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SECTION 106 CONSULTATION CASE STUDY REPORT
EVALUATION TO EFFECTS TO THE SR 70 OVER KISSIMMEE RIVER BRIDGE
(BRIDGE No. 910001; 8HG01236/8OB00336)

Florida Department of Transportation

District One

State Road 70 PD&E Study

Limits of Project: CR 721 South to CR 599/128th Avenue

Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, Florida

Financial Management Number: 450334-1-22-01

ETDM Number: 14491

Date: August 2025

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.

SECTION 106 CONSULTATION CASE STUDY REPORT

**STATE ROAD (SR) 70 FROM COUNTY ROAD (CR) 721 SOUTH TO
CR 599/128TH AVENUE
HIGHLANDS and OKEECHOBEE COUNTIES, FLORIDA**

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SR 70 OVER KISSIMMEE RIVER BRIDGE
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**Florida Department of Transportation
District One
801 North Broadway Avenue
Bartow, Florida 33830**

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August 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District One is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study along State Road (SR) 70 from County Road (CR) 721 South to CR 599/128th Avenue in Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, Florida. The purpose of this project is to address safety conditions and to maintain important east-west connectivity within the regional transportation network and accommodate freight activity within the area. The study is approximately 8.6-miles long and proposed improvements include the widening of a two-lane facility up to a four-lane, divided facility, and/or the inclusion of operational improvements along the corridor. This Draft Section 106 Case Study Report is being prepared as part of the project's ongoing PD&E Study.

As part of the PD&E Study, two build alternatives, Build Alternative 1 and Build Alternative 2, and a No Build Alternative are being evaluated. Both Build Alternatives for the SR 70 improvements involve the replacement of the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001 [8HG01236/8OB00336]) which was previously determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). In order to meet the established schedule for the PD&E deliverables, a discussion was held on July 25, 2023, with representatives from Archaeological Consultants, Inc. (ACI), Scalar, and FDOT District One to develop an approach for cultural resource compliance on the SR 70 PD&E Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS). This approach enables the Section 106 process to move forward with consultation to resolve the adverse effect on the NRHP-eligible SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (8HG01236/8OB00336) prior to completing the CRAS for the rest of the project (mainline road realignment, ponds, etc.). A full archaeological and historic resources survey of the corridor was conducted, and the results are in the April 2025 CRAS.

In June 2024, FDOT conducted a CRAS that was limited to the footprint of construction of the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge replacement portion of the PD&E Study (ACI 2024). The bridge footprint was the Area of Potential Effects (APE). The purpose of the bridge CRAS was to survey and re-assess the bridge's significance in terms of eligibility for listing in the NRHP. The bridge (8OB00336/8HG01236) was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP by the SHPO in 2014 under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as an example of a removable span bridge. As a result of the 2024 CRAS, the FDOT determined that the bridge remains eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as an example of a removable span bridge. The SHPO concurred with the determination(s) on July 17, 2024 (Lotane 2024; Project File No. 2024-2438). See **Appendix A** for a copy of the SHPO concurrence.

The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001 [8HG01236/8OB00336]) is a seven span, concrete beam and girder bridge constructed in 1966 in order to carry SR 70 over the newly channelized Kissimmee River (C-38). The peak of the bridge is equipped with a steel, removable span which accommodates the passing of larger vessels while being more cost effective than a manned, operable span. The overall dimension of the bridge measures approximately 418-ft (feet) long with four approach spans that are 33-ft wide with a roadway width of approximately 24-ft, and three main spans that are 31-ft wide with a roadway width of approximately 22-ft.

The objective of this *Section 106 Consultation Case Study Report* is to evaluate the potential effects of the proposed undertaking to the historic property located within the APE, which includes the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge, Bridge No. 910001 (8HG01236/8OB00336). Potential effects to this historic property were evaluated to comply with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic

Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665, as amended), as implemented by *36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 800* ("Protection of Historic Properties," revised January 2004), and Chapter 267, *Florida Statutes*. This report includes a summary description of the project and of the significant historic property, as well as application of the Criteria of Adverse Effects, as defined in *36 CFR Part 800.5*.

The FDOT has applied the Criteria of Adverse Effect found in *36 CFR Part 800.5* to the historic property determined eligible for listing in the NRHP located within the APE. This document provides information for consultation with the SHPO and Office of Environmental Management (OEM). Based on the proposed undertaking to replace the existing significant bridge, the findings presented here indicate that the proposed undertaking will have an **Adverse Effect** to the NRHP-eligible SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge, Bridge No. 910001 (8HG01236/8OB00336).

Public engagement and appropriate coordination meetings will continue through the completion of the PD&E Study and the final design phase. As such, coordination among FDOT, District One, OEM, the SHPO, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), as well as the public will continue to ensure that a sensitive and appropriate mitigation treatment plan is developed. Measures to resolve the adverse effect will be documented in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between FDOT, SHPO, and other affected parties, as appropriate. Once the MOA is executed, the FDOT will ensure that the mitigation measures outlined in the MOA are implemented.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One, prepared this Draft Section 106 Case Study Report with support from Archaeological Consultants, Inc. (ACI) in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, and as implemented by *36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 800* ("Protection of Historic Properties") and as per revised Chapter 267, *Florida Statutes (F.S.)*. This case study report documents the alternatives evaluated for the State Road (SR) 70 Project and their potential effects to the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001). The project limits for the SR 70 Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study are from County Road (CR) 721 South to CR 599/128th Avenue in Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, Florida (**Figure 1-1**). The project was evaluated through FDOT's ETDM Programming Screen Phase in February 2023 (ETDM No. 14491; FDOT 2023a).

