avenue (SW 177th Ave.) in Miami-Dade County on Florida's southeast coast to C.R. 92 and beyond to 6L's Road near Naples, Florida. In addition to the large number of parks and preserves, the ROGG Study Area also occurs within the jurisdictions of at least six different governing bodies including:

- United States Federal Government,
- State of Florida,
- Miami-Dade County,
- Collier County,
- Miccosukee Tribe of Florida,
- Seminole Tribe of Florida.

The ROGG Study Area closely aligns with that of U.S. 41; a two-lane, two-way historic highway linking Miami on the east coast to Naples on the west coast of the state. Although the majority of the motorized vehicular transportation burden was relieved by the construction of I-75 (Alligator Alley) in 1969, U.S. 41 is still the only paved road linking the eastern and western coasts of South Florida that is available for use by cyclists, pedestrians, and hikers. ROGG would serve as a critical pedestrian linkage between the municipalities of Miami, Naples, Everglades City, and the Miccosukee Indian Village.

The primary conflict between U.S. 41 and ROGG is not the volume of traffic on the roadway, but rather the rate of speed and constrained ROW in that traffic is traveling. For the majority of its length, U.S. 41 has a ROW that is approximately 100 feet to 200 feet wide. However, only a small portion actually comprises the maintained U.S. 41 ROW, typically 50 feet. Much of the remaining ROW is relatively undisturbed wetlands or natural areas. The U.S. 41 ROW is significantly more constrained east of the Miami-Dade County line due to limited shoulder widths, continuous guardrails on both sides of the road, and nearby canal banks. The potential for a continuous trail along the western portions of the Study Area would not be without a challenge as well; the western 18.2 miles contains 36 bridges that the trail that would need to traverse.

There are numerous potential destinations along the ROGG Study Area that range from local eateries to large National Parks. Because of its adjacency to numerous parks and natural areas, ROGG would provide trail users with vital access to a wide variety of natural sites and unique ecosystems. Trail users will have access to natural environments, such as those seen in the Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve.

Pristine natural environments are habitats for native flora and fauna which together provide users a prime destination for bird watching, photography, fishing, and unique opportunities for environmental education and outreach. Furthermore, many of the natural areas within the Study Area are conducive for active-recreation activities, such as hiking, biking, kayaking, or exploring in an ORV.

The trail itself may become a destination, albeit one of varying value for different users. The greenway would provide local residents with new opportunities for active recreation and alternative transportation near their homes. It would also serve as a regional draw for distance cyclists or endurance runners who want to be able to travel for long, uninterrupted distances and by tourists seeking a day-trip to explore the Everglades.

Segments

Over the span of 76 miles, the ROGG Study Area provides a diverse collection of landscape types and conditions offering variation in experiences. In addition, man-made barriers helped define segments that were studied and documented in further detail. For this study, three distinct segments were defined using geographical borders and man-made features. Following are descriptions of each of the segments:

ROGG West

Beginning at 6Ls Road, east of the city of Naples, the western portion of the ROGG Study Area extends for 18.2 miles to S.R. 29/ C.R. 29. U.S. 41 in this portion of the Study Area crosses 12 roadway intersections and 37 waterways with associated bridges. Potential connections include six adjacent private attractions, four local and state parks and three existing trailheads. Major road interchanges include: S.R./C.R. 29 and C.R. 92 / San Marco Road. Traveling east, the width of the ROW of U.S. 41 within the Study Area is fairly uniform.
Unique ecological systems of the ROGG West segment

include the Picayune and Fakahatchee Strands, which are comprised of cypress strands, wet prairie, and pine flatwoods in lowland areas and subtropical hardwood hammock in upland areas. Florida panther habitat exists in the area, including public lands that connect to the Panther NWR located immediately north of the ROGG Study Area.

ROGG Central

ROGG Central spans from S.R. 29/ C.R. 29 to the Miami-Dade County Line, covering a total distance of 32.7 miles. U.S. 41 within this portion of the Study Area includes at least ten roadway intersections and 28 bridges. Three private attractions, two housing communities, seven parks and six trailheads facilities are located along or adjacent to U.S. 41. Major road intersections in ROGG Central include C.R. 84 / Birdon Road, C.R. 839 / Turner River Road and C.R. 94.

The ROGG Central segment of the Study Area is dominated by one large ecologically significant area: Big Cypress National Preserve. The primary ecological communities consists of wet prairie and cypress forest, while areas of mangrove are present near the coast.

ROGG East

Traveling east, the ROGG East segment spans a distance of 26.2 miles, from the Miami-Dade County Line to Krome Avenue (SW 177th Ave.). U.S. 41 exhibits 27 roadway intersections or driveways and five waterways with associated bridges in this portion of the Study Area. Connections include nine private attractions, private residences, one park and one trailhead. Krome Avenue and Loop Road are the two primary road intersections within the ROGG East segment.

Bordered primarily by ENP to the south, the ROGG East segment contains vast swaths of sawgrass and marsh ecological communities with scattered tree islands. Viewsheds are typically wide and far reaching, while views within the U.S. 41 corridor are largely contained by invasive vegetation or levees. Extensive restoration projects associated with (CERP) are proposed throughout this segment of the ROGG Study Area.

2.2.2 Review Methodology

The Project Team began to research and analyze each segment of the ROGG Study Area by compiling extensive GIS databases for physical conditions, landscape features, recreation elements, transportation features, and other aspects to prepare base maps. In November 2012, the Project Team performed a three-day long analysis of the Study Area, beginning at the western end at C.R. 92 and working east to Trail Glades Sports Shooting Range on U.S. 41 in Miami-Dade County. The analysis of the Study Area conducted during the site review included high-level observations of existing facilities, maintained ROW, natural resources, and potential opportunities, constraints and impacts to the feasibility of constructing the ROGG.

The results of this analysis included the identification of focus areas representing points of interest within the ROGG Study Area that may pose opportunities or constraints for the feasibility assessment and master plan. Most of the identified focus areas either consisted of areas with typical conditions found in the segment or unique conditions requiring innovative solutions for the feasibility assessment. General categories of focus areas were identified as part of this analysis, including ROW characteristics, existing trailheads and trails, cultural resources, environmentally sensitive resources, and bridges. Descriptions of existing conditions for specific focus areas identified in each ROGG segment are provided in the segment descriptions later in this chapter, but the following provides a general description of these focus areas and the characteristics comprising the definition of the focus area.

1. **Right-of-Way (ROW)**
   This category of focus areas consists of exceptionally narrow or wide portions of two aspects of ROW: Maintained ROW and Designated ROW. Maintained ROW is the area consisting of U.S. 41 that is owned by FDOT, is grassed or routinely cleared of vegetation, and maintained by FDOT District 1 or FDOT District 6, while Designated ROW is defined as the entire roadway property owned by the FDOT. Focus areas with narrow Maintained ROW exhibit ROW widths of 40 feet or less as a width less than 40 feet would not accommodate the existing 28 foot wide highway and an additional 12 feet for an implemented pathway. Focus areas with wide Maintained ROW exhibit ROW widths greater than 75 feet, which would allow for the trail and additional parking or amenities. Designated ROW within ROGG Study Area varies in width from 34 feet to over 200 feet. Designated ROW less than 50 feet in width would pose a challenge for the addition of a trail. The following characteristics summarize focus areas for ROW:

   Characteristics:
   - Maintained ROW less than 40 feet,
   - Maintained ROW greater than 75 feet,
   - Designated ROW less than 50 feet.

2. **Existing Trailheads and Trails**
   This category of focus areas consists of trails and trailheads that exist within the ROGG Study Area and provide opportunities to connect ROGG to other regional trail systems. Focus areas includes existing trailheads and trails that begin or cross U.S. 41.

   Characteristics
   - Any trails or trailheads that begin or cross the U.S. 41.

3. **Cultural Resource Features**
   Designated Historic Structures
   This category of focus areas consists of historic structures and the facilities adjacent to those structures that occur within the Study Area. These structures were taken into account during the planning and design of the Study Area, as they should not be negatively impacted by ROGG activities.

   Characteristics
   - Any structures within a one mile radius of the corridor that have been designated as historic.

   Culturally Significant Lands
   This category of focus areas include significant lands within tribal ownership, cultural resource sites, or other features used in the daily and/or ceremonial life of tribal members within the Study Area. Potential impacts from ROGG facilities will need to be avoided unless otherwise approved by the tribes.

   Characteristics:
   - Residential or commercial sites within tribal ownership within the Study Area used for daily and/or ceremonial uses,
   - Portions of the Study Area located within 1/2 mile of a ceremonial site.

4. **Environmentally Sensitive Resource Features**
   Although wetlands, listed species habitat, hydrological system components, and other environmental resources occur throughout the Study Area, this category of focus areas addresses specific landscape features, specific identified improvements for regional hydrological restoration, and/or Critical Habitat locations within the Study Area. The implementation of ROGG at these locations may require unique or additional permitting requirements or designs for a trail to accommodate specific operating conditions, future hydrological restoration activities, or listed species requirements. In addition to these focus areas, improvements for ROGG will be required to address potential effects on all of the environmental resources within the Study Area. Characteristics of Environmental Resource Feature focus areas include any designated Critical Habitat, structures required for implementing CERP or other restoration projects, or unique landscape features.

   Characteristics:
   - Areas within one mile radius of the U.S. 41 corridor of any designated Critical Habitat, structures for CERP related projects or unique landscape features.

5. **Primary Hubs**
   For the purposes of the focus area analysis, primary hubs are defined as existing activity centers that provide, or could potentially provide, access to trail-related activities, food, water, restrooms, lodging and/or multi-modal transportation. Primary hub focus areas may include parking, restrooms, multi-modal transportation access, and/or facilities for food and water.

   Characteristics:
   - Private and publicly owned sites with existing or potential future parking, restrooms, multi-modal transportation access and/or facilities for food and water.

6. **Bridges**
   This focus area category consists of bridges on U.S. 41. Many of these bridges are narrow with limited shoulders between travel lanes and bridge guard walls. Narrow bridges pose a challenge for the feasibility of the trail, as additional construction or modification of existing structures would be required to accommodate a trail facility on the bridge or the construction of separate facilities would be required.

Boardwalk trail at Kirby S. Storter Park (Big Cypress National Preserve)

2.2.3 ROGG West Existing Conditions

Overview

The ROGG West segment is 18.2 miles long, beginning at 6L's Road in southeast Naples and terminating at S.R. 29/C.R.29. The western most segment running from 6L's Road to C.R. 92 was contained in the FDOT NEPA Study (415621-1-22-01) entitled U.S. 41 PD&E Study from C.R. 951 to C.R. 92 and will not be included in further analysis or documentation as part of this Feasibility Study and Master Plan process.

Although the shortest of the three segments, the ROGG West segment is home to several significant state and federal park facilities, including the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, Ten Thousand Islands NWR, Collier-Seminole State Park, and Picayune Strand State Park. The large amount of natural lands within and adjacent to these facilities has made this segment a prime destination for fishing and airboating, resulting in the presence of several commercial providers and rental companies.

Two principal route opportunities exist for ROGG West and both are parallel to U.S. 41. Direct proximity to the U.S. 41 ROW is the main alignment alternative for this segment of ROGG. Two Old Tamiami Trail segments totaling less than one mile in length provide two short additional alignment alternatives. Following are summaries for each alternative alignment option:

Route Alignment Options Observed

U.S. 41 - Primary Alignment

Summary of Existing Condition

Opportunities for alternative alignments are limited in ROGG West due to the proximity of the Tamiami Canal on the north side with a guardrail barrier and extensive wetlands south of the maintained U.S. 41 ROW. Maintained ROW dimensions average between 50 feet and 60 feet in width. The southern shoulder averages between 15 and 18 feet while the paved portions vary from four to eight feet. The grassed shoulder extends an additional 10 to 14 feet. The southern shoulder slopes at an average 1:5 slope to the south and is abutted by wetlands for the majority of the segment's length. The width of the northern shoulder is constrained to an average of six to seven feet by the presence of a guardrail barrier adjacent to the Tamiami Canal.

A key feature to the U.S. 41 roadway in the ROGG West segment is the presence of 36 bridges. At many of the existing bridges, the roadway shoulders narrow to three feet to accommodate the bridge widths that typically provide 30 to 32 feet of total clearance. Additionally, U.S. 41 briefly becomes a divided, four-lane highway for approximately 0.5 mile at its intersection with the Port of the Islands residential community.

Vegetation along U.S. 41 in ROGG West is composed largely of cypress swamp, wet prairie and mangrove wetlands. The majority of the wet prairies occur on the north side of U.S. 41, with the highest concentration being located between Collier-Seminole State Park and the entrance to the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. In this same area, mangrove wetlands become more prevalent, predominantly on the south side of U.S. 41, with the highest concentration occurring to the east-southeast of Collier-Seminole State Park. The lower height and decreased density of vegetation within wet prairies allow for long views and vistas from the roadway, especially in the western portions of the alignment.

Critical Nodes

1. **U.S. 41 and C.R. 92/San Marco Road:** C.R. 92/San Marco Road connects U.S. 41 with Marco Island to the southwest. This intersection forms the western terminus of the ROGG West segment and the overall ROGG Study Area.

2. **U.S. 41 and Newport Drive/Peacock Lane:** Located approximately six miles east of C.R. 92, Newport Drive and Peacock Drive are the primary motorized vehicular connections into the Port of the Islands residential developments.

3. **U.S. 41 and Old Tamiami Trail** (near the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park): Approximately 9.3 miles east of C.R. 92, U.S. 41 intersects with two spurs of Old Tamiami Trail roadbed.

4. **U.S. 41 and S.R. 29/ C.R. 29:** The intersection of U.S. 41 and S.R. 29 is the eastern terminus of the ROGG West segment. S.R. 29 serves as a linkage both north to I-75 and south to Everglades City and ENP Gulf Coast Visitor Center at Chokoloskee.