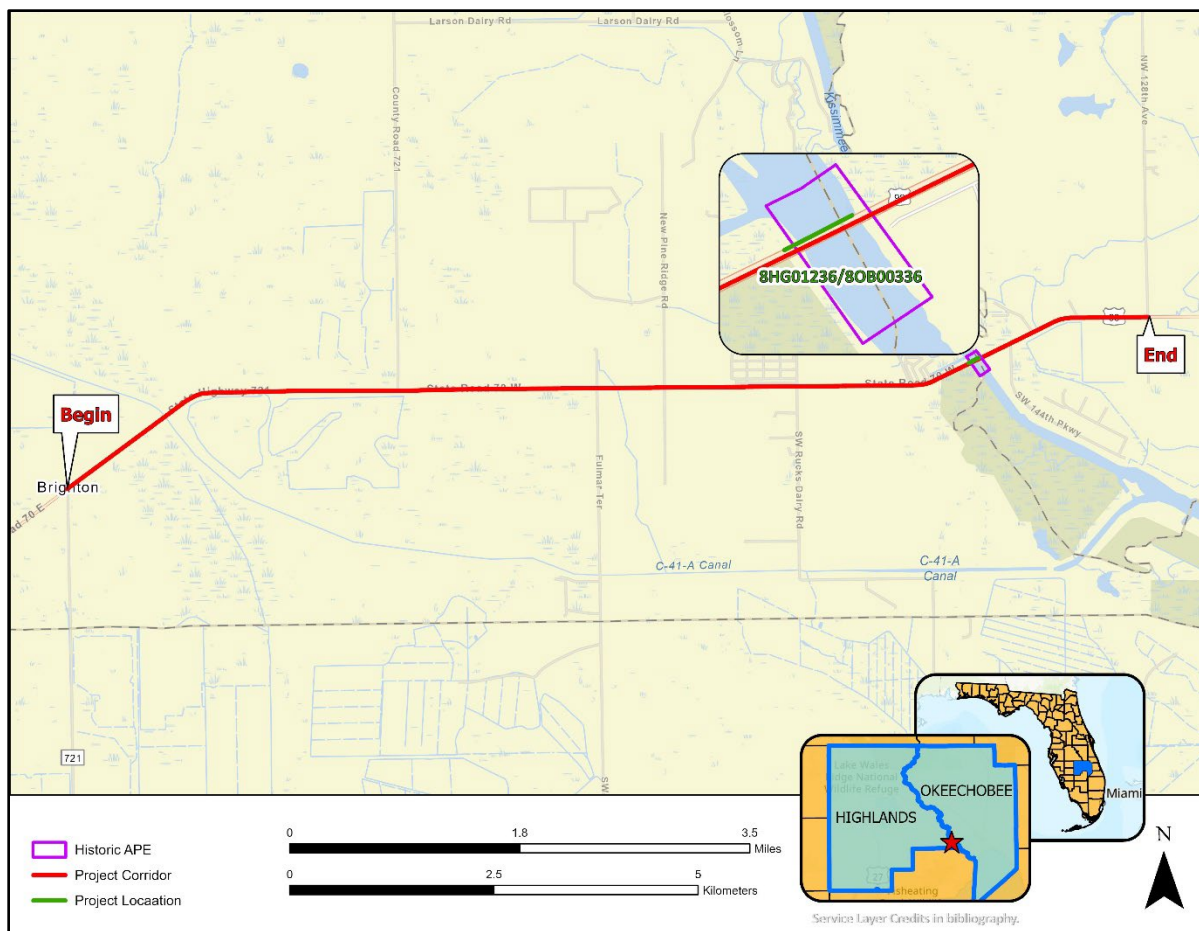


Figure 1-1 Location of the SR 70 Bridge over Kissimmee River (Bridge No. 910001 [8HG01236/8OB00336]) within the SR 70 from CR 721 S to CR 599/128th Avenue Corridor in Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, Florida.

The existing SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001) was constructed in 1966 and has been previously recorded in the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) as 8HG01236/8OB00336. Due to its location on the Okeechobee-Highlands County line, the bridge has been assigned a Highlands County FMSF number (8HG01236) and an Okeechobee County FMSF number (8OB00336). It was determined

eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) during the 2010 update to *The Historic Highway Bridges of Florida* (ACI 2012). In 2024, a bridge Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) was conducted to survey and re-assess the bridge's significance in terms of eligibility for listing in the NRHP within the project's area of potential effect (APE) (ACI 2024). The historical/architectural APE was limited to the footprint of the bridge construction. As a result of the 2024 CRAS, FDOT determined that the bridge remains eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C in the area of Engineering. The SHPO concurred with the determination(s) on July 17, 2024 (Lotane 2024; Project File No. 2024-2438). See **Appendix A** for a copy of the SHPO concurrence.

As per Section 106 and revised Chapter 267, *F.S.*, the FDOT Office of Environmental Management (OEM) must consider the effect of the undertaking (project) on any historic property that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, and afford the SHPO a reasonable opportunity to comment with regard to such an undertaking. The objective of this Section 106 Case Study Report is to evaluate the potential effects (direct and indirect) of the proposed undertaking to the NRHP-eligible SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001 [8HG01236/8OB00336]). This report includes a summary description of the project and of the significant historic property.

This *Draft Section 106 Case Study Report* will be displayed at the upcoming Public Hearing tentatively scheduled for the end of 2025. Updates reflecting any additional consultation, revised project information, the preferred alternative, and recommended mitigation will be documented in a finalized *Section 106 Case Study Report*. Through continued coordination between FDOT, SHPO, and other affected parties, as appropriate, mitigation measures to resolve the adverse effect will be documented in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Once the MOA is executed, it will serve as final documentation of the Section 106 process.

1.1 Purpose and Need

The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001) Project is located in Section 25 of Township 37 South, Range 33 East (United States Geological Survey [USGS] Okeechobee NW 1952), in Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, Florida. The purpose of this project is to address safety conditions on SR 70 from CR 721 S to CR 599/128th Avenue. Other goals of the project include maintaining east-west connectivity, improving the local and regional transportation network, and enhancing the movement of goods.

The need for the proposed improvements for SR 70 includes addressing the age and existing conditions of the Kissimmee River bridge as well as existing safety concerns. The Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001) requires structural strengthening due to the substandard load rating. Additional needs include improving traffic conditions, emergency evacuation, and incident response times. The secondary need for this project is to maintain Important East-West Connectivity within the Regional Transportation Network. The study evaluates alternatives for the widening of SR 70, with consideration of multimodal facilities with the intent of creating a safer corridor for bicyclists and pedestrians. The need for the project is based on the following criteria:

Safety: Improve Traffic Safety Conditions, Emergency Evacuation, and Incident Response Times

SR 70 is currently a two-lane undivided roadway with 10-foot (ft) travel lanes and 8-foot shoulders, 4-ft of which are paved. Guardrails, roadside swales, and fence posts are also in close proximity to the

roadway. With a context classification of C2-Rural, the existing typical section does not meet the Florida Design Manual standards. The substandard lane and shoulder widths and proximity of guardrails, roadside swales, and fence posts restrict the ability of drivers to avoid hazards within each directional travel lane without veering off the roadway causing direct impacts.

By the 2052 design year, assuming no capacity improvements to the existing two-lane facility within the project limits, existing operational deficiencies along the corridor will remain under No-Build conditions. The proposed four-lane widening of SR 70 will promote enhanced traffic flow and will help improve the corridor Level of Service (LOS) and address safety concerns.

Beyond the projected growth in traffic along the SR 70 corridor, another important consideration is planning for evacuations in the event of an emergency event (i.e., hurricane). As a Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) facility and state highway, SR 70 serves as a major evacuation route for both Highlands and Okeechobee Counties. In addition, as an important east-west corridor across the state, evacuations must consider in-county as well as out of county travel from either coast of the state.

Area Wide Network/System Linkage: Maintain Important East-West Connectivity within the Regional Transportation Network