Old Tamiami Trail Spurs - Alternative

Summary of Existing Condition

The current alignment of U.S. 41 bisects an "S" curve that was present in the historical alignment of Old Tamiami Trail, resulting in two bifurcated roadbed segments to the north and south of U.S. 41 near the entrance to the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. The roadbed is composed of severely degraded asphalt, and is surrounded by overgrown, dense vegetation on both sides. There is motorized vehicular access to this spur at its westernmost terminus via an access roadway. The northeastern spur of Old Tamiami Trail has a canal running along its northern edge, which has pulled the Tamiami Canal away from the current U.S. 41 alignment in the vicinity of the Old Tamiami Trail spur. The eastern terminus of this spur is separated from U.S. 41 and is the future location of a new visitor center and parking area for Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park.

The planned Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park visitor center will be located on the north side of U.S. 41, immediately east of the current location of the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk. The visitor center will utilize the northeastern Old Tamiami Trail spur for the center and parking facilities. Planned amenities include parking for 50 vehicles, a drop-off area, restrooms and information kiosk. Park staff would prefer that any ROGG facilities are located within this development area. A targeted completion date has not be set.

The southwestern spur of Old Tamiami Trail does not have an adjacent canal. The roadbed is of a similar construction to that of its northern counterpart; however, it is in better physical condition. The southern spur is accessible from U.S. 41, by traveling through land owned by the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, via two paved access roads located approximately 400 feet apart at the eastern terminus of the spur. This spur dead-ends approximately 100 feet from its western intersection with the U.S. 41 roadway.

tical Nodes

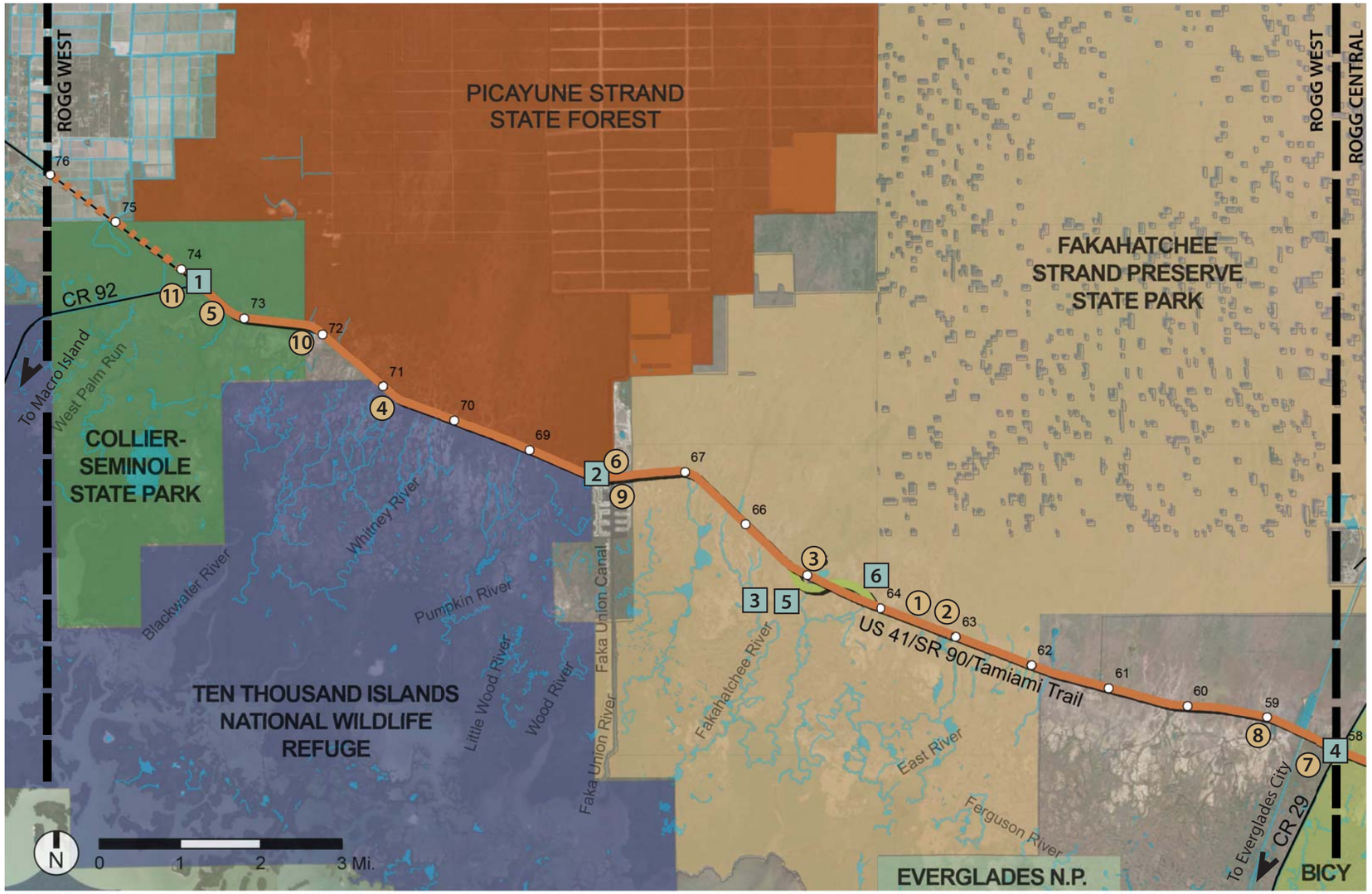
5. **U.S. 41 and Old Tamiami Trail (southern spur):** The southern spur only has access from U.S. 41 at its eastern terminus via two paved access roads.

6. **U.S. 41 and Old Tamiami Trail (northern spur):** In contrast, the northern spur has access only at its western terminus via a roughly paved access road, but is currently blocked by a locked motorized

The Bay City Walking Dredge at Collier-Seminole State Park

Looking west along U.S. 41 in the ROGG West vicinity showing existing guardrail and overhead utility lines on the northern side of the roadway and maintained ROW to the south side of the roadway.

ROGG West - Existing Conditions Base Map



ROGG West

Location: C.R. 92/San Marco Road to S.R. 29

Length: 18.2 miles

Critical Nodes

1. U.S. 41 and C.R. 92/ San Marco Road
2. U.S. 41 and Newport Drive/Peacock Lane
3. U.S. 41 and Old Tamiami Trail (near the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve)
4. U.S. 41 and S.R. 29
5. U.S. 41 and Old Tamiami Trail (southern spur)
6. U.S. 41 and Old Tamiami Trail (northern spur)

Points of Interest

1. Wayside Park
2. Small Roadside Park and Canoe Launch
3. Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park
4. Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge and Marsh Trail
5. Collier-Seminole State Park
6. Picayune Strand State Forest
7. Intersection of S.R. 29 and U.S. 41
8. Swampland Airboat Tours
9. Port of the Islands Everglades Adventure Resort
10. Corey Billie's Airboat Rides
11. Intersection of C.R. 92 and U.S. 41

Legend

- Segment Match Line
- County Boundary Line
- Governmental Boundary Line
- Roadway
- 61 Mile Marker (from Krome Ave.)
- U.S. 41 Alignment
- U.S. 41 Aligment (within FDOT NEPA Study 415621-1-22-01)
- Old Tamiami Trail Alignment
- Waterway
- Big Cypress National Preserve (BICY)
- Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park
- Everglades National Park
- Collier-Seminole State Park
- Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge
- Picayune Strand State Forest
- # Point of Interest
- # Critical Node

See page 44 and 46 for description of # items.

vehicular gate.

2.2.4 ROGG West Points of Interest

A key attribute of the ROGG West segment is the ecological diversity and varied natural setting that is readily observable from U.S. 41. The ROGG West segment is home to three state preserves, parks, or forests, and one national wildlife refuge. Additionally, ROGG West is also home to one of the few densely populated residential developments found along the entire ROGG Study Area: Port of the Islands Resort.

Public Points of Interest

Parks and Preserves

1 **Wayside Park:** Located on the south side of U.S. 41 approximately 16.3 miles east of C.R. 92, Wayside Park provides paved parking and several shaded picnic tables The parking area provides approximately 15 unlined parking spaces. This area has the potential to become a trailhead parking area for ROGG.

2 **Small Roadside Park and Canoe Launch:** Approximately 0.3 mile east of Wayside Park along the south side of U.S. 41 is a gravel road that leads to open water where a canoe launch is located. There is limited, unpaved parking at the launch, the majority of which occurs at the southern terminus of the gravel roadway.

3 **Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park:** Also referred to as "the Amazon of North America," the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park entrance is located approximately 9.3 miles east of C.R. 92 along the north side of U.S. 41. The Park is an approximately 80,000-acre, freshwater swamp stretching from U.S. 41 to I-75, and is unique in part because it is the only place in the world where cypress and royal palm both occur in the canopy of an old growth swamp. Available recreation activities at the Preserve are passive in nature, including walking, hiking, and wildlife viewing. The primary attraction is the 0.6 mile Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk.

4 **Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge and Marsh Trail:** Located 3 miles east of C.R. 92 and south of U.S. 41, the 35,000-acre Ten Thousand Islands NWR contains one of the largest expanses of mangrove forest in North America, covering approximately 23,000 acres. These mangroves provide habitat for more than 200 species of fish and almost 200 species of birds. The remaining 12,000 acres in the Refuge occur along its northern border and consist primarily of brackish marsh and ponds, coastal oak hammocks, and tropical hardwoods.

5 **Collier-Seminole State Park:** The primary entrance to the Collier-Seminole State Park is located along the south side of U.S. 41, approximately 0.4 miles east of C.R. 92. The 7,271 acre park offers users a wide range of recreational activities, including kayaking, cycling, hiking, fishing, birding, and picnicking. For a fee, the park rents canoes and camp sites (including primitive, youth, and full-facility sites). Collier-Seminole State Park is located within the vast mangrove forests of southwest Florida and is the home to one of the few remaining royal palm stands in Florida. In addition, the park is also a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark as it maintains the last remaining "walking dredge" originally used to build U.S. 41 in the late 1920's.

6 **Picayune Strand State Forest:** The 78,000-acre Picayune Strand State Forest is located between 1-75 and U.S. 41, with primary entrances at Everglades Boulevard to the north end and Sabal Palm Road to the west. Picayune Stand is a hydric forest comprised of cypress swamp, wet prairie, and pine flatwoods in the lowlands and subtropical hardwood hammocks in the uplands. Access to Picayune Strand State Forest consists of a recreation site on the north side of U.S. 41 immediately west of the Faka Union Canal.

Private/Commercial Points of Interest

7 **Intersection of S.R. 29 and U.S. 41:** There is a small commercial core at the intersection of S.R. 29/ C.R. 29 and U.S. 41 that consists of the Collier County Sheriff's Station and the Everglades Chamber of Commerce (both in the ROGG Central segment), as well as a gas station and Subway restaurant in the ROGG West segment portion of the intersection.

8 **Swampland Airboat Tours:** Located approximately one mile west of S.R. 29 on the south side of U.S. 41, Swampland Airboat Tours is a private company that provides guided airboat tours. The site includes a paved parking area, private water access, and a small outbuilding to the rear of the parking lot, which contains a gift shop.

9 **Port of the Islands Everglades Adventure Resort:** The Port of the Islands Everglades Adventure Resort is a private, adventure-themed resort that is located within the Port of the Islands residential development that is six miles east of C.R. 92 on the south side of U.S. 41. The resort offers a variety of lodging accommodations as well as outdoor adventure activities such as rifle marksmanship, hiking adventures, eco-excursions, bicycling, and hunting expeditions as well as tennis and swimming. In addition, the resort offers more passive activities, including birding, photography and chartered fishing. There is also a full-service marina owned by the Collier County Parks and Recreation Department providing direct access to the backwaters of the Everglades and the Gulf of Mexico.

10 **Corey Billie's Airboat Rides:** Located 1.6 miles east of C.R. 92 along U.S. 41, Corey Billie's Airboat Rides is the closest private airboat tour provider to the greater Naples area. In addition to guided tours, the site provides a gift shop with restroom facilities, a paved parking lot, and water access via a boardwalk.

11 **Intersection of C.R. 92 and U.S. 41:** Located at the intersection of U.S. 41 and C.R. 92/ San Marco Rd., this area is a small commercial node that consists of a gas station, an alligator exhibit (Hold & Hug Alligator Exhibit), and a restaurant (Lagoona Grille). All facilities are in separate structures on the south side of U.S. 41; although they share a linear parking lot.

Canoe and boat launch at Collier-Seminole State Park

Entrance to the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge

The Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk at Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park

Public Draft - December 2014

Typical Existing Conditions

Roadway (ROW)

Typical ROW along the ROGG West segment averages a maintained width of 65 feet wide, and ranges from 45 to 95 feet. This portion of the corridor is typically uniform in scale and construction. Travel lanes vary from 11-12 feet in width, while shoulders for the highway are typically five feet wide on the south side and range from five to twelve feet on the north side. Images of the typical roadway cross-section are shown below.

Bridges

With the exception of the bridge just west of Port of the Islands, most bridges in the corridor are identical in scale and construction. The typical bridge is approximately 32 feet wide overall with two 12-foot wide travel lanes and four foot wide shoulders on both sides of the road. Bridges within the corridor pose difficulty for the implementation of the trail due to their narrow width.

Landscape (habitat)

Typical habitat of the western portion of the ROGG Study Area includes oak hammock, marsh, wet prarie and mangrove forest. Scattered pinelands occur, especially on the western portion of the ROGG West segment. Cattail dominated marshes occur within areas historically used for agriculture.