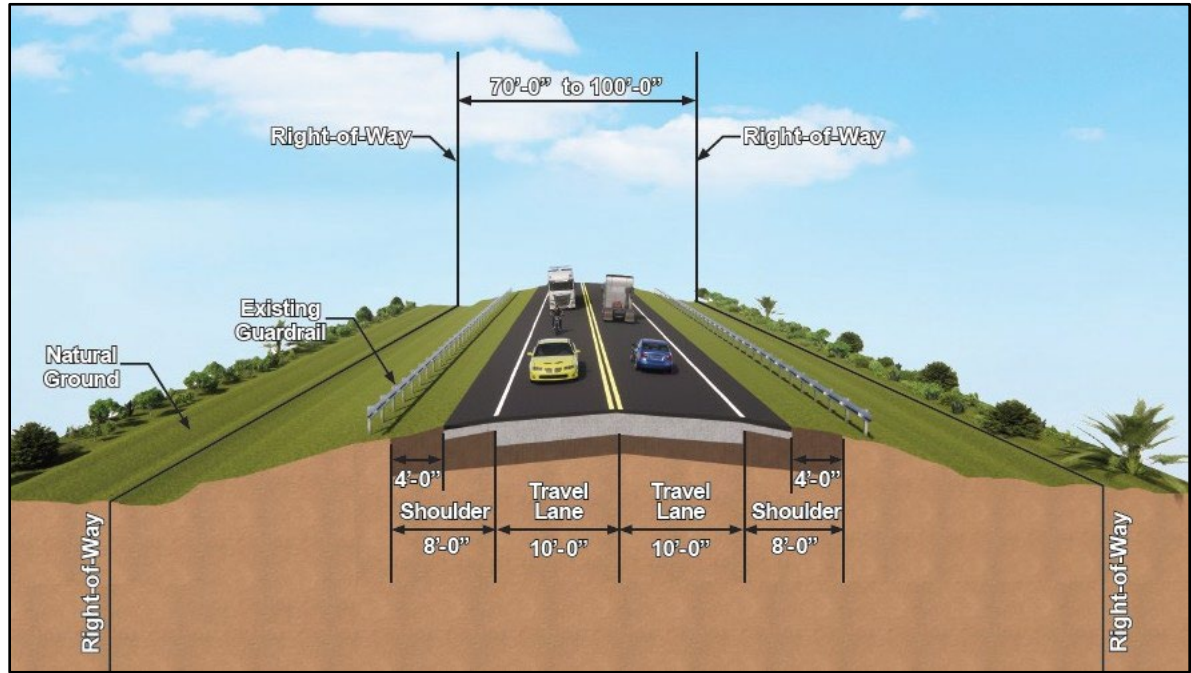
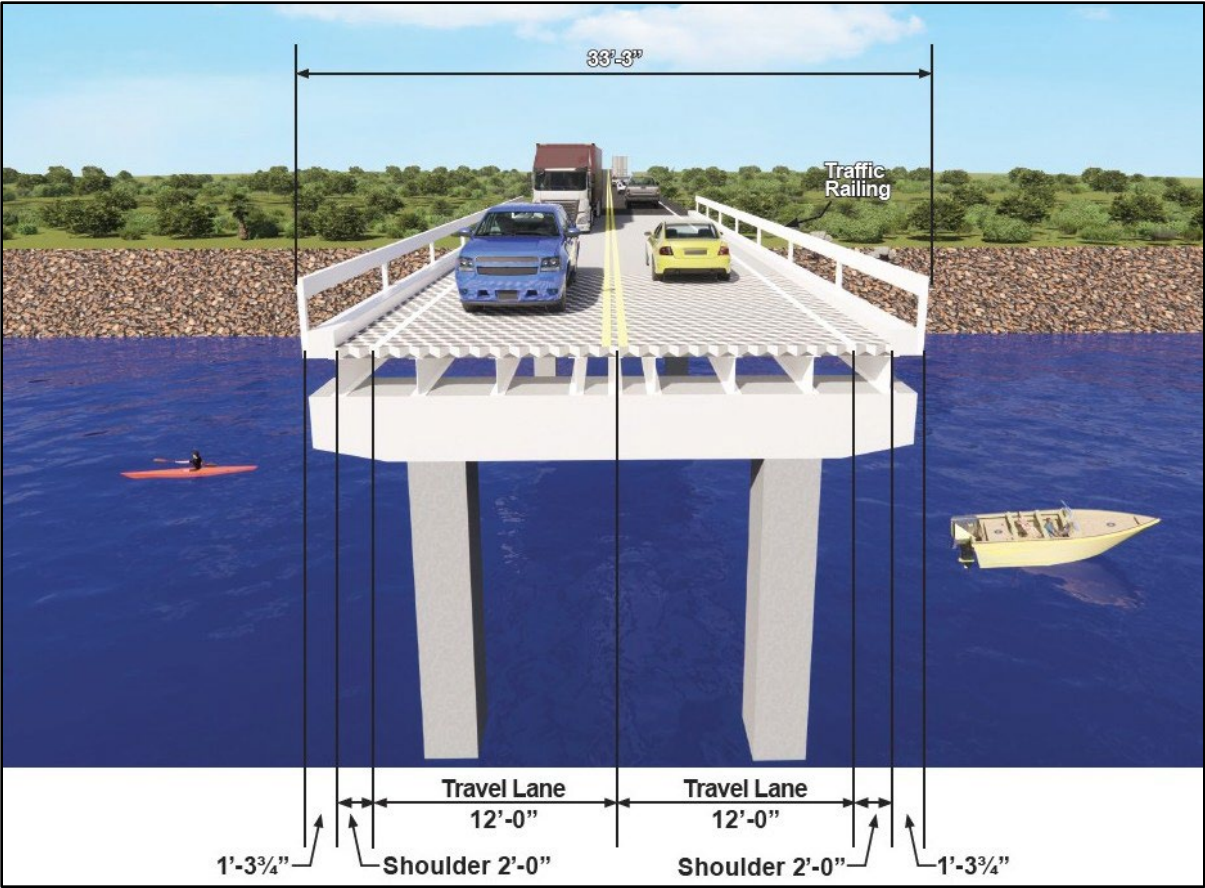
The project is intended to complement other SR 70 corridor safety and traffic operational improvements identified in the 2029 - 2045 SIS Long Range Cost Feasible Plan (LRTP) from CR 675 in Manatee County to US 98 in Okeechobee County. In turn, the improvements are anticipated to maintain the corridor's function as a designated SIS highway corridor and important east-west connection for freight and commuters across the Central Florida region and state.

Transportation Demand: Accommodate Freight Activity

According to the FDOT District 1 Freight Mobility and Trade Study: Technical Memorandum 5 - Freight Improvements Prioritization, improvements to SR 70 are the #1 long-term priority in Highlands County and the #2 long-term priority of Okeechobee County to facilitate the future growth of freight traffic in the region. Additionally, the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), its committees, and community stakeholders have identified SR 70 as the highest priority transportation facility in the region in need of improvements due to concerns pertaining to safety, freight mobility, and economic growth. The project improvements are aligned with the goals of these plans and SIS objectives of promoting interregional transportation linked to economic development.

1.2 Existing Conditions

There are two bridges within the project limits, one over Slough Ditch (C-41A) Canal and one over the Kissimmee River. The existing bridge over the Kissimmee River (Bridge No. 910001 [8HG01236/8OB00336]) has two 12-ft travel lanes and two-ft shoulders (**Figure 1-2**). The bridge does not have bicycle lanes or sidewalks present on either side. Within the project limits, SR 70 is currently a two-lane undivided roadway with 10-ft-wide travel lanes and 8-ft-wide shoulders, 4-ft of which are paved (**Figure 1-3**). There are no designated bicycle lanes or sidewalks present on either side of the roadway. The posted speed limit along the project corridor is 60 miles per hour (MPH).



1.3 Project Description and Proposed Alternatives

The study is approximately 8.6-miles long and proposed improvements include the widening of a two-lane facility up to a four-lane, divided facility, and/or the inclusion of operational improvements along the corridor. Alternatives for the proposed improvements for widening SR 70 were evaluated. Both build alternatives, Build Alternative 1 and Build Alternative 2, propose an open drainage system to collect roadway runoff in ditches and direct it to new stormwater management facilities. Each build alternative will require additional right-of-way (ROW) for the mainline widening and new stormwater management ponds. The build alternatives were evaluated based on environmental effects, ROW needs, and project costs. Considerations such as impacts to environmental resources, and the acres of ROW needed for roadway improvements and stormwater facilities, were quantified. Throughout this study, a “no-build” alternative is also considered. The “no-build” alternative assumes that no improvements are made to SR 70 through the year 2052, except routine maintenance.

Build Alternative 1 was recently identified as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative eliminates ROW impacts to residential areas along the mainline by meandering outside of the existing ROW. The alignment for Build Alternative 1 closely follows the existing roadway alignment and widens to the south. There are two areas that shift further to the south of the current alignment, resulting in small segments of new roadway alignment. The first area is located at a realigned CR 721 South intersection and continues for approximately 0.7-mile and the second area is located between Boney Lane and Northwest Riverside Road. This new alignment uses the existing alignment and avoiding impacts to adjacent developed parcels and recreational properties where possible. In comparison to Build Alternative 1, Build Alternative 2 requires less additional ROW. This is because the alignment uses the existing ROW north of SR 70 and widens slightly south of the existing roadway alignment for most of the corridor. However, it has the same new alignment at CR 721 South as Build Alternative 1.

The proposed alternatives for the SR 70 improvements involve the replacement of the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001) that will carry westbound traffic and the construction of a second bridge to the south to carry eastbound traffic. The proposed typical section for the bridge over the Kissimmee River consists of two 12-ft travel lanes in each direction. Adjacent to the inside travel lanes are six-foot shoulders and adjacent to the outside travel lanes are 10-ft shoulders. The 12-ft shared use path increases to 14-ft across the length of the eastbound bridge (**Figure 1-4**). See **Appendix B** for the Alternative 1 Concept Plan sheet. While the existing bridge has a removable span, there have been no requests to open the bridge in more than five years (FDOT 2023). Therefore, the bridge could be replaced as a fixed span considering the Kissimmee River is being restored to a natural, non-navigable waterway. The existing bridge will remain operational until the new bridge is constructed. In addition, the proposed typical for SR 70 within the project limits is a rural typical section with flush shoulder and an open roadway drainage system for the 4-lanes. The typical section includes two 12-ft travel lanes in each direction, a 40-ft median, 5-ft outside paved shoulders, 4-ft inside paved shoulders, and a 12-ft shared use path on the south side of the roadway. Design and posted speeds of 65 MPH are proposed. Below is a depiction of the typical section (**Figure 1-5**).

Avoidance and minimization options would have been considered as part of the PD&E Study in order to avoid impacts to the historic bridge. However, there are constraints adjacent to the existing SR 70 alignment in the area of the Kissimmee River bridge with the Florida Power and Light (FPL) easement to the north and the Florida Gas Transmission (FGT) easement to the south. Due to the positioning of both easements, the potential to realign SR 70 to avoid replacing the bridge is not a feasible option.

Furthermore, Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001) requires structural strengthening due to the substandard load rating. As such, keeping the existing historic bridge in place would not meet the purpose and need of the project, which is to address safety conditions on SR 70 from CR 721 S to CR 599/128th Avenue.

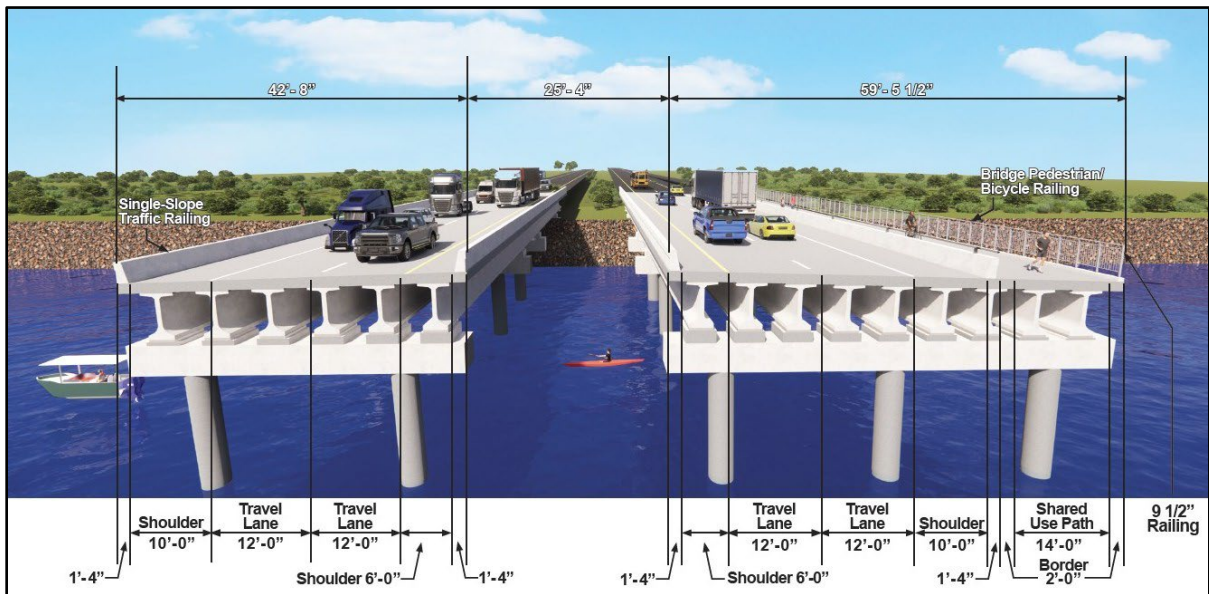


Figure 1-4 Proposed Kissimmee River Bridge typical section.

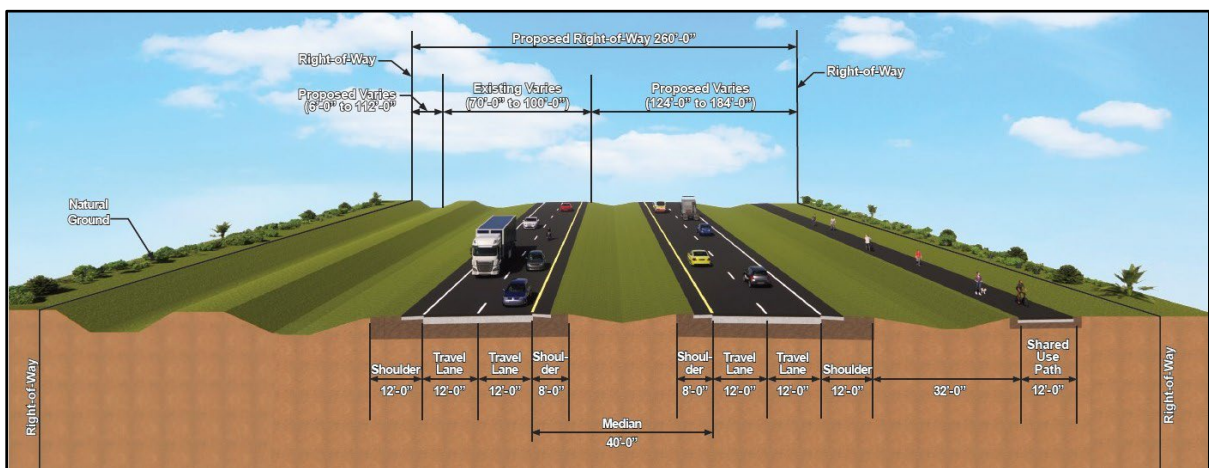


Figure 1-5 Proposed typical section.

2.0 CULTURAL SETTING

This Section 106 Case Study Report is preceded by the bridge CRAS Report for the PD&E Study of SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge which included an extensive cultural overview (ACI 2024). While the entirety of that information is not repeated here, a brief summary of relevant historical trends within the project area of Highlands and Okeechobee Counties follows and was taken directly from the 2024 bridge CRAS.

Okeechobee County was established on August 7, 1917 from parts of St. Lucie, Osceola, and Palm Beach counties. Soon after, the Florida East Coast Railroad linked Okeechobee with Fort Pierce and in 1926 with Belle Glade. This route also made the transport of winter vegetables to eastern markets more feasible. The railroad became an important route for the growing tourist industry, as visitors wanted to enjoy fishing on the lake or hunting in the nearby pine forests. The great Florida Land Boom of the 1920s saw widespread development of towns and highways. Several reasons prompted the boom, including the mild winters, the growing number of tourists, the larger use of the automobile, the completion of roads, the promise by the Florida Legislature never to pass state income or inheritance taxes, and the aggressive advertising campaigns of real estate companies. The growth spurred the division of Desoto County into Highlands, Glades, Charlotte, Hardee, and Desoto Counties in April 1921. By ca. 1924, the Warren G. Harding Memorial Bridge was constructed to carry the newly constructed Florida State Road 8 – now known as SR 70 – over the naturally occurring Kissimmee River (Orlando Sentinel 1924).

By 1927, the economic growth of the early 1920s was halted. To make the situation even worse, two hurricanes hit South Florida in 1926 and 1928. In September 1926, a devastating hurricane swept through South Florida killing hundreds in the Moore Haven area. Refugees again fled north when another hurricane swept through South Florida in September 1928. The 1928 hurricane winds created a tidal wave of water over Lake Okeechobee's shores, killing hundreds. The hurricane not only created a flood of refugees, but also cut utility lines and destroyed citrus crops (Sebring Historical Society 1987). The following year, the Mediterranean fruit fly invaded and paralyzed the citrus industry creating quarantines and inspections that further slowed an already sluggish industry. The stock market crash in October furthered the economic distress.