Typical U.S. 41 paved ROW with narrow paved shoulder on north side

Port of the Islands bridge for U.S. 41, view from west-bound lanes looking west

Freshwater marsh and wet prairie

Typical U.S. 41 roadway section with wider shoulder between travel lane and guardrail

Typical narrow bridge crossing for U.S. 41

Mangrove and stream crossings

Focus Areas

1. **Right-of-Way**
   Narrow:
   - None Observed

   Wide:
   - San Marco Road to Collier Seminole State Park
   - Ten Thousand Islands NWR Marsh Trail
   - Port of the Islands
   - Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park

2. **Existing Trails and Trailheads**
   - Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk at Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park
   - Collier-Seminole State Park
   - Ten Thousand Islands NWR Marsh Trail

3. **Designated Historic Structures**
   - Weaver's Station within the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park
   - Bay City walking dredge within Collier-Seminole State Park

4. **Environmentally Sensitive Resources Features**
   - Area east of C.R. 92 (Critical Habitat)
   - Port of the Islands (Critical Habitat)
   - U.S. 41 Culvert Enhancements for Picayune Strand Restoration Project
   - Florida Panther Focus Area

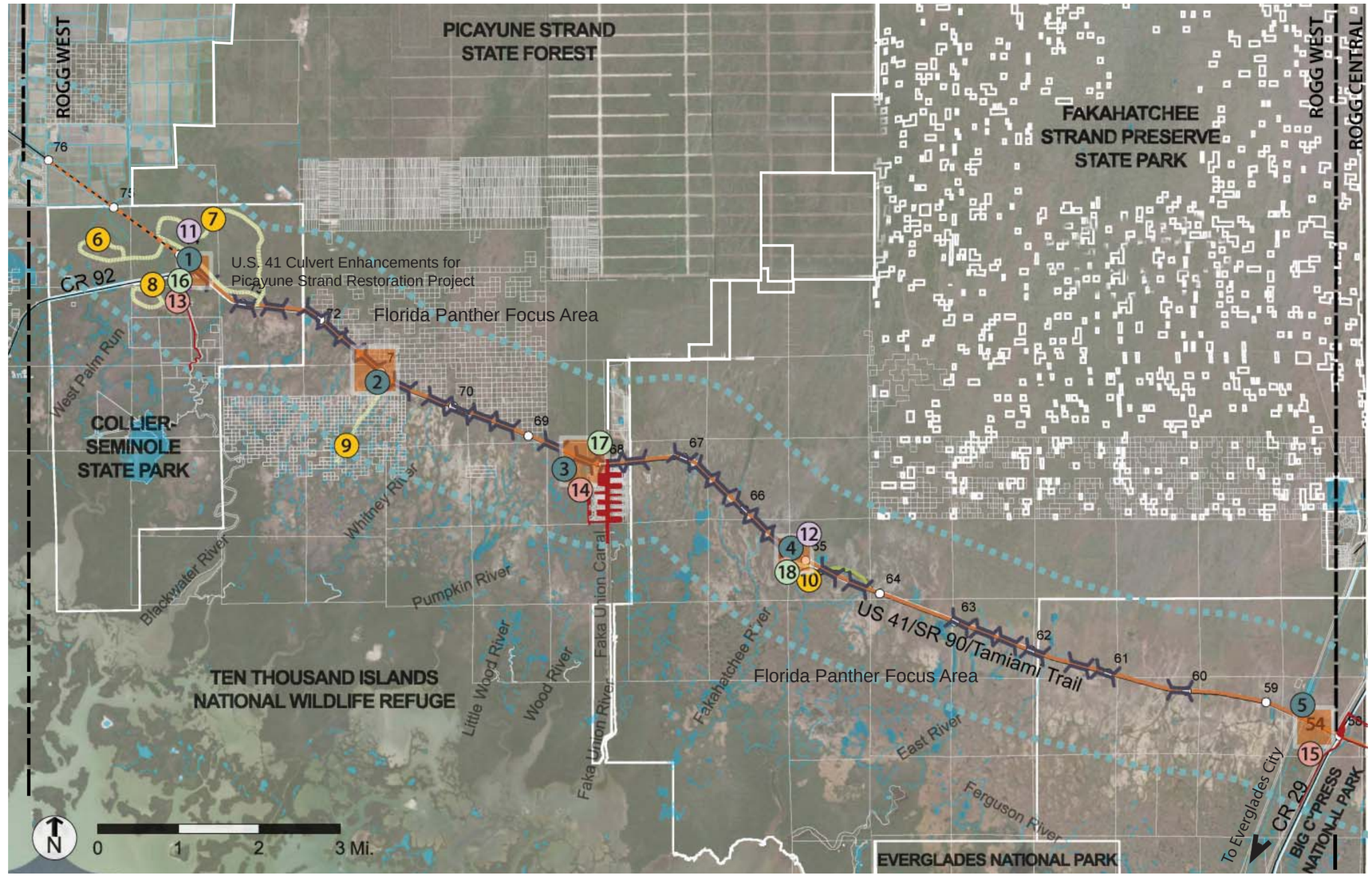
5. **Primary Hubs**
   - Collier-Seminole State Park
   - Port of the Islands Marina
   - Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park
   - Everglades City

6. **Bridges**
   - 36 bridges overall

Old Tamiami Trail Spur Entrance to Weaver's Station
Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park

City Hall in Everglades City

ROGG West Focus Areas Map



Legend

- Segment Match Line
- County Boundary Line
- Governmental Boundary Line
- Roadway
- 59 Mile Marker (from Krome Ave.)
- U.S. 41 Alignment
- U.S. 41 Alignment (within FDOT NEPA Study 415621-1-22-01)
- Old Taimiami Trail Alignment
- 1 Mile Study Area
- Existing Trail
- Waterway
- Bridge
- ROW Focus Area
- Critical Habitat
- # Right-of-Way (ROW)
- # Existing Trailheads and Trails
- # Cultural Resources Feature
- # Environmentally Sensitive Resources Feature
- # Primary Hub

See page 49 for identification of # items.

Right-of-Way (ROW)

Wide ROW includes any maintained ROW greater than 70 feet. Wide ROW allows for ample space for any proposed trail and room for potential parking spaces.

Five portions of U.S. 41 have a wide ROW within the ROGG West segment:

1. San Marco road throughout the Collier-Seminole State Park entrances
2. Ten Thousand Islands NWR Marsh Trail
3. Port of the Islands
4. Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park
5. S.R. 29/ C.R. 29 intersection

Existing Trailheads and Trails

Existing trails and trailheads that occur on or along the Study Area may be an opportunity to connect to a proposed trail.

Five trails currently exist within the ROGG West segment:

6. Collier-Seminole 3.5 Mile Bike Trail
7. Collier-Seminole Hiking Trail
8. Royal Palm Hammock Trail
9. Ten Thousand Islands NWR Marsh Trail
10. Big Cypress Bend Trail

Environmentally Sensitive Resources Features

Critical Habitat for the West Indian Manatee is found in several locations within the ROGG West segment. Critical Habitat spans portions of:

13. Collier-Seminole State Park
14. Port of the Islands Marina
15. S.R. 29 intersection

The entire segment is within the Florida Panther Focus Area, which is part of the core habitat for Florida panthers in Florida. The Picayune Strand Restoration CERP project includes the installation of culverts under U.S. 41 for hydrological improvements in the area.

Primary Hubs

Four existing primary hubs are present in the ROGG West segment:

16. Collier-Seminole State Park
17. Port of the Islands
18. Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park
- Everglades City (not shown)

Restrooms, parking and access to trails are available at three locations. Private parking, restrooms and access to food and drink are available in Everglades City

Cultural Resource Features

There are two designated historic sites or landmarks within the ROGG West segment. Weaver's Station is within the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park and is used to host one of U.S. 41's original way stations built by Barron Collier in 1928.

The Bay City Walking Dredge is located in Collier-Seminole State Park and is a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark.

11. Bay City Walking Dredge
12. Weaver's Station

Bridges

36 bridges occur along U.S. 41 within the ROGG West segment and are shown on the adjacent map.

Typical Bridge

ROGG West Opportunities and Constraints Summary

The ROGG West segment of the Study Area enjoys an abundance of existing destinations and activities for future trail users to enjoy. Existing conditions are favorable for the implementation of an alternate mode of transportation, which would allow for large influxes of visitors to access destinations while also enjoying the natural wonders of the landscape between the destinations.

The biggest opportunity observed for ROGG West is an abundance of existing facilities that could serve as trailheads with minimum improvements needed. Most existing destinations provide parking, while some provide nearby restrooms and access to food and water, both of which are commonly needed amenities for trailheads. An additional planned facility is the new visitor center for Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, which will include parking, restrooms and information for visitors. Each of the existing four separate state and federal lands entities immediately adjacent to U.S. 41 provide either parking and/or restrooms for trail users.

An opportunity to provide connections into three communities, including Naples, San Marco and Everglades City, also makes this portion of the Study Area unique. With needed hotels and restaurants already in place, these communities stand to benefit economically from an increased number of visitors using the trail. Connections to existing trails and boardwalks at Collier-Seminole State Park, Ten Thousand Islands NWR and Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park offer additional opportunities for various user types that may seek hiking, kayaking, canoeing, back-packing, mountain biking, and other types of outdoor recreation.

Constraints along the ROGG West segment consist primarily of four items: bridges, wetlands, Florida panther habitat, and EFH. In total, 36 bridges exist along the ROGG West segment with many having been constructed using a pile and slab technique that prevents the use of cantilever design for expansion to the bridge when routing the trail. In addition, most bridges are 32 feet in width which does not allow for an appropriate bike lane of five feet per FDOT standards for roadway with posted speed limits of 45 mph. This results in a need to evaluate separate trail bridges at many locations, which will increase potential impacts to surrounding areas and costs for construction.

The second major constraint is existing wetlands. Though the designated ROW for U.S. 41 ranges from 150 to 200 feet in width, the maintained ROW is much smaller with widths typically ranging between 45 and 65 feet. The north side of the ROW contains several constraints due to the proximity of the Tamiami Canal, existing utility lines, and a vehicle guardrail. The south side of the ROW contains most of the remaining designated ROW that the existing U.S. 41 roadbed and fill currently do not occupy. However, eight feet of stabilized shoulder is needed for emergency pull-offs, resulting in approximately seven to twelve feet of remaining maintained ROW which the trail could utilize.

The third major constraint is the location of the corridor within the Panther Focus Area. While not considered Critical Habitat under the terms of the ESA, the USFWS has designated the Panther Focus Area as part of the core habitat for Florida panthers within the state. Construction within the Panther Focus Area is allowed, but mitigation is required for impacts to habitats identified in guidelines by the USFWS. This mitigation can add substantial costs to the implementation of any project requiring impacts to both uplands and wetlands within the area. The fourth major constraint is the occurence of EFH. Construction of projects within EFH require consultation with the NMFS, but mitigation is required for impacts that are permitted by the NFMS as part of the consultation. Mitigation for EFH impacts is limited in availability and may require a project specific mitigation project. Though these constraints present a number of challenging situations, the ROGG has the ability to remain flexible in routing and design with a number of innovative solutions.

Beginning of ROGG Central at the Collier County-line along U.S. 41

Big Cypress National Preserve Oasis Visitor Center

Unpaved portion of Loop Road, approximately 5.3 miles west of the Collier County-line

2.2.5 ROGG Central Existing Conditions

Overview

Spanning a distance of approximately 32.7 miles between the Collier County/Miami-Dade County line and S.R. 29/ C.R. 29, the ROGG Central segment is the longest of the three trail segments. It traverses one of the corridor's most significant assets: Big Cypress National Preserve. Access to natural resources via Florida National Scenic Trail, ORV trailheads, campgrounds, and the Big Cypress National Preserve Oasis Visitors Center is available. In addition, ROGG Central includes several roadside parks and the Ochopee Post Office, described at the smallest post office in the United States. At the western terminus of the Study Area, S.R. 29 provides access to Everglades City.

Two principal route opportunities exist within the ROGG Central segment. The primary route alternative consists of the U.S. 41 ROW. A separate route alternative consists of Loop Road. Following are summaries of each alternative alignment option:

Route Alignment Options Observed

U.S. 41 - Primary Alignment

Summary of Existing Condition

The U.S. 41 potential alignment consists of maintained ROW and natural systems in the remainder of the ROW. Maintained ROW averages between 50 feet and 60 feet in width, which is wider than the average width found in the ROGG West segment. The additional width in maintained ROW in ROGG Central provides a sense of openness in this segment. Guardrails typically occur on the north side of the roadway as a barrier between U.S. 41 and the Tamiami Canal. The canal along U.S. 41 in this segment is narrower (approximately 20 feet) than the L-29 canal found in the ROGG East segment.

Roadway shoulders are typically structured turf, which contrasts with the pavement seen in many portions of the ROGG West segment. The shoulders on the north side of the roadway typically are level and average approximately six to eight feet in width as measured from the travel lanes. The widths of the northern shoulders are constrained by the presence of a guardrail adjacent to the canal bank. The southern shoulder averages between eight to ten feet in width and typically slopes for an additional five to ten feet to the edge of the adjacent wetlands. The paved shoulders have recently been expanded to four feet from S.R. 29/ C.R. 29 to the Miami-Dade County line. Vegetation consists primarily of cypress strands and wet prairies common to the Big Cypress National Preserve. Long views and vistas from the roadway are available.

Critical Nodes

4 **U.S. 41 and S.R. 29/ C.R. 29:** The intersection of U.S. 41 and S.R. 29/ C.R. 29 is the western terminus of the ROGG Central Study Area. S.R. 29 serves as a linkage north to I-75 and C.R. 29 connects south to Everglades City and Chokoloskee.

7 **U.S. 41 and Loop Road (Monroe Station):** Approximately 4.3 miles west of the Big Cypress National Preserve Oasis Visitor Center is Monroe Station; an historic U.S. 41 station and the western terminus of Loop Road. From Monroe Station, Loop Road continues south, eventually turning to the east and reconnecting with U.S. 41 in the ROGG East segment.