Between 1930 and 1938, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) started construction of the Herbert Hoover Dike after authorization by the River and Harbor Act of 1930 (USACE 1996). The Herbert Hoover Dike represents the largest civil engineering project in South Florida designed to control waters in and around Lake Okeechobee and in turn protecting the surrounding communities and agricultural fields from flooding. In 1947, the worst storm since the 1928 hurricane hit the lake and in October of that year, the citizens of Okeechobee formed a committee to seek federal flood control. Between 1948 and 1971 various projects were formulated and implemented for flood control (Will 1990). In 1948, the U.S. Congress authorized the USACE to construct the Central and South Florida Flood Control (C&SF) Project, which led to engineering changes to deepen, straighten, and widen the Kissimmee River waterway. The Kissimmee River was channelized by cutting and dredging a 30-foot deep straightway through the river's meanders (Florida Center for Environmental Studies 2018; Grunwald 2006; McCally 1999; SFWMD n.d.). The 1952 Okeechobee NW quad map shows the naturally occurring segment of the Kissimmee River prior to channelization (USGS 1952).

The Flood Control Acts of 1948, 1950, 1954, 1958, 1962, and 1968 led to the further improvements and modifications to the Herbert Hoover Dike throughout the 1950s and 1960s (New South Associates, Inc. 2010). In the 1960s, the C&SF modified the native Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades system extensively throughout South Florida, including construction of interceptor canals and water control structures to achieve flood control in the Upper and Lower Kissimmee Basin. Between 1966 and 1971, the Kissimmee River became canal 38 (C-38) after it was further widened and deepened and received multiple water control structures (SFWMD 2010). The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001) was constructed in 1966 to accommodate the newly channelized Kissimmee River (C-38). The C&SF eventually became the SFWMD. The channelization of the Kissimmee River did help with flood control but had a devastating effect on the local ecological system. The Kissimmee River Restoration Project began in 1999 with the backfilling of eight miles of the C-38 canal. Continuous water flow has been established to 24 miles of the meandering river and seasonal rains and flows now inundate the floodplain in the restored areas (SFWMD n.d.). The plan calls for the return flow to 44 miles of the river's historic channel and restoration of about 40 square miles of river/floodplain ecosystem.

From 1960 to the present, dairy farms, beef production, and agriculture pursuits have dominated the county. Okeechobee County, which has 535 farms covering 325,257 acres, is ranked number one in Florida in livestock and poultry products and in milk production, and number two in production of cattle and calves (USDA 2022). In addition, the Lykes Ranch, located in Glades and Highlands Counties, maintains one of the largest cow-calf operations in the United States (Lykesranch.com n.d.). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB), the population of Okeechobee County in 2020 was 39,644—a decrease in population of about 300 residents since 2010 (USCB 2023a). Similarly, Highlands County remains sparsely settled and agriculturally based. However, as development continues, the population has gradually increased. Highlands County's population increased from 98,786 in 2010 to 101,235 in 2020 (USCB 2023b).

3.0 EXISTING SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC PROPERTY

Based on the results of FDOT's 2024 CRAS, the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge, Bridge No. 910001 (8HG01236/8OB00336) remains eligible for listing in the NRHP. The SHPO concurred with FDOT's determination on July 17, 2024. A copy of the concurrence letter is included in **Appendix A** and a copy of the FMSF forms created for the significant property is included in **Appendix C**. The bridge CRAS included extensive physical descriptions, and historical information related to the significant resource (ACI 2024) and some of the information is not repeated here. A summary of the history and importance of the significant property follows.

3.1 SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge No. 910001 (8HG01236/8OB00336)

The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001) is a seven span, concrete beam and girder bridge constructed in 1966 in order to carry SR 70 over the newly channelized Kissimmee River (C-38) (**Photo 4-1**). The peak of the bridge is equipped with a steel, removable span which accommodates the passing of larger vessels while being more cost effective than a manned, operable span (**Photo 4-2**). The overall dimension of the bridge measures approximately 418-ft long with four approach spans that are 33-ft wide with a roadway width of approximately 24-ft, and three main spans that are 31-ft wide with a roadway width of approximately 22-ft. The approach spans are a concrete beam and girder style superstructure with a concrete deck that has been paved with asphalt, while the main span is a removable steel span. The substructure has solid, sloped abutments comprised of concrete bags. The superstructure is supported by six bents, each comprised of squared concrete headers with two squared concrete piers and footers with a horizontal strut between the piers. Decorative details include concrete post and lintel style parapets with "KISSIMMEE RIVER" stamped onto the northeast corner and "1966" stamped onto the southeast corner of the parapets. Metal guardrails affixed to wooden posts have been installed along the roadway approaching the bridge. In addition, an upright metal sign has been installed adjacent to the northeast corner of the bridge which reads, "BILLY BOWLEGS III BRIDGE / DESIGNATED BY 1969 LEGISLATURE OF FLORIDA."



Photo 4-1 SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge, Bridge No. 910001 (8HG01236/8OB00336), looking northwest.



Photo 4-2 SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge, Bridge No. 910001 (8HG01236/8OB00336), looking east.
Note the removable steel span.

Removable span bridges include a span that can be completely removed by machinery that is not included as part of the bridge, such as a crane, or can be hinged in an upright position (FDOT 2012). These types of bridges are beneficial at water crossings where large vessels rarely navigate as they do not require staffing and other operational fees that an operable span would require. The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge was first recorded during the 2010 update of *The Historic Highway Bridges of Florida* conducted by ACI for the FDOT and published in 2012 (FDOT 2012; Survey No. 20057). Due to its location on the Okeechobee-Highlands County line, the bridge has been assigned a Highlands County FMSF number (8HG01236) and an Okeechobee County FMSF number (8OB00336). Following the aforementioned survey, the resource (8HG01236/8OB00336) was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP by the SHPO in 2014. The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (8HG01236/8OB00336) has not been significantly altered since this determination, and FDOT has determined that it remains eligible for individual listing in the NRHP under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as an example of a removable span bridge.

4.0 EVALUATION OF EFFECTS

The Criteria of Adverse Effects (36 CFR Part 800.5(a)(1)) was applied to the NRHP-eligible property located within the project APE, the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge, Bridge No. 910001 (8HG01236/8OB00336). The criteria for assessing an adverse effect state that:

“(1) Criteria of adverse effect. An adverse effect is found when an undertaking may alter, directly or indirectly, any of the characteristics of an historic property that qualify the property for inclusion in the National Register in a manner that would diminish the integrity of the property’s location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association...”

The criteria further state that adverse effects on historic resources include, but are not limited to: physical destruction of or damage to all or part of the property; alteration of a property; removal of the property from its historic location; change of the character of the property’s use or of physical features within the property’s setting that contribute to its historic character; introduction of visual, atmospheric or audible elements that diminish the integrity of the property’s significant historic features; and neglect of a property which causes its deterioration.

4.1 Build Alternatives

Two build alternatives, Build Alternative 1 and Build Alternative 2, were evaluated as part of the SR 70 PD&E Study. Both build alternatives involve the replacement of the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001 [8HG01236/8OB00336]). The proposed alternative for the SR 70 improvements involves developing a new bridge following the existing SR 70 alignment that will carry westbound traffic over the Kissimmee River and the construction of a second bridge to the south that will carry eastbound traffic. The proposed typical section for the bridge over the Kissimmee River consists of two 12-ft travel lanes in each direction. Adjacent to the inside travel lanes are six-foot shoulders and adjacent to the outside travel lanes are 10-ft shoulders. The 12-ft shared use path increases to 14-ft across the length of the eastbound bridge.