8 **U.S. 41 and Collier County /Miami-Dade County Line:** Located approximately 26.2 miles west of Krome Avenue, the intersection of U.S. 41 and the Collier County / Miami-Dade County line is the eastern terminus of the ROGG Central segment. At this location, there is an existing gravel lot and pull-off area on the south side of U.S. 41.

Loop Road- Alternative

Summary of Existing Condition

Although the eastern terminus of Loop Road is in the ROGG East segment, 20.7 miles of Loop Road's 23.5 mile alignment is within the ROGG Central segment. The majority of Loop Road is a narrow, gravel road with limited or no shoulders. The exception is the first several miles (in the ROGG East segment) where the road surface is asphalt. The gravel portion of Loop Road is approximately 24 to 30 feet in width, with three foot wide unpaved shoulders on either side. The designated ROW width of Loop Road is 50 feet. Although unpaved, the gravel road has been recently improved by the addition of new drainage culverts, and a re-graded surface within Monroe County.

The shoulders of the roadway are immediately abutted by dense vegetation, although the majority of the landscape beyond the shoulders of the roadway is composed of cypress swamps and isolated pockets of wet prairie. Views from the road into the surrounding landscape are limited, due largely to the density of the vegetation that includes invasive species.

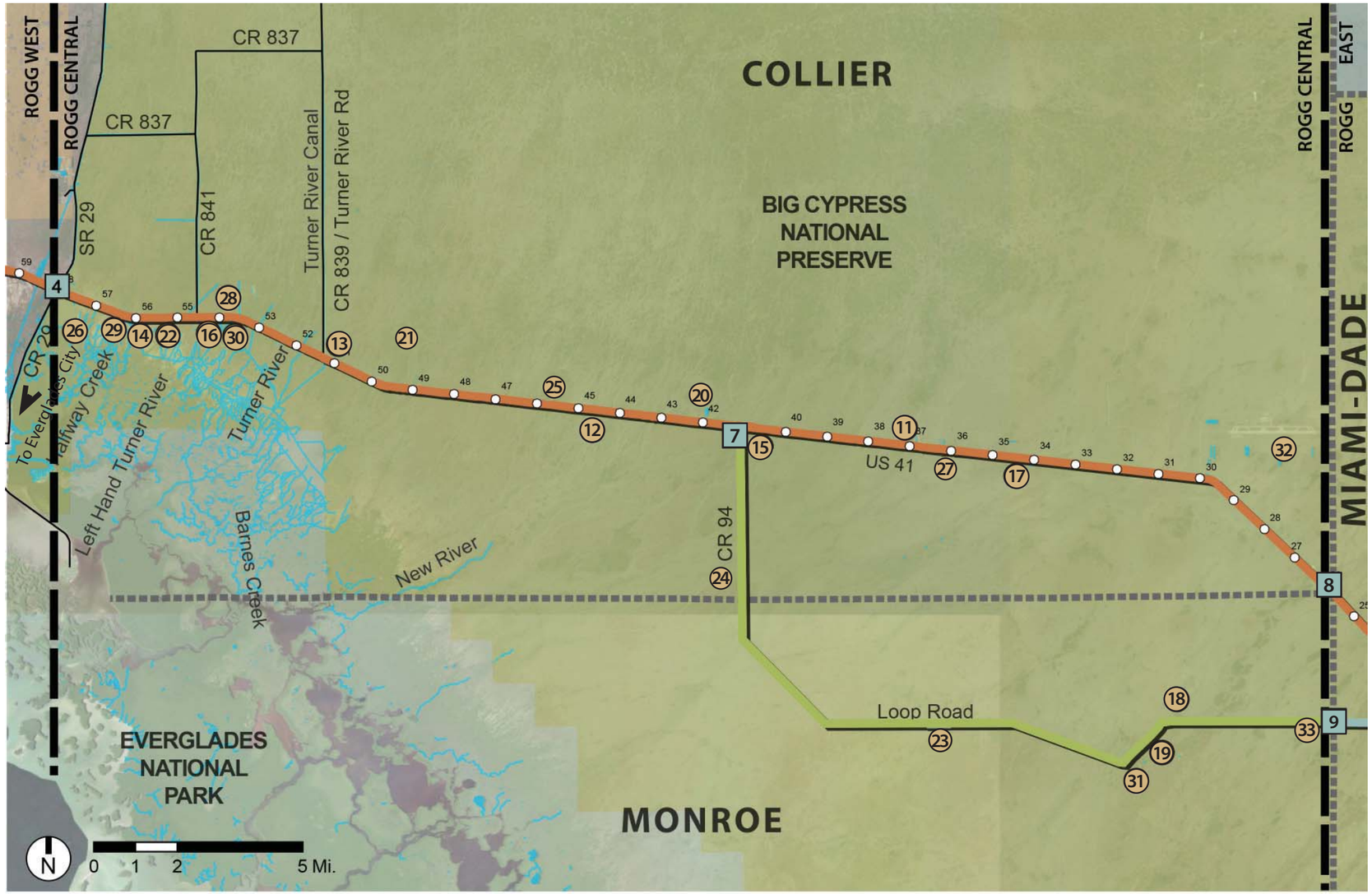
There are few structures or destinations along Loop Road. Several existing primitive campgrounds and four ORV trailheads accessible from the road: Monroe South and Paces Dike, which have been recently expanded and improved, Mitchells Landing, and Boundary Line. Boundary Line will be improved pending availability of funds. These trailheads could provide better access and parking along Loop Road, although most will have limited amenities. There are private residences along Loop Road within the ROGG Central segment, although the overwhelming majority of these occur within the first several miles south of Monroe Station, on the eastern portions of Loop Road.

Critical Nodes

7 **U.S. 41 and Loop Road (Monroe Station):** Approximately 4.3 miles west of the Big Cypress National Preserve Oasis Visitor Center is Monroe Station; an historic U.S. 41 station and the western terminus of Loop Road. From Monroe Station, Loop Road continues south, eventually turning to the east and reconnecting with U.S.41 in the ROGG East segment.

9 **Loop Road (ROGG Central) and Loop Road (ROGG East):** Approximately 2.8 miles west of the Loop Road, Old Tamiami Trail, and U.S. 41 junction is the boundary line between the ROGG East and ROGG Central segment along the Loop Road alignment. There is no development or significant features at this location.

ROGG Central - Existing Conditions Map



Legend

- Segment Match Line
- County Boundary Line
- Governmental Boundary Line
- Roadway
- Mile Marker (from Krome Ave.)
- U.S. 41 Alignment
- Loop Road Alignment
- Waterway
- Big Cypress National Preserve (BICY)
- Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park
- Everglades National Park
- Point of Interest
- Critical Node

See page 50, 52 and 53 for description of # items.

ROGG Central

Location: S.R. 29/C.R. 29 to Collier County/Miami-Dade County Line

Length: 32.7 miles

Critical Nodes

- 4 U.S. 41 and S.R. 29
- 7 U.S. 41 and Loop Road (Monroe Station)
- 8 U.S. 41 and Collier County Line
- 9 Loop Road (ROGG Central) and Loop Road (ROGG East)

Points of Interest

- 11 Big Cypress National Preserve Oasis Visitor Center
- 12 Kirby S. Storter Roadside Park
- 13 H.P. Williams Roadside Park
- 14 Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center and Big Cypress National Preserve Headquarters
- 15 Monroe Station
- 16 Ochopee Post Office
- 17 Midway Campground
- 18 Pinecrest Campground
- 19 Mitchell's Landing Campground
- 20 Monument Lake Campground
- 21 Burns Lake Campground
- 22 Dona Drive Campground (NPS Volunteers Only)
- 23 Pace's Dike ORV Trailhead
- 24 Sig Walker ORV Trailhead
- 25 Skillet Strand North and South ORV Trailheads
- 26 Collier County Sheriff's Station and the Everglades Area Chamber of Commerce Welcome Center
- 27 Clyde Butcher's Big Cypress Gallery
- 28 Joanie's Blue Crab Café
- 29 Wooten's Everglades Airboat Tours
- 30 Trail Lakes Campgrounds and Everglades Adventure Tours
- 31 Loop Road Environmental Education Center
- 32 Dade-Collier Training and Transitional Airport
- 33 Boundary Line ORV Trailhead

2.2.6 ROGG Central Points of Interest

ROGG Central's location within the Big Cypress National Preserve makes it a very desirable location for natural or environmental experiences along the entire corridor. Established in 1974, Big Cypress National Preserve consists of 729,000 acres of mostly freshwater swamp and is home to a diverse variety of native flora and fauna including over 180 species of birds and several endangered species such as the Florida panther. In addition, Big Cypress serves to protect and facilitate the traditional use of the land by the Seminole and Miccosukee Indian Tribes of Florida and Gladesmen.

As part of Big Cypress National Preserve, there are several smaller roadside parks, seven campgrounds, and three recently completed ORV trailheads providing access to over 424 miles of off-road trails. The ROGG Central segment is also the location of several cultural and historical resources, such as the Big Cypress Gallery of the renowned south Florida nature photographer Clyde Butcher, and the Ochopee Post Office. These facilities could be integrated into ROGG as trailheads or destinations for ROGG users.

Public Points of Interest

Parks and Preserves

11 **Big Cypress National Preserve Oasis Visitor Center:** The Oasis Visitor Center is located in the eastern third of the Big Cypress National Preserve, approximately 21 miles east of S.R. 29. The center provides a base for seasonal ranger-led programs, the Preserve's ORV permits office, and numerous exhibits related to the natural and cultural history of the Preserve. In addition, the facility offers a paved parking lot (33 car spaces, two ADA accessible spaces, and 12 RV/bus spaces), educational kiosk, canoe launch, boardwalk trail, Everglades Association bookstore, and public restrooms. Immediately north of this site is the Oasis Ranger Station U.S. Government Airport. The Visitor Center provides access to the Florida Scenic Trail as well.

12 **Kirby S. Storter Roadside Park:** Located approximately 13.5 miles east of S.R. 29 on the south side of U.S. 41, Kirby Storter is a small roadside park that offers a paved parking lot (29 spaces, one ADA accessible), restroom facilities, five picnic pavilions, an informational kiosk, and an elevated accessible boardwalk that is more than 2,100 feet long leading into a cypress strand.

13 **H.P. Williams Roadside Park:** H.P. Williams Park is a small, triangle-shaped park immediately east of the intersection of Turner River Road and U.S. 41, approximately 6.7 miles east of S.R. 29. This park offers users picnic benches, an accessible boardwalk, an educational kiosk, restroom facilities, and a paved parking lot with approximately 40 spaces (two ADA accessible spaces).

14 **Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center and Big Cypress National Preserve Headquarters:** Located 2.5 miles east of S.R. 29, the Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center serves as a home base for the agencies, hosts seasonal, ranger-led programs, and offers both indoor and outdoor interactive exhibits that provide education materials for visitors concerning the history and importance of the Big Cypress Swamp and its ecosystems. The Center provides indoor public restrooms, a swamp-buggy display, bookstore, gift shop, public meeting room, and an elevated boardwalk overlooking a wetland and canal. Approximately 1,500 feet east of the Welcome Center is the Preserve Headquarters complex. This facility houses staff and volunteers associated with the day to day management of the Big Cypress National Preserve.

Historic and Cultural Sites

15 **Monroe Station:** After the development of the original U.S. 41 in the late 1920s, six service stations were constructed along the remote portions of the trail to provide travelers with resting points and facilities. Located at the southeast corner of Loop Road and U.S. 41, Monroe Station is one of two remaining original stations. In April of 2000, Monroe Station was added into the National Register of Historic Places with a period of historical significance listed from 1928 to 1934, during which time the site helped foster transportation, exploration, and settlement. Currently, the station building is in poor condition, and is not open to the public. The building is adjacent to a trailhead for the Monroe North and Monroe South ORV trails, as well as a hunter check station.

16 **Ochopee Post Office:** The Ochopee Post Office is located approximately 4.3 miles east of S.R. 29 on the south side of U.S. 41. At a total of 61.3 square feet, it is the smallest, active post office in the United States and is a Collier County designated historic site. The structure is surrounded by a gravel and asphalt parking lot. The building used to be a storage facility for irrigation pipes of an adjacent tomato farm and was converted into a post office in 1953 after a fire destroyed Ochopee's previous post office and general store.

Everglades City and Chokoloskee have several Collier County designated historic sites that could potentially be accessible from ROGG.

Campgrounds at BICY

17 **Midway Campground:** Located approximately 24 miles east of S.R. 29, Midway Campground surrounds a small lake and offers restrooms, potable water, 26 RV sites (with electric hookups), and ten tent camping sites.

18 **Pinecrest Campground:** Located 5.8 miles west of U.S. 41 on the north side of Loop Road, Pinecrest offers ten primitive camping sites (no water or restroom facilities).

19 **Mitchell's Landing Campground:** Mitchell's Landing is a primitive campground located along Loop Road,approximately seven miles west of the eastern terminus of Loop Road at U.S. 41. This site has 15 tent sites, but no water access or restroom facilities. Access is provided via a secondary gravel road.

20 **Monument Lake Campground:** Located 0.8 mile west of Monroe Station, Monument Lake Campground offers restrooms, potable water, lake access, 26 RV sites, and ten tent camping sites. There are no existing RV hook-ups for water, sewer, or electrical at this site.

21 **Burns Lake Campground:** Burns Lake is a primitive campground surrounding a small lake. The campground does not provide running water, although there is a vault toilet near the day use area. This camp site is located 8.1 miles west of Monroe Station, and approximately one mile north of U.S. 41 on Burns Lake Road. As of December 2012, there were 14 tent sites available due to construction.

Historic Monroe Station

View north of Big Cypress National Preserve from U.S. 41

Joanie's Blue Crab Café restaurant

Example of a narrow shoulder at one of the U.S. 41 bridge crossings in ROGG Central

22 **Dona Drive Campground:** The Dona Drive Campground is located approximately one mile east of the Big Cypress National Preserve Welcome Center. This site is used primarily by Preserve volunteers and contains a large fill area, lake, and individual campsites, each with a concrete pad, picnic table, and an electrical hook-up.

ORV Trailheads

15 **Monroe Station:** (see Historical and Cultural Sites)

23 **Pace's Dike ORV Trailhead:** The Pace's Dike trailhead is located on the southern side of Loop Road, approximately ten miles southwest of Monroe Station. Pace's Dike provides five to ten spaces for both passenger and ORV vehicles, a picnic area, an information kiosk, and future restrooms.

24 **Sig Walker ORV Trailhead:** Located approximately three miles south of Monroe Station, on the west side of Loop Road, the Sig Walker trailhead will provide trail access, vault toilets, picnic shelters, and gravel ORV parking areas.

25 **Skillet Strand North and South ORV Trailheads:** The Skillet Strand ORV Trailhead consists of two components: Skillet Strand North and Skillet Strand South. Located on the north side of U.S. 41 approximately 4.7 miles west of Monroe Station, Skillet Strand North trailhead is a recently improved site that offers trail access. Skillet Strand South will be on the south side of U.S. 41 across from Skillet Strand North. This trailhead is planned as a new facility that would provide passenger vehicle and ORV parking, a picnic area, restroom facilities, and information kiosk.

Municipal or Governmental

26 **Collier County Sheriff's Station and the Everglades Area Chamber of Commerce Welcome Center:** The Collier County Sherriff's station and the Everglades Area Chamber of Commerce Welcome Center are located at the southeast corner of the intersection of U.S. 41 and S.R. 29/ C.R. 29. The Welcome Center has restroom facilities, multiple parking spaces, and a shop for sundries.

Private/Commercial Points of Interest

27 **Clyde Butcher's Big Cypress Gallery:** Clyde Butcher is an internationally renowned black-and-white photographer whose primary subject matter is natural landscapes. Butcher was honored by the state of Florida with the highest award given to an artist: the Artist Hall of Fame Award. Many of Butcher's most famous works are representative of the Big Cypress and Everglades landscapes. His gallery is located approximately five miles east of Monroe Station, on U.S. 41. This site offers a gift shop, art gallery, nature trails, and a rentable cottage at the rear of the property.

28 **Joanie's Blue Crab Café:** Located 4.4 miles east of S.R. 29/ C.R. 29 on the north side of U.S. 41, Joanie's Blue Crab Café is a locally-owned restaurant that specializes in local seafood and traditional Everglades fare. In addition to the indoor restaurant, this site also provides outdoor picnic seating areas and a paved parking lot. The restaurant building is also a Collier County designated historic site.

29 **Wooten's Everglades Airboat Tours:** Located two miles east of S.R. 29/ C.R. 29 on the south side of U.S. 41, Wooten's Everglades Airboat Tours is a private company that provides guided airboat tours and swamp buggy rides. In addition, the site offers live alligator shows, an animal sanctuary, a gift shop, and a large gravel parking lot.

30 **Trail Lakes Campgrounds and Everglades Adventure Tours:** The Trail Lakes Campground is a 30-acre, private camping facility located approximately four miles east of S.R. 29/ C.R. 29 on the south side of U.S. 41. Campground amenities include 150 campsites, restroom and shower facilities, laundry, pet areas, a scenic lake view, picnic shelters, trash stations, and electrical hook-ups for RVs. In addition to providing campsites, Trail Lakes Campground also rents/sells camping supplies, provides guided adventure tours, and is home to a wildlife exhibit and the "Skunk Ape Research Center."
the ROGG West segment.

31 **Loop Road Environmental Education Center:** Located 12 miles west of Shark Valley along Old Loop Road, this education center offers overnight group camping programs available to elementary and middle school-aged children and a variety of amenities, including a chickee hut, picnic areas, five platform tents, grills, restrooms, a pond, nature trails, and a butterfly garden.

32 **Dade-Colllier Training and Transition Airport:** Located 28 miles east of S.R. 29/ C.R. 29, the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport is a secure facility managed by Miami-Dade Aviation Department. An approximately three mile entrance road contains grass parking opportunities near U.S. 41.

33 **Boundary Line ORV Trailhead:** Located near the Miami-Dade/Collier County Boundary, the trailhead provides 5-15 spaces for both passenger and ORV motorized vehicles, a picnic area, information kiosk, boat ramp and future restrooms.

Typical Existing Conditions

Roadway (ROW)

Roadway ROW in the ROGG Central segment averages an overall maintained ROW of 58 feet wide with a range from 40 to 71 feet. This portion of the corridor is typically uniform in scale and construction. The Tamiami Canal typically lies adjacent to, and north of U.S. 41. Shoulders are generally narrow on the north side of the road as there is a guardrail between the travel lane and canal. The south shoulder is typically wider with a two to four-foot wide paved shoulder and grassed bank to the adjacent wetland edges. Portions of the ROW exhibit guardrails on both sides of the road. Loop Road is typically 24 to 30 feet wide with three foot wide unpaved shoulders on either side of the road.

Typical paved U.S. 41 ROW with guardrails on the north and grassed shoulder to south

Typical ROW conditions along Loop Road

Bridges

Bridges in the ROGG Central segment are typically nearly identical in scale and construction. The typical bridge measures approximately 32 feet wide overall. Bridges within the corridor pose difficulty for the implementation of the ROGG as the narrow width provides little additional space between the travel lanes and the guardrail barriers of the bridge edges.

Conditions found on typical U.S. 41 bridge with narrow shoulders and barrier

Typical canal bridge

Landscape (habitat)

Typical habitat of the western portion of the ROGG Study Area ranges from cypress strand, marsh, wet prarie and pinelands.

Typical cypress habitat

Typical wet prairie habitat

Focus Areas

1. **Right-of-Way**
   Narrow:
   - None Observed

   Wide:
   - Joanie's Blue Crab Café

2. **Existing Trails and Trailheads**
   - Oasis Visitor Center boardwalk
   - Fire Prairie Trail at Turner River Road
   - The Florida Trail terminus at the Oasis Visitor Center
   - Kirby Storter Boardwalk
   - Loop Road at Monroe Station
   - Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center
   - ORV trailheads (Skillet Strand North and South, Sig Walker, Pace's Dike)

3. **Cultural Resources Features**
   - Ochopee Post Office
   - Monroe Station
   - Corn Dance ceremonial sites
   - Battle of Turner River battlefield
   - 1936 Meeting Monument

4. **Environmentally Sensitive Resources Features**
   - Critical Habitat for manatee in waterways from S.R. 29, east to Birdon Road
   - Florida Panther Focus Area
   - FDOT RADS System
   - Turner River

5. **Primary Hubs**
   - Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center
   - Oasis Visitor Center
   - H.P. Williams Roadside Park
   - Everglades Area Chamber of Commerce Welcome Center

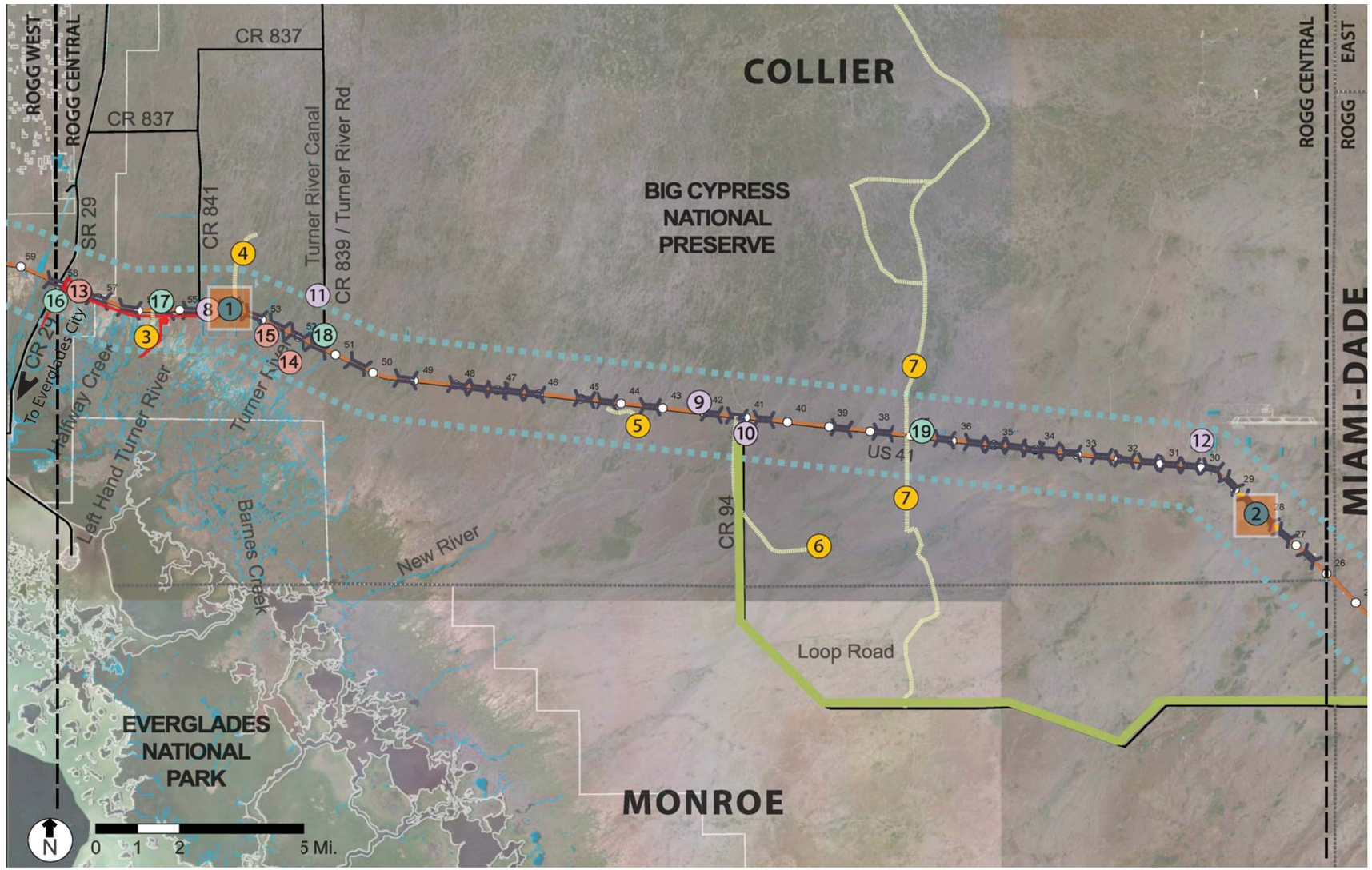
6. **Bridges**
   - 28 total

Boardwalk trail at Kirby S. Storter Park at Big Cypress National Preserve

Walking trail at Clyde Butcher's Big Cypress Gallery

Boardwalk at Kirby S. Storter Park in Big Cypress National Preserve

ROGG Central - Focus Areas Map



Legend

- Segment Match Line
- County Boundary Line
- Governmental Boundary Line
- Roadway
- 26 Mile Marker (from Krome Ave.)
- U.S. 41 Alignment
- Loop Road Alignment
- 1 Mile Study Area
- Existing Trail
- Waterway
- Bridge
- ROW Focus Area
- Critical Habitat
- # Right-of-Way (ROW)
- # Existing Trailheads and Trails
- # Cultural Resources Feature
- # Environmentally Sensitive Resources Feature
- # Primary Hub

See page 57 for identification of # items.

Right-of-Way (ROW)

Wide ROW includes any maintained ROW greater than 70 feet. Wide ROW allows for ample space for a proposed trail and the potential of parking. Two portions of U.S. 41 have a wide ROW:

1. Joanie's Blue Crab Restaurant
2. A private driveway at mile marker 28.2

Cultural Resource Features

Three structures have been designated as historic places by the U.S. National Register of Historic Places or Collier County

8. The Ochopee Post Office (Collier County historic site)
9. 1936 Seminole Conference at Monument Lake Campground (not a U.S. National Registered historic place)
10. Monroe Station

Two culturally significant locations exist in the corridor:

11. Battle of Turner River Battlefield
12. Within 1/2 mile of ceremonial site

Environmentally Sensitive Resource Features

Critical Habitat for the West Indian manatee is found in the very western portion of the ROGG Central segment . The entire segment is within the Florida Panther Focus Area, which is part of the core habitat for Florida panthers in Florida. The FDOT has installed a RADS system in portions of this segment, including an area near Turner River.

13. West Indian Manatee Critical Habitat
14. Turner River
15. RADS location

Existing Trailheads and Trails

Existing trails and trailheads that occur on or along the Study Area may be an opportunity to connect to a proposed trail. Five trails currently exist along the ROGG Central segment:

3. Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center (boardwalk only)
4. Burns Lake Trail (ORV trailhead)
5. The Kirby Storter Boardwalk
6. The Gatorhook Trail on Loop Road
7. The Florida National Scenic Trail

The Florida Trail, which is accessible at the Big Cypress Oasis Visitor Center, spans over 1400 miles throughout the state of Florida. Future amenities at Skillet Strand (North and South), Pace's Dike, and Sig Walker ORV trailheads

Primary Hubs

Three existing primary hubs are located within the ROGG Central segment that provide restrooms, parking and access to trail:

16. Everglades Area Chamber of Commerce Swamp Welcome Center
17. Big Cypress Welcome Center
18. H.P. Williams Park
19. Big Cypress National Preserve Oasis Visitor Center

Bridges

Twenty-eight bridges occur along U.S. 41 within the ROGG Central segment and are shown on the adjacent map.