Build Alternative 1 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative eliminates ROW impacts to residential areas along the mainline by meandering outside of the existing ROW. The alignment for Build Alternative 1 closely follows the existing roadway alignment and widens to the south. There are two areas that shift further to the south of the current alignment, resulting in small segments of new roadway alignment. This new alignment uses the existing alignment and avoiding impacts to adjacent developed parcels and recreational properties where possible.

Since the project would require the removal of the historic Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001), an evaluation of visual effects, or noise and air effects is not warranted as the significant resource will be replaced. By replacing the existing historic bridge, all the physical features and historic use of the bridge will be destroyed. As such, based on the proposed undertaking to remove and replace the historic bridge, the findings presented here indicate that Build Alternative 1 and Build Alternative 2 will have an **Adverse Effect** to the NRHP-eligible SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001 [8HG01236/8OB00336]).

4.2 No-Build Alternative

A No-Build Alternative is considered a valid alternative throughout the life of the study. The No-Build Alternative assumes no improvements to SR 70 within the study limits through the Design Year of 2052, limiting work in the project area to routine maintenance. Based on the 2022 Bridge Inspection Report, the existing bridge is considered satisfactory; however, due to the age of the structure (built in 1966 [58 years]), the bridge has reached the end of its service life which is designed for the service life of 50 years. The bridge currently shows signs of deterioration of the concrete and steel span, which is in line with the age of the bridge. In 2024, repairs and rehabilitation to the bridge (cleaning and sealing the roadway, deck spall repairs, structural steel repairs, and repainting of the steel portions) were done to maintain the bridge and extend its time throughout and beyond the PD&E study. This will allow the bridge to remain in use until a solution for replacement or additional repair is made. The anticipated amount of time to pass during the process would add another 10 to 15 years to the lifespan, far exceeding the intended service of the bridge to 68 to 70 years. Furthermore, the existing bridge has substandard shoulder widths and railings, especially on the steel (movable) span, and the steel structure with steel deck is not suitable for widening.

Based on the information above, the No-Build Alternative to maintain the existing alignment and keep the existing bridge unaltered and in place is considered feasible and ultimately, would result in an adverse effect. As part of the No-Build Alternative, routine maintenance will not correct the ongoing physical deterioration and aging of the bridge that will eventually lead to bridge failure. Furthermore, in order to meet the project Purpose and Need, the Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001) would need to be widened; however, considering the bridge type (steel span bridge), if the bridge were widened to meet current design standards, the bridge would have a substandard load rating. As such, the No-Build Alternative to keep the existing bridge in place would also result in an **adverse effect** on the NRHP-eligible SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge, Bridge No. 910001 (8HG01236/8OB00336).

5.0 COORDINATION

A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) has been created for this project to obtain comments and input from the public, government officials, agency representatives and other interested parties. The major elements of this program include the advance notification coordination process, a Public Kick-off Meeting, Alternatives Public Meeting, Public Hearing, and other coordination meetings with stakeholders and agencies. The following sections give an overview of the public involvement activities conducted to date; two newsletters and the Alternatives Public Workshop Summary are included in **Appendix D**.

5.1 Local Coordination

Information regarding agency coordination efforts will be provided in this section following the public hearing process.

5.2 Public Coordination

Federal and State agencies as well as Native American Tribes, having a concern in this project due to jurisdictional review or expressed interest were identified and contacted directly by the FDOT through the Advance Notification (AN) process (FDOT 2023b). Informational letters and newsletters were distributed to elected and appointed officials, interested parties, as well as property owners/tenants, and business owners/operators. Other outreach techniques used to notify the public of the proposed improvements include local newspapers, television, and radio. In addition, public announcements via flyers will be available to the surrounding community and civic groups. All meeting notifications will be available in Spanish and translators will be present during public meetings.

In addition to working with online and media outlets, different notification techniques have been used throughout the project development process. Direct mail for notifications were sent out to property owners within 300-ft on either side of the centerline of each Build Alternative, as well as other local citizens who may be impacted by the construction of this project as well as elected and appointed public officials, public and private groups, organizations, agencies, or businesses and individuals who request to be placed on the mailing list for this project.

A project specific web page, <https://www.swflroads.com/project/450334-1>, was developed at the beginning of the study to provide current project information to elected officials, agencies, and the public. The website contains a project location map, project purpose, public involvement notices, public meeting materials, project schedule, project newsletters, and other project related information. The website is updated periodically with current related information and will be available for the duration of the study. On August 7, 2025, a copy of the bridge CRAS was uploaded to the project website for the public to review the findings and FDOT's determination that the proposed undertaking will have an adverse effect to the NRHP-eligible bridge. The website also includes a link where visitors can provide their comments and questions and sign up for the mailing list.

For this project, approximately four newsletters are anticipated to be distributed throughout the duration of the PD&E Study. To date, two newsletters have been sent out. The first notification was sent out in May of 2023, as the project Kickoff Newsletter that contained the project location, purpose, alternatives, and timeline. A second Newsletter was sent out in June 2024 prior to the Public

Alternatives Meeting that was held in-person on June 11 and virtually on June 18. The remaining newsletters will be distributed prior to the public hearing and upon completion of the study.

In June 2024, FDOT conducted the Alternatives Public Workshop (in-person and online) to present information about the preliminary alternatives and to provide the public with the opportunity to comment. Meeting materials were posted to the project webpage and at the start of both events, a handout of the project was provided as well as an explanation of the comment process. Renderings of the proposed Kissimmee River bridge, consisting of one new bridge structure to carry eastbound traffic and a second new bridge structure to carry westbound traffic, were included in the informational boards, presentation, and meeting handout. The Public Workshop was advertised in the Lake Okeechobee News and the Highlands News-Sun and the Florida Administrative Register. Meeting notifications and newsletters were emailed to elected and appointed officials, interested parties, and ETAT members, and mailed to property owners. In all, 24 people attended the Alternatives Public Workshop (11 citizens and 3 elected officials signed in at the in-person meeting and 8 citizens, 1 elected official, and 1 agency representative joined the online meeting).

At the in-person meeting, attendees were able to leave written comments and at the online workshop, 12 project-specific comments were submitted which the study team answered live at the GoTo Webinar. All other comments were submitted either by email, website, or by mail. Four comment forms were received at the in-person meeting and zero were received during the 14-day comment period following the meeting, ending June 25, 2024. Comments received through the engagement activities outlined above expressed a need for the widening of SR 70. Other public comments or questions related to the project included:

- Stated to keep the historical designation of the Kissimmee River bridge as Billy Bowlegs, III Bridge
- Expressed the need for a noise wall and guardrail
- Preference for Alternative Two (one person)
- Pleased with the proposed design at SW 144th Parkway
- Access, specifically related to the southern portion of the project
- Anticipated relocations associated with either alternative
- Existing and proposed elevation at the Kissimmee River Fishing Resort

FDOT representatives as well as members of the consultant team have been and will continue to be available to discuss the project and answer questions throughout the duration of the project.

On July 21, 2025, an email was sent to historical societies in the area of Highlands and Okeechobee Counties asking for their review of the bridge CRAS and to provide any input within 30 days. A copy of the bridge CRAS was sent as an attachment and the email discussed the project and previous public involvement opportunities. A link to the project website was also included. The purpose of the email was to request comment from local historical organizations for consideration and inclusion in the MOA. Content of the email explained that the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge was eligible for listing in the NRHP and that the FDOT has determined that the proposed undertaking will have an adverse effect on the bridge. The email also explained that a Section 106 Case Study Report was being drafted to analyze the adverse effects and that an MOA is also currently being prepared. The email was sent to the following historical societies and agencies:

- Okeechobee County Community Services
- Okeechobee Historical Society
- Heritage Association of Highlands County, Inc.
- Highlands County Historic Preservation Commission
- Sebring Historical Society
- Lake Placid Historical Society

Within the 30-day response period, the Okeechobee Historical Society and the Highlands County Historic Preservation Commission provided a response. Neither organization objected to the project but recommended that the historic significance of the bridge be preserved and both expressed interest in being part of the MOA process. The President of the Okeechobee Historical Society responded on July 31, 2025 requesting that the name and the Billy Bowlegs III plaque remain; however, if that is not possible, then they have requested that the plaque and any other historical artifacts be offered to the historical society for preservation. Highlands County responded on August 15, 2025 notifying that the project was on the upcoming Historic Preservation Commission agenda for the August 21, 2025 board meeting. The intent of the meeting is for the board Chair to sign the response letter that will be submitted to FDOT for their inclusion in the MOA. The response letter asks that the legacy and historical significance of the Kissimmee River Bridge be preserved as best possible with recommendations to include interpretive signage or other appropriate measures to be incorporated into the MOA. Project representatives were in attendance and during the meeting the board motioned to sign the draft letter with no changes and commented that they would like a monument or display at the location of the bridge site commemorating the prior bridge. During the meeting, it was also noted that one of the board members of the Highlands County Historical Preservation Commission is also the head of the Lake Placid Historical Society, thus it is inferred that this agency is aware of the project. Additionally, one member of the public in attendance identified himself as a member of the Heritage Association of Highlands County; thus, also inferred that affiliates of the preservation community are aware of the project. See **Appendix E** for a copy of the agenda and signed letter.

A public hearing for this PD&E Study is tentatively scheduled for the end of 2025 and will include a comment period. A formal public hearing is held to provide a forum for input from property owners and interested parties on the final recommendations. The Section 106 Case Study Report and other PD&E Study documents will be available for public review at least 21 calendar days prior to the public hearing as well as being on display at the public hearing.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The FDOT applied the Criteria of Adverse Effects found in *36 CFR Part 800.5* to the NRHP-eligible SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001 [8HG01236/8OB00336]) located within the APE. This document provides information for consultation with the SHPO and OEM. Based on the proposed undertaking to replace the historic bridge, the findings presented here indicate that the proposed undertaking will have an **Adverse Effect** to the NRHP-eligible SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001 [8HG01236/8OB00336]). Furthermore, the No-Build Alternative is considered a valid alternative throughout the life of the study. The “No-Build” alternative assumes that no improvements are made to SR 70 through the year 2052, except routine maintenance which will not correct the ongoing physical deterioration and aging of the bridge that will eventually lead to bridge failure. As such, the option to keep the existing bridge in place would also result in an **adverse effect** on the NRHP-eligible SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge, Bridge No. 910001 (8HG01236/8OB00336).

6.1 Continued Coordination

According to the Public Involvement Plan, public engagement and appropriate coordination meetings with local government, and environmental permitting agencies, work sessions, and small group meetings will continue throughout the final design phase (FDOT 2023b). As such, coordination among FDOT, District One, OEM, the SHPO, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), as well as the public will continue to ensure that a sensitive and appropriate mitigation treatment plan is developed. The ACHP will be notified of the adverse effect determination, and measures to resolve the adverse effect to the Kissimmee River Bridge (Bridge No. 910001) will be documented in a MOA between FDOT, SHPO, and other affected parties, as appropriate. The MOA is currently being drafted and includes recommendations from the Okeechobee Historical Society and the Highlands County Historic Preservation Commission as discussed above in Section 5.2. Proposed mitigation options being discussed include, but are not limited to, Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation prior to demolition, salvaging the Billy Bowlegs III plaque and other historical artifacts, and preparing interpretive signage or some form of display at the location of the bridge site commemorating the prior bridge. Discussions and coordination regarding the MOA are still ongoing.

7.0 REFERENCES CITED

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APPENDIX A

SHPO Correspondence



Florida Department of Transportation

RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

801 N. Broadway Avenue
Bartow, FL 33830

JARED W. PERDUE, P.E.
SECRETARY

July 9, 2024

Alissa S. Lotane
Director and State Historic Preservation Officer
Florida Division of Historical Resources
Florida Department of State
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Attn: Ms. Alyssa McManus, Transportation Compliance Review Program

RE: Cultural Resource Assessment Survey
Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study
State Road (SR) 70 from County Road (CR) 721
South to CR 599/128th Avenue
Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, Florida
SR 70 Over Kissimmee River Bridge (8HG01236/8OB00336)
Financial Project No.: 450334-1-22-01

Dear Ms. Lotane,

Enclosed please find one copy of the report titled *Cultural Resource Assessment Survey Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study State Road (SR) 70 from County Road (CR) 721 South to CR 599/128th Avenue, Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, Florida; SR 70 Over Kissimmee River Bridge (8HG01236/8OB00336)*. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District One is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to address safety conditions on SR 70 from CR 721 S to CR 599/128th Avenue. The study is approximately 8.6-miles long and proposed improvements include the widening of a two-lane facility up to a four-lane, divided facility, and/or the inclusion of operational improvements along the corridor. Travel lane widths may be widened from 10 feet (ft) to 12 ft as part of the project and multimodal facilities will also be considered along the corridor where appropriate. Additional right-of-way (ROW) is expected to accommodate the proposed improvements.

All project alternatives proposed for the SR 70 improvements will involve the replacement of the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (8HG01236/8OB00336) which has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). In order to meet the established schedule for the PD&E deliverables, a discussion was held on July 25, 2023 with representatives from ACI, Scalar, and FDOT District One to develop an approach for cultural resource compliance on the SR 70 PD&E Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS). The approach would enable the Section 106 process to move forward with consultation to resolve the adverse effect on the NRHP-eligible SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (8HG01236/8OB00336) prior to completing the CRAS for the rest of the project (mainline road realignment, ponds, etc.). The intention is to get consultation to a point where a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is acceptable to all parties involved but will remain in a draft state until completion of the mainline/ponds CRAS. The draft MOA will be updated as necessary

following the mainline CRAS. In August 2023 a Cultural Resource Coordinator for District One coordinated with the Office of Environmental Management (OEM) and subsequently, with the SHPO regarding this approach and in November 2023 all parties were in agreement. As such, this CRAS is limited to the bridge replacement portion of the PD&E and a full archaeological and historic resources survey of the corridor will be conducted following the identification of corridor alternatives and will be an addendum to this CRAS.

The purpose of this CRAS was to locate and identify any historic resources within the project area of potential effect (APE) at the bridge location and to assess their significance in terms of eligibility for listing in the NRHP. For the purpose of this survey, the historical/architectural APE was limited to the footprint of construction of the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge replacement. The fieldwork was conducted in January 2024.

This CRAS was conducted to comply with the requirements set forth in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, found in 36 CFR Part 800 (Protection of Historic Properties). The study also complies with Chapter 267 of the Florida Statutes and Rule Chapter 1A-46, Florida Administrative Code and Section 267.12, Florida Statutes, Chapter 1A-32. All work was performed in accordance with Part 2, Chapter 8 of FDOT's PD&E Manual (2023 revision), FDOT's Cultural Resources Management Handbook, and the standards stipulated in the Florida Division of Historical Resources' (FDHR) *Cultural Resource Management Standards & Operations Manual, Module Three: Guidelines for Use by Historic Preservation Professionals*. The Principal Investigator for this project meets the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation* (48 FR 44716-42). This study also complies with Public Law 113-287 (Title 54 U.S.C.), which incorporates the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, as amended.