Typical Bridge

ROGG Central Opportunities and Constraints Summary

Spanning the longest length of the three segments, ROGG Central offers a number of opportunities and constraints which makes this area unique. This portion of the Study Area is dominated by the presence of the Big Cypress National Preserve, which offers eight existing and proposed destinations that can serve as trailheads. Two primary destinations are the Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center and the Oasis Visitor Center, both managed by the NPS. These destinations contain existing parking, restrooms, boardwalks and educational opportunities for trail users and are directly linked to U.S. 41.

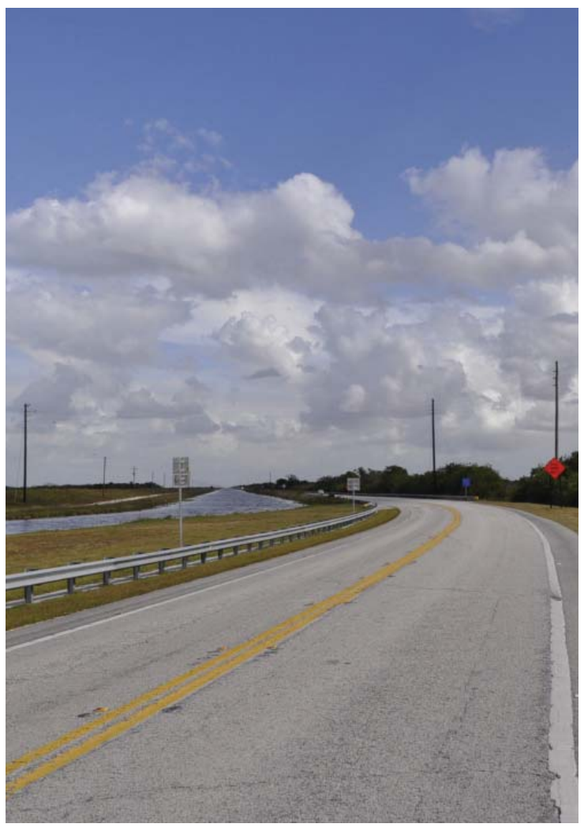
Other existing destinations include campgrounds and historic structures, including Monroe Station which is currently being expanded with new parking and restroom facilities. Trail connectivity to the Fire Prairie Trail at Turner River Road and the Florida National Scenic Trail at the Oasis Visitor Center provide opportunities for visitors to experience the landscape away from U.S. 41, including backcountry camping allowed by the NPS with appropriate permits. Access to canoeing and kayaking is also available via launches at the Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center, Dona Drive Campground, and the Turner River Canoe Launch. Loop Road also offers opportunities for trail users to explore deep within the Big Cypress National Preserve. However, limitations such as a narrow ROW and gravel surface may provide challenges to the feasibility of ROGG within this alternative.

Constraints for ROGG Central are similar to those of ROGG West. Although there are fewer existing bridges within this segment, the design of the bridges are similar to bridges in ROGG West and will not support cantilevering. Although a slightly wider maintained ROW in this segment reduces some of the challenges around impacts to the nearby wetlands for an alignment along U.S. 41. However, the occurrence of a number of federally or state listed species may impact overall opportunities. One of the most significant listed species issues is the location of the corridor within the Panther Focus Area. While not considered Critical Habitat under the terms of the ESA, the USFWS has designated the Panther Focus Area as part of the core habitat for Florida panthers within the state. Construction within the Panther Focus Area is allowed, but mitigation is required for impacts to habitats identified in guidelines by the USFWS. This mitigation can add substantial costs to the implementation of any project requiring impacts to both uplands and wetlands within the area. Additional constraints include the presence of Critical Habitat for manatees shown on the ROGG Central Focus Areas Map.

The presence of a Roadside Animal Detection System (RADS) in the Turner River area presents a constraint that the development of ROGG itself may actually benefit. RADS are currently being tested in this area to increase awareness of wildlife activity along U.S. 41. However, due to the proximity of detection devices to the highway's shoulders, many of the system components suffer from errors caused by vehicles parking along the roadway or from vandalism. By locating the devices on the outside of the trail, the devices could be located further from vehicle traffic and in a manner which limits opportunities for errors.

This segment also includes cultural resource features that would need to be accommodated by future ROGG facilities. These include Native American ceremonial sites and historic places designated on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. A CRAS will most likely be needed to identify properties and assess effects. Prior to an archaeological survey an Archaeological Research Permit will need to be obtained from the Department of Interior for any portion of the project with in federal lands. A State of Florida Archaeological Permit will most likely be required prior to surveys within state lands.

Segment of Old Tamiami Trail South of U.S. 41 in Everglades National Park



U.S. 41 corridor looking east near the ValueJet Flight 592 Memorial

2.2.7 ROGG East Existing Conditions

Overview

The ROGG East Study Area is approximately 26.2 miles long, stretching from Krome Avenue (SW 177th Ave.) in western Miami-Dade County to the Collier County / Miami-Dade County line. This segment is severely constrained for trail use due to the limited shoulder width and continuous guardrails on both sides of the road and hydrological features as well as by the improvements associated with CERP/CEPP and related projects. Significant destinations include the Miccosukee Indian Village, the ValuJet Flight 592 Memorial, Francis S. Taylor WMA, and ENP. In addition, the easternmost access to Loop Road, a potential trail connection, can be found just west of the Miccosukee Indian Village.

Route Alignment Options Observed

Within the ROGG East segment of the Study Area, five possible alignment routes have been identified that will be evaluated as part of this feasibility study, including:

1. U.S. 41
2. Old Tamiami Trail
3. L-28 Levee
4. Loop Road
5. L-29 Levee

The following are descriptions of existing conditions of each.

U.S. 41 - Primary Alternative

Summary of Existing Condition

Although U.S. 41 spans the entire length of the ROGG Study Area, the segment stretching from Krome Avenue west to the Collier County-line is one of the most physically constrained portions of the roadway. This is largely due to the limited amount of maintained ROW, narrow paved shoulders, and the presence of motorized vehicular guardrails on both sides of the roadway in certain portions. In addition, the adjacency of the L-29 canal to the road constrains trail options on the north side of the road. The most challenging elements of the segment are four hydrological control structures (S12s) which consist of narrow shoulders of two feet, ingress and egress traffic and CEPP proposed projects which include several additional bridges as part of the Tamiami Trail Modifications: Next Steps.

A one mile long bridge recently opened on the estern end of the ROGG East segment to replace the existing U.S. 41 roadbed and allow for better sheetflow under the roadway consistent with recommendations from CERP and related studies. Several additional bridge improvements to U.S. 41 totaling 5.5 miles in length are planned as part of the Tamiami Trail Modifications: Next Steps Environmental Impact Statement. These range from a 0.4 mile long bridge near the existing Frog City site to a 2.6 mile long bridge extending over the Blue Shanty Canal and past several existing airboat ride operations. A trail on these bridges is not currently in the plans. It is anticipated that adding bicycle/pedestrian facilities to the existing bridge design would increase construction costs.

The northern side of U.S. 41 is paralleled by canals for its entire length in the ROGG East segment, with the largest canals occurring in the first 24 miles west of Krome Avenue. The L-29 Canal, as referred to west of Krome Avenue has associated hydrological control structures as well as gravel maintenance roads running along the northern levee for the first 12 miles west of Krome Avenue and again 21.5 to 24 miles west before joining the L-28 levee. The last two miles of the ROGG East segment are bordered by the L-29 Canal, although the canal is narrower in width (15 to 20 feet wide) than the 75 to 100 foot width of the L-29 canal on eastern portions of this segment. Four hydrological control structures (S12s) are located U.S. 41 in ROGG East and would require retrofitting in order for a path to cross. These control structures are managed by USACE.

The majority of the viewshed along U.S. 41 in the ROGG East segment is bordered by dense vegetation for most of the length of the road that limits long views over the marshes and prairies of the Everglades. This is especially true in the western portion of the ROGG East segment where a dense canopy of cypress and various shrub species are present on both sides of the roadway. Along the L-29 Canal in the eastern portion of the segment, the only significant vegetation is located on the southern side of the road due to the presence of the canal to the north. Views north from U.S. 41 are generally impeded by the L-29 levee located along the L-29 Canal (C-4). The recently completed one-mile bridge on U.S. 41 provides improved views to the South into Everglades National Park.

Critical Nodes

8 **Collier County/Miami-Dade County line:** This occurs approximately 26.2 miles west of Krome Avenue (See ROGG Central).

10 **U.S. 41 and Loop Road:** This occurs at the eastern terminus of Loop Road, located approximately two miles east of the Collier County /Miami-Dade County line.

11 **U.S. 41 and Krome Avenue (SW 177th Ave.):** Krome Avenue runs north to the U.S. 27/ Okeechobee Road area and connects to Kendall Drive and Homestead/Florida City. It is considered the eastern terminus of the ROGG Study Area. Krome Avenue to the south is programmed for improvements by FDOT that include the addition of designated bike lanes. Krome Avenue provides connectivity to several Greenways Master Plan corridors including Black Creek Trail. In addition, FDOT has recently constructed designated bike lanes on several sections of U.S. 41 east of Krome Avenue.

Old Tamiami Trail - Alternative

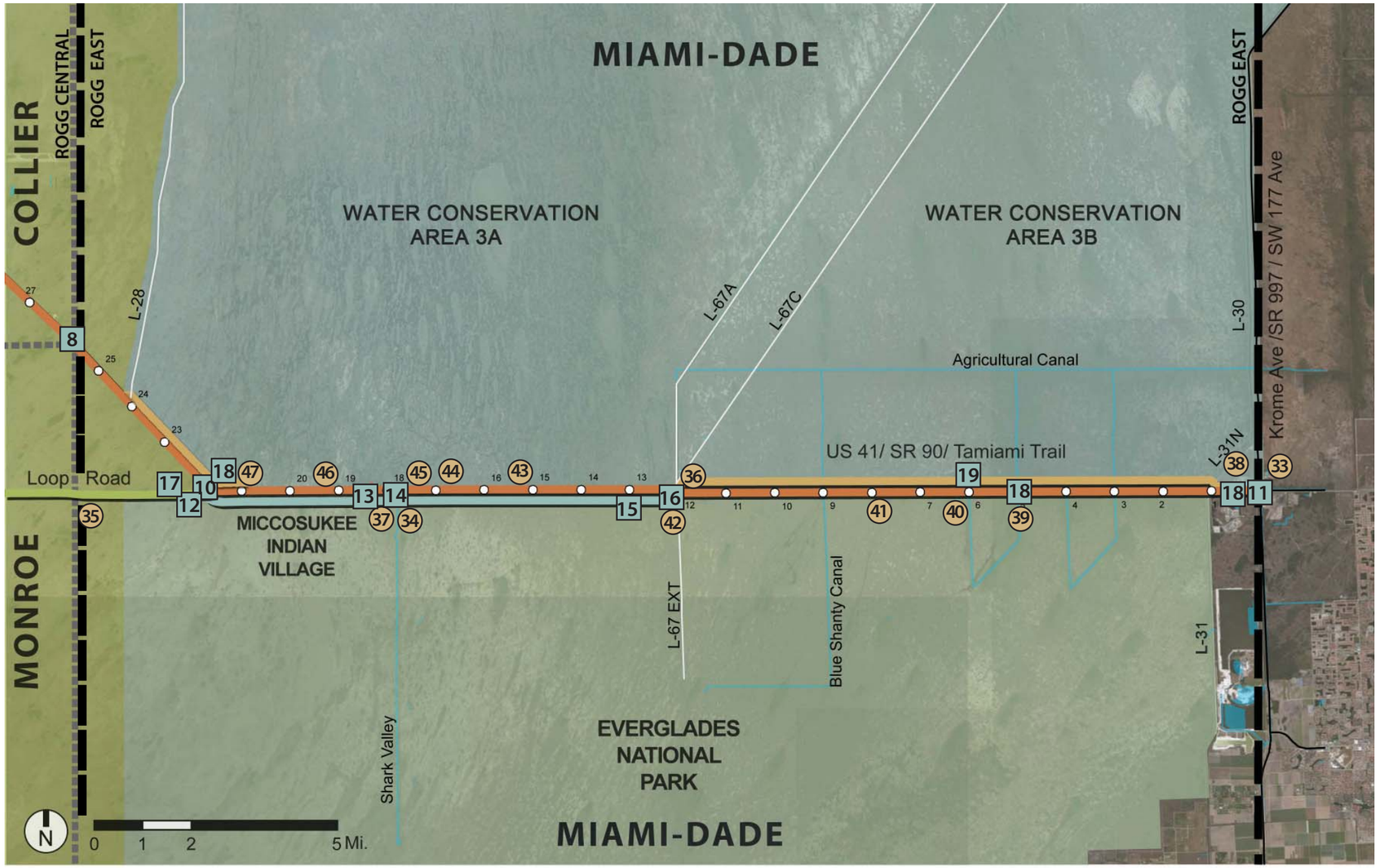
Summary of Existing Condition

Old Tamiami Trail is the historical, but now abandoned, alignment of U.S. 41. CEPP proposed improvements that include the removal of the Old Tamiami Trail roadbed and embankment, however, no time line has been proposed. of The primary functioning infrastructure along the Old Tamiami Trail serves as an overhead utility corridor with utility lines located on the south edge of the roadbed. This alignment is approximately 9.5 miles in length and runs parallel to, and approximately 100 to 150 feet south of, U.S. 41. The roadbed surface is comprised of deteriorated asphalt. The banks of the roadbed have become overgrown with vegetation, including areas that are effectively blocked by overhanging vegetation. This vegetation limits visibility both into and out of the alignment. The roadbed is bordered for its entire length on the north by a canal originally used to provide fill for the roadbed.

There are four primary access points linking U.S. 41 to the Old Tamiami Trail alignment, three of which are gravel access roads. The fourth connection location is at the Miccosukee Indian Village where the last three miles of Old Tamiami Trail is still an active roadway serving the village residents. In the Miccosukee Indian Village portion of the Old Tamiami Trail, the roadbed is bordered by residential, commercial, and natural land uses, the majority of which occur on the south side of the roadway.

There are several significant breaks in the roadbed where segments up to 600 feet in length have been removed to allow for water from the L-29 Canal to flow south. This effectively renders these portions of the Old Tamiami Trail

ROGG East - Existing Conditions Map



ROGG East

Location: Collier County/Miami-Dade County Line to Krome Avenue (SW 177th Ave)

Length: 26.2 miles

Critical Nodes

- 8 Collier County/Miami-Dade County Line
- 10 U.S. 41 and Loop Road
- 11 U.S. 41 and Krome Avenue (SW 177th Ave.)
- 12 Old Tamiami Trail and Loop Road
- 13 Miccosukee Indian Village
- 14 Everglades National Park / Shark Valley Entrance
- 15 U.S. 41 and gravel road
- 16 U.S. 41 and Old Tamiami Trail
- 17 U.S. 41 and Loop Road
- 18 Canal Bank Access Points
- 19 Tigertail Residential Community

Points of Interest

- 33 Miami-Dade County Trail Glades Sports Shooting Range
- 34 Everglades National Park / Shark Valley Entrance
- 35 Boundary Line ORV Trailhead
- 36 ValuJet Flight 592 Memorial
- 37 Miccosukee Indian Village
- 38 Miccosukee Resort and Gaming Center
- 39 The Originial Coopertown Air Boats
- 40 Gator Park
- 41 Everglades Safari Park
- 42 Buffalo Tiger Airboat Rides
- 43 Osceola Gift Shop
- 44 Tigertail Airboat Rides
- 45 Miccosukee Restaurant
- 46 Chief Osceola Airboat Rides
- 47 Tippy's Everglades Outpost

Legend

- Segment Match Line
- County Boundary Line
- Governmental Boundary Line
- Roadway
- Mile Marker (from Krome Ave.)
- U.S. 41 Alignment
- Loop Road Alignment
- Old Tamiami Trail Alignment
- L-29/L-28 Levee Alignment
- Waterway
- Water Conservation Area (WCA)
- Big Cypresss National Preserve
- Everglades National Park
- Point of Interest
- Critical Node

See page 58, 60 and 61 for description of # items.

Loop Road as seen near U.S. 41

ValuJet Flight 592 Memorial north of U.S. 41

Entrance to the Miccosukee Indian Village from U.S. 41

alignment impassible without a bridge or culvert.

Critical Nodes

12 **Old Tamiami Trail and Loop Road:** The western terminus of Old Tamiami Trail occurs at the intersection with Loop Road, which is approximately four miles east of the Collier County/Miami-Dade County line.

13 **Miccosukee Indian Village:** Old Tamiami Trail serves as a main street for the Miccosukee Indian Village, linking many of its residences to the village center. There are three paved access roads linking U.S. 41 to Old Tamiami Trail within the village, all of which are also referred to as Old Tamiami Trail.

14 **Everglades National Park / Shark Valley Visitor Use Area:** The entrance road to the Shark Valley Visitor Use Area from U.S. 41 intersects with the Old Tamiami Trail alignment.

15 **U.S. 41 and gravel road:** This single-purpose gravel roadway links U.S. 41 and the Old Tamiami Trail alignment, located approximately two miles from the eastern terminus of Old Tamiami Trail.

16 **U.S. 41 and Old Tamiami Trail:** The first access point to the Old Tamiami Trail alignment occurs at a gravel intersection just south of the ValuJet Flight 592 Memorial, approximately 12 miles west of Krome Avenue.

Loop Road - Alternative

Summary of Existing Condition

Loop Road (C.R. 94) connects to Old Tamiami Trail and U.S. 41 approximately four miles east of the Collier County/Miami-Dade County line. Loop Road initially traverses due west from U.S. 41 and then turns north to reconnect with U.S. 41, thus forming a "loop."

The first 2.8 miles of Loop Road's approximately 23.5-mile length are located within the boundary of the ROGG East segment and Miami-Dade County. This portion of Loop Road is unique in that it is one of the few places along its length where there are concentrated residential areas. Similar to western portions of Old Tamiami Trail, this segment of Loop Road is a paved roadway, which is bordered by a vegetated canal to the north and either residential or natural areas to the south. Beyond the residential areas, the roadway is bordered on both sides by vegetation, which becomes significantly denser towards the west. Additionally, there are overhead power lines running on the southern edge of the roadbed within the ROGG East segment.

Critical Nodes

17 **U.S. 41 and Loop Road:** A paved access road located approximately four miles east of the Collier County/Miami-Dade County line creates the eastern terminus of Loop Road. This location also serves as the western terminus of the Old Tamiami Trail alignment.

L-29 Levee - Alternative

Summary of Existing Condition

The L-29 levee run parallel to the northern side of U.S. 41 within the eastern portion of the ROGG East segment for 12 miles west of Krome Avenue.

The levee has two parallel access roads with one at the top of the levee and one at the beach on the southern side of the levee. These access roads are surfaced with gravel and vary in width from nine to 15 feet. These levees provide access to boat ramps and are open for vehicles driven by the general public, service personnel, and Tigertail village residents. There are no access control gates or signage along either of the access roads. There are two paved bridges that are approximately 20 feet in width occurring along the levee roads at existing water control structures.

There are only two locations along U.S. 41 where motorized vehicular bridges provide access from U.S. 41 to the levee road. The first occurs near the eastern terminus of the ROGG East segment, while the second occurs near the ValuJet Flight 592 Memorial. These bridges are located at water control structures to provide for ingress and egress of authorized service vehicles and personnel.

Proposed plans for CEPP would remove approximately 3 miles of the levee eastward of the ValueJet Memorial towards Tigertail. Access to the L-29 levee from U.S. 41 would be immediately available on east and west ends of the portion of the levee removed. A new north-south levee (Blue Shanty) would allow continuous bicycle/pedestrian access east to west via this northbound 14 mile route through WCA-3B around the gap without use of U.S. 41 or alternatively, U.S. 41 could be used for three miles.

Additionally, the L-28 Levee may be used for bicycle/pedestrian access from mile 21.5 to 24 west of Krome Avenue. At mile 24 the L-28 Levee turns north, away from U.S. 41. Connection across the canal to U.S. 41 may needed at this location.

Critical Nodes

18 **Levee Access Points:** There are several locations along U.S. 41 where there are motorized vehicular bridges that provide access to the canal levee access roads. At this time, these locations are primarily for the ingress and egress of authorized service vehicles and personnel. Examples of these access points can be found at the following locations:

- L-29 Access bridge (motorized vehicular),
- Bridge at Cooper Town Airboats (pedestrian only),
- L-28 Access bridge (motorized vehicular).

19 **Tigertail Residential Community:** Approximately six miles west of Krome Avenue, there is a small residential community located on the northern side of the L-29 canal, known as Tigertail. The community is approximately 2.1 acres in size and consists of approximately 21 buildings or structures. There is an existing pedestrian bridge connecting a parking area along U.S. 41 to the community. However, direct motorized vehicular access requires the use of the levee roadways and the parking and bridge are not publically accessible.

2.2.8 ROGG East Points of Interest

ROGG East offers a variety of stops and destinations that appeal to a wide range of user groups. Publicly accessible points of interest are oriented heavily towards parks and natural areas as well as cultural or historic sites. With the exception of the Miccosukee Restaurant, private or commercial points of interest are largely represented by companies that provide airboat tours and "Everglades experiences," such as fishing and wildlife observation.

Public Points of Interest

Parks and Preserves

33 **Miami-Dade County Trail Glades Sports Shooting Range:** Located 0.3 mile east of Krome Avenue, the Miami-Dade County Trail Glades Sports Shooting Range is actually outside of the project study area. However, it could serve as an auxiliary trailhead or destination due to its location near the eastern terminus of the study area. The park is home to one of Miami-Dade County's public shooting ranges, and is currently managed by MDPROS. Although the shooting range occupies the majority of developed area of the site, there are some underutilized auxiliary open spaces and paved parking areas that may be available for use as trailhead facilities.

34 **Everglades National Park / Shark Valley Visitor Use Area:** Located approximately 18 miles west of Krome Avenue, Shark Valley provides exemplary opportunities for wildlife observation. Shark Valley offers users over 15 miles of trails (both paved and boardwalk), guided tram tours, a nature center and bicycle rentals. A new visitor center and restroom opened in December, 2013 and existing parking capacity is limited, which can be overwhelmed quickly during peak seasons. Alternative parking areas that could service ROGG and Shark Valley may be able to be connected via ROGG.

35 **Boundary Line ORV Trailhead:** The Boundary Line trailhead is located along the south side of Loop Road, approximately 2.3 miles west of U.S. 41 near the Monroe and Miami-Dade County lines. The site is unimproved and offers only trail access. Planned improvements include parking, restroom facilities, and informational kiosks that could be utilized as a trailhead.

Historic and Cultural Sites

36 **ValuJet Flight 592 Memorial:** The ValuJet Flight 592 memorial was constructed in 1999 and dedicated to the remembrance of the 110 people who perished in the crash of ValuJet Flight 592 in 1996. Flight 592 crashed into the Everglades shortly after takeoff north of the current memorial site in the Everglades. The memorial consists of 110 concrete pillars arranged in an arrow that points in the direction of the crash site. The memorial was designed by students at the University of Miami, in conjunction with the American Institute of Architects. The site provides three gravel parking spaces and can be accessed via a gravel access road and bridge at the existing USACE S-333 Water Control Structure.

37 **Miccosukee Indian Village:** Located approximately 18.5 miles west of Krome Avenue, the Miccosukee Indian Village is home to many members of the Miccosukee Indian Tribe. The Miccosukee's core social services, such as police, schools, and governmental buildings, are located in the Village. Additionally, visitors to the Village can find numerous cultural resources in the form of historic artifacts, craft and cooking demonstrations, special events, and a history museum. There is an extensive parking area at the eastern entrance that provides parking for visitors to the village. This parking area is within trust lands for the Miccosukee Indians and would require their approval for any use associated with ROGG.

Private/Commercial Points of Interest

38 **Miccosukee Resort and Gaming Center:** In addition to the aforementioned Miccosukee Indian Village, the Miccosukee Indian Tribe of Florida also owns and operates a resort and gaming center located at northwest corner of the intersection of Krome Avenue and U.S. 41. The resort offers hotel accommodations, various forms of electronic gaming, a salon, teen area, an events center, and several restrooms. In addition to the interior amenities, the site provides a substantial amount of paved parking. Similar to the Miccosukee Indian Village, the site occurs within trust lands for the Miccosukee Indians. Any use of the parking facilities would require the approval of the Miccosukee Indians.

39 **The Original Coopertown Air Boats:** Located on the south side of U.S. 41, approximately five miles west of Krome Avenue, The Original Coopertown Air Boats is a private company that provides air boat rentals and tours into ENP. The site offers 30 paved parking spaces and a restaurant. A pedestrian bridge crossing the L-29 canal is located north of the site.

40 **Gator Park:** Located 1.3 miles west of Coopertown Air Boats (6.3 miles west of Krome Avenue) on the south side of U.S. 41, Gator Park offers airboat tours, wildlife viewing, a restaurant, RV camping, 39 parking spaces, and cultural demonstrations relevant to life in the Everglades.

41 **Everglades Safari Park:** Located 2.8 miles west of Gator Park (9.1 miles west of Krome Avenue), Everglades Safari Park offers services and amenities including airboat tours in ENP, wildlife exhibits, dining area, cultural demonstrations and 50 parking spaces.

42 **Buffalo Tiger Airboat Rides:** Located approximately 3.4 miles west of Everglades Safari Park (12.5 miles west of Krome Avenue) near the ValuJet Flight 592 Memorial, Buffalo Tiger Airboat Rides is a private company that specializes in seasonal airboat rides and tours. The site is located north of U.S. 41 and consists of a small building, parking lot, and a dock with chickee huts.

43 **Osceola Gift Shop:** The Osceola Gift Shop is a small retail store located along the north side of U.S. 41, approximately three miles east of the Miccosukee Indian Village (15.4 miles west of Krome Avenue). In addition to the gift shop's main building, there are several chickee huts, and 22 parking spaces (two ADA accessible).

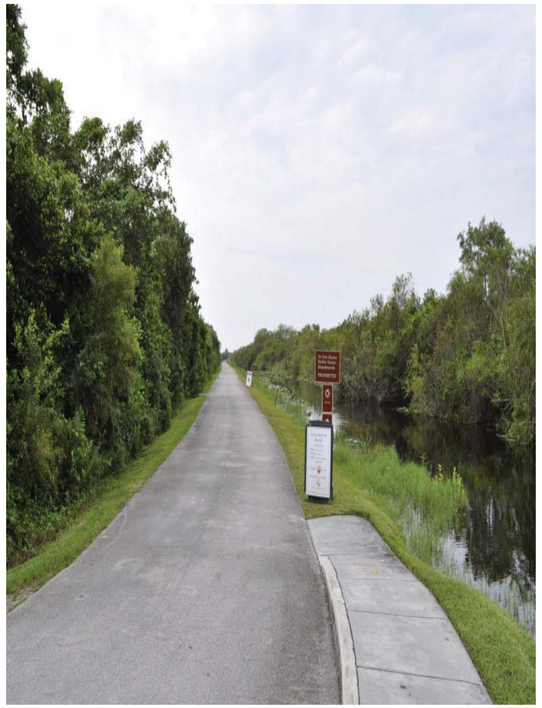
44 **Tigertail Airboat Rides:** Located 1.4 miles west of the Osceola Gift Shop (16.8 miles west of Krome Avenue), Tigertail Airboat Rides is a private company offering airboat tours and rides. It offers several chickee huts, water access, eight paved parking spaces (one ADA accessible), and portable toilets.

45 **Miccosukee Restaurant:** Located approximately 1.7 miles east of the Miccosukee Indian Village along the north side of U.S. 41, the Miccosukee Restaurant specializes in traditional Native American cuisine as well as contemporary fare. Although the restaurant is the primary function of the site, there is also a Miccosukee Indians Information Center, an airboat dock, several chickee huts, and 35 paved parking spaces (two ADA accessible).

46 **Chief Osceola Airboat Rides:** Chief Osceola Airboat Rides is a small private company located in the central portion of the Miccosukee Indian Village (19 miles west of Krome Avenue), which provides airboat rides and tours. Amenities on site include a boat ramp, several chickee huts, a small outbuilding, and 20 paved parking spaces (two ADA accessible).

47 **Tippy's Everglades Outpost:** Described as a "one-stop-shop for everything outdoors," Tippy's Everglades Outpost is a private retail business that also provides airboat tours, a multi-level dock and gazebo, wildlife and history exhibits, and a restaurant.

View of WC-3B in ROGG East segment



Entrance to the bike/tram trail at Shark Valley in Everglades National Park

Typical Existing Conditions

Roadway (ROW)

Typical ROW along the ROGG East segment averages an overall maintained ROW of 76 feet wide, but ranges from 38 to 168 feet. This roadway surface of U.S. 41 varies in its design in this portion of the ROGG Study Area. However, the L-29 canal is located to the immediate north of the road and is present throughout the eastern portion of the Study Area. A recent one-mile long bridge has been completed as part of the hydrological restoration projects ongoing in the region. The goal of this project is to allow water flow and restore aquatic habitat connectivity through an area currently separated by levees. Images of the typical roadways cross-section are shown below.

Bridges

The typical bridge is approximately 32 feet wide with two 12 foot travel lanes. The new one-mile bridge is wider than the other existing bridges with ten foot paved shoulders on the outside travel lanes. Bridges within this area of the Study Area pose difficulty for the implementation of the trail due to their narrow width.

Landscape (habitat)

Typical habitat of the eastern portion of the ROGG Study Area ranges from wet prairie, marsh and shrub wetland, to maleleuca-dominated marsh.

Typical U.S. 41 roadway section lacking guardrails

U.S. 41 water control structure crossing with no shoulders

View from top of L-29 levee looking out to the WCA

Everglades National Park-Shark Valley entrance; visitors parking and walking within U.S. 41 ROW

U.S. 41 one-mile bridge, looking west

Old Tamiami Trail existing roadbed and vegetation south of existing U.S. 41

Focus Areas

1. **Right-of-Way**
   Narrow:
   - L-28 Access Canal
   - Cooperstown Air Boats
   - Everglades Safari Park
   - One-Mile Bridge

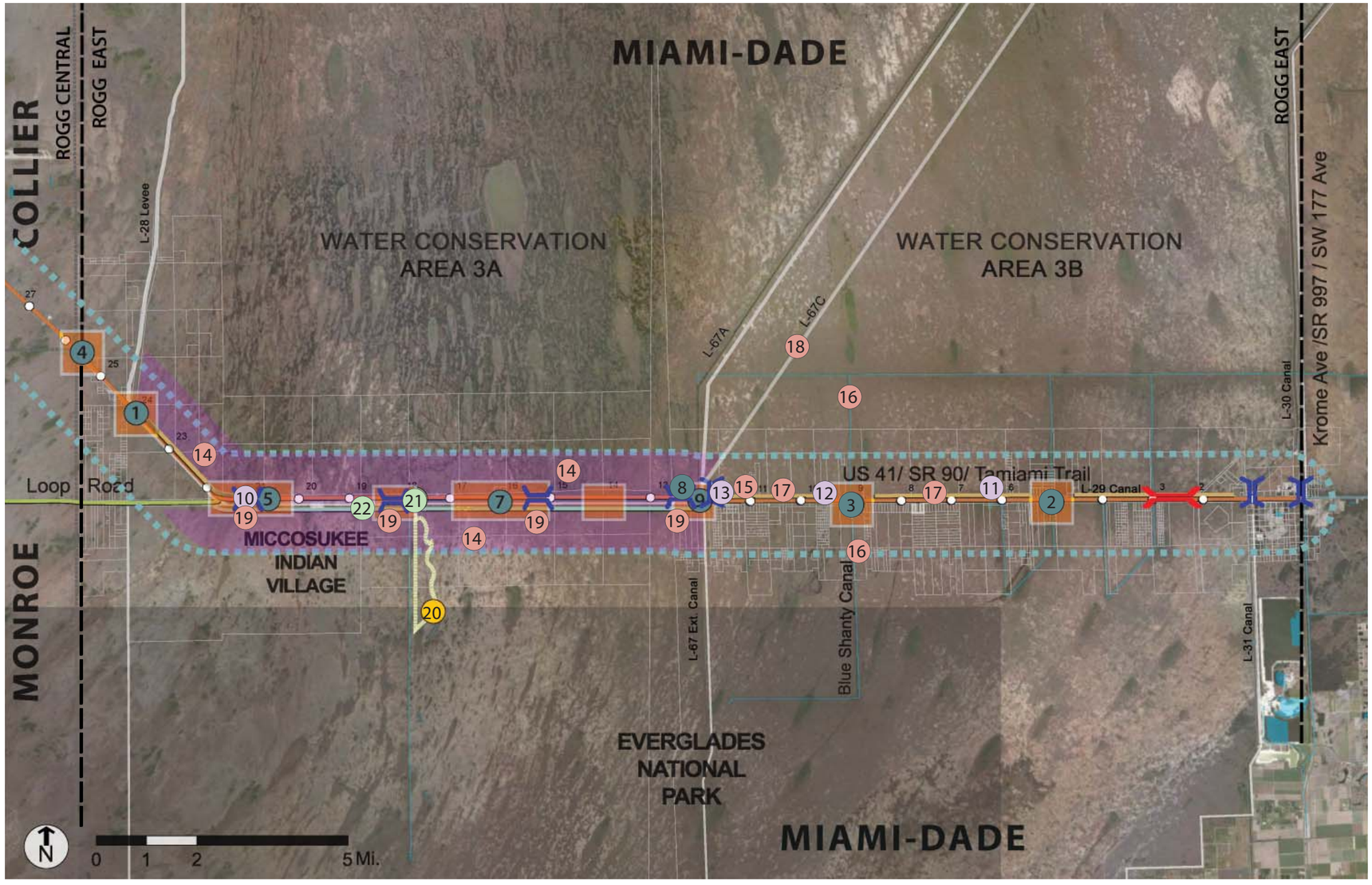
   Wide:
   - Collier/Dade County Line
   - Loop Road, East Terminus
   - Miccosukee Indian Village
   - Tigertail Airboat Rides
   - Osceola Gift Shop
   - Old Tamiami Trail
   - Buffalo Tiger Airboat Rides/L-29 Levee
2. **Existing Trails and Trailheads**
   - The Bobcat Boardwalk
   - Otter Cave Hammock Trail
   - Tram Road
3. **Cultural Resource Features**
   - Miccosukee Indian Village
   - Tigertail Residential Community
   - Osceola Residential Community
   - ValuJet Flight 592 Memorial
4. **Environmentally Sensitive Resource Features**
   - Snail Kite Critical Habitat spans U.S. 41 for 12.4 miles
   - L-28 Canal and Levee
   - L-67C Levee
   - Blue Shanty Canal
   - Old Tamiami Trail Breaches
   - CEPP Projects
5. **Primary Hubs**
   - ENP Shark Valley Visitor Use Area
6. **Bridges**
   - Six total

Looking west from atop the L-29 Levee in the ROGG East Study Area

Entrance to Shark Valley, Everglades National Park

Western portion of ROGG East Study Area

ROGG East - Focus Areas Map



Legend

- Segment Match Line
- County Boundary Line
- Governmental Boundary Line
- Roadway
- Mile Marker (from Krome Ave.)
- U.S 41 Alignment
- Loop Road Alignment
- Old Tamiami Trail Alignment
- L-29 Levee / L-28 Levee Alignment
- 1 Mile Study Area
- Waterway
- Bridge
- ROW Focus Area
- Critical Habitat
- Existing Trail
- Right-of-Way (ROW)
- Existing Trailheads and Trails
- Designated Historic Structure/ Landmark
- Environmentally Sensitive Resource
- Primary Hub

See page 65 for identification of # items.

- One-Mile Bridge
- Water Control Structure

Right-of-Way (ROW)

There are three areas found in the Study Area with a narrow ROW. Those areas with a ROW less than 40 feet wide within the ROGG East segment include:

1. L-28 Access Canal
2. Coopertown Air Boats
3. Everglades Safari Park

Wide ROW includes any maintained ROW greater than 70 feet. Wide ROW may allow for ample space for a shared use or multi-use path but is dependent upon design elements of the roadway with the ROW such as lateral positions of roadbed, presence of guardrails, and other elements. Six portions of U.S. 41 have a wide ROW:

4. Collier/Miami-Dade County Line
5. Loop Road East Terminus
6. Miccosukee Indian Village/Tigertail Airboat Rides/ Osceola Gift Shop
7. Old Tamiami Trail
8. Buffalo Tiger Airboat Rides/L-29 Levee
9. L-29/ValuJet Flight 592 Memorial

Existing Trailheads and Trails

Trails and trailheads that already occur on or along the Study Area could act as an opportunity to connect to a proposed greenway trail.

The only trails currently existing along ROGG East are the Shark Valley trails within ENP. Trails within the park include:

20. The Bobcat Boardwalk
20. Otter Cave Hammock Trail
20. Tram Road

Tram Road extends over 15 miles round trip and is used for tram rides, bicycling and walking. Otter Cave Trail is 0.25 mile long and provides access through a tropical hardwood forest. The Bobcat Boardwalk Trail is 0.5 in length and travels through saw grass slough and tropical hardwood forests.

Connectivity to future Miami-Dade County trail routes shall be considered when planning ROGG.

Cultural Resource Features

Four culturally significant locations exist in the corridor:

10. Miccosukee Indian Village
11. Tigertail Residential Community
12. Osceola Residential Community
13. ValuJet Flight 592 Memorial

The Airboat Association of Florida site and Mack's Fish Camp are both eligible for the National Register of Historical Places as Traditional Cultural Properties, however, neither are listed at this time.

Primary Hubs

Everglades National Park-Shark Valley Entrance and the Miccosukee Indian Village are the two existing primary hub areas within the ROGG East segment that provide parking, access to trails, restrooms and concessions.

21. Everglades National Park-Shark Valley Entrance
22. Miccosukee Indian Village

Environmentally Sensitive Resource Features

Snail Kite Critical Habitat exists throughout the entire western half of the ROGG East segment.

14. Snail Kite Critical Habitat
15. L-29 Levee removal (proposed)
16. Blue Shanty Canal
17. L-29 Levee and Canal
18. L-67C Levee
19. Old Tamiami Trail Breaches

Bridges

Five bridges occur along U.S. 41 in the ROGG East sgement. The one-mile bridge has been completed and is highlighted in red on the adjacent map.

- One-mile long bridge
- Typical Bridge
- Water Control Structure

ROGG East Opportunities and Constraints Summary

Contained entirely within Miami-Dade County, the ROGG East segment may experience the highest volume of visitors of all the segments due to the proximity of the Shark Valley entrance to ENP, Miccosukee Indian Village, and nine private attractions near the Miami metropolitan area. Miami-Dade also has the largest existing transit network which can be connected directly to the ROGG, providing options for residents to take transit to the eastern terminus of ROGG or potentially farther west to Shark Valley and the Miccosukee Indian Village.

Shark Valley is currently one of the fastest growing visitor use areas in terms total number of visitors for all of ENP entrance points, while it is also one of the most constrained for expanding to meet these increased needs. A new visitor center and restroom facility is under construction at Shark Valley. The park facility frequently experiences parking lot capacity issues during the peak visitation season. Development of the ROGG and coordination of transit could help relieve some of the vehicle traffic congestion issues at Shark Valley, while the addition of other opportunities along the ROGG East segment could provide additional opportunities for visitors to experience the Everglades could offset the growth in total number of visitors and their impacts at Shark Valley.

Existing facilities at a number of locations such as Shark Valley, Miccosukee Indian Village and ValuJet Flight 592 Memorial offer potential trailhead amenities, such as parking, restrooms and educational elements. ROGG East also includes the greatest number of possible alignments, including one within the U.S. 41 maintained ROW on new or proposed bridges, within existing levee ROWs along the L-29, within the Old Tamiami Trail corridor, or Loop Road. Each potential alignment should be studied in greater detail in order to determine all options in the feasibility of constructing the ROGG.

Environmental and cultural opportunities include a focused effort to remove exotic species to improve both habitat and viewsheds. Culturally significant lands include Native American lands in the western areas of ROGG East segment, which includes the Miccosukee Indian village area.

This segment also has the greatest amount of proposed changes to the landscape as part of the recommended restoration efforts of the CEPP and related projects. These proposed improvments remove barriers to south bound hydrological sheet flow and will include the addition of several new bridges along U.S. 41. Additional proposed projects include the removal of the existing roadbed, partial and complete removal of some levees, removal of the Old Tamiami Trail roadbed and fill, and the addition or upgrades to several water control structures. A critical constraint for ROGG is to use existing features or find cross-section alternatives that do not diminish south bound sheet flow. The immediate time-lines for these restoration efforts are not known and ultimately could take decades to implement. As such, the addition of the ROGG to the existing levee network, within the Old Tamiami Trail corridor, or as part of the proposed bridges could still proceed in coordination with these efforts and ultimately could be constructed as a temporary route until the time of removal, although these uses would need to not inhibit future restoration activities.