Historic background research, including a review of the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) and the NRHP databases, indicated that one historic bridge (8HG01236/8OB00336) was previously recorded within the APE. Due to its location on the Okeechobee-Highlands County line, the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (FDOT Bridge No. 910001) has been assigned a Highlands County FMSF number (8HG01236) and an Okeechobee County FMSF number (8OB00336). The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (FDOT Bridge No. 910001) is a seven span, concrete beam and girder bridge constructed in 1966 in order to carry SR 70 over the newly channelized Kissimmee River (C-38). The peak of the bridge is equipped with a steel, removable span which accommodates the passing of larger vessels while being more cost effective than a manned, operable span. The bridge (8OB00336/8HG01236) was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP by the SHPO in 2014 under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as an example of a removable span bridge.

The historical/architectural field survey resulted in the identification of two historic resources (8HG01236/8OB00336 and 8HG01650/8OB00489) within the APE. These include the previously recorded concrete beam and girder SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (8HG01236/8OB00336) and the newly identified Kissimmee River (C-38 Canal) (8HG01650/8OB00489), constructed in 1966. The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (8HG01236/8OB00336) has not been significantly altered and appears to remain eligible for individual listing in the NRHP under Criterion C. Although the channelization of the Kissimmee River (C-38 Canal) (8OB00489) is significant within the ecological and developmental history of south and central Florida, the majority of the linear resource is located outside of the APE, and a survey of the entire 69-mile-long channelized river is beyond the scope of this project. In addition, the linear resource has not been previously recorded elsewhere in Okeechobee or Highland Counties. As such, following the guidance

Ms. Lotane, SHPO
FPID No.: 450334-1-22-01
July 9, 2024
Page 3

of the *Historic Linear Resource Guide* provided by the FDHR, there is insufficient information to evaluate the 102 ft segment of the Kissimmee River (C-38 Canal) that is contained within the APE (FDHR 2022). Based on the results of this study, it is the opinion of the District that the proposed undertaking will have an **adverse effect** on the SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (8HG01236/8OB00336) and have **no adverse effect** on the Kissimmee River (C-38 Canal) (8HG01650/8OB00489).

I respectfully request your concurrence with the findings of the enclosed report.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me at (863) 519-2625 or Jeffrey.James@dot.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

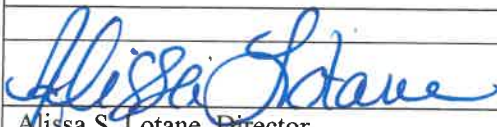
Jeffrey James
Environmental Manager
FDOT, District One

Enclosures: One original copy of the CRAS Report (June 2024), Four (4) FMSF forms, One Completed Survey Log, GIS Shapefiles

The Florida State Historic Preservation Officer finds the attached Cultural Resource Assessment Survey Report complete and sufficient and ☒ concurs / ☐ does not concur with the recommendations and findings provided in this cover letter for SHPO/FDHR Project File Number 202402438. Or, the SHPO finds the attached document contains _____ insufficient information.

In accordance with the *Programmatic Agreement Among the FHWA, the FDOT, the ACHP, and the SHPO Regarding Implementation of the Federal-Aid Highway Program in Florida* (2023 PA), and appended materials, if providing concurrence with a finding of **No Historic Properties Affected** for a whole project, or to **No Adverse Effect** on a specific historic property, SHPO shall presume that FDOT may pursue a *de minimis* use of the affected historic property in accordance with Section 4(f) as set forth within 23 C.F.R. Part 774 and its implementing authorities, as amended, and that their concurrence as the official with jurisdiction (OWJ) over the historic property is granted.

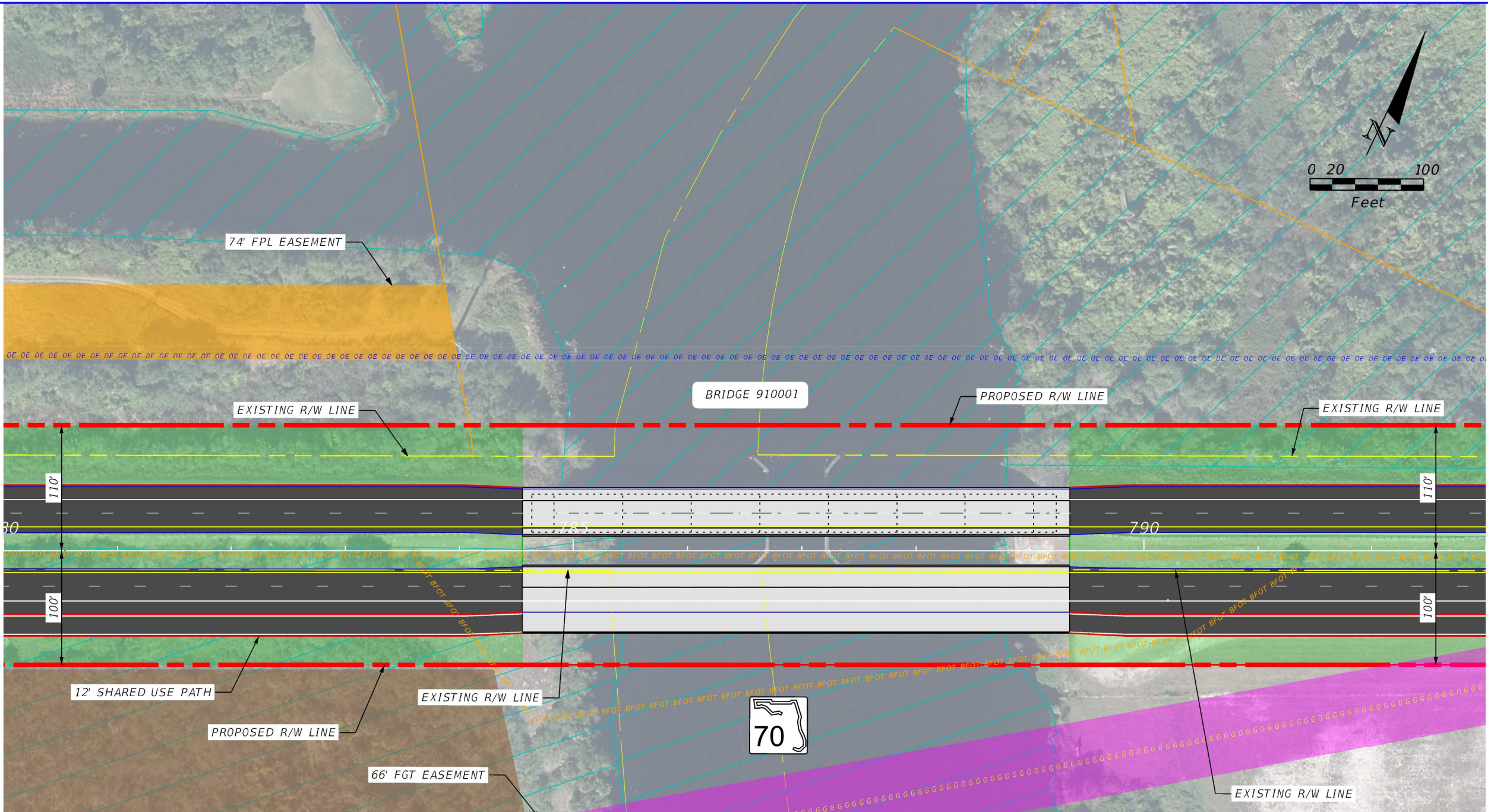
SHPO Comments:


Alissa S. Lotane, Director
Florida Division of Historical Resources

Date 7/17/24

APPENDIX B

Concept Plan Selected Sheet (November 2024)



XX

POND ALTERNATIVE NUMBER

EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY

PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY

PARCEL BOUNDARIES

#

POTENTIAL MED./HIGH CONTAMINATION SITE

FPL EASEMENT

WETLANDS & SURFACE WATERS

PUBLIC RECREATIONAL PROPERTIES

GGGGGG

FLORIDA GAS TRANSMISSION

0E 0E 0E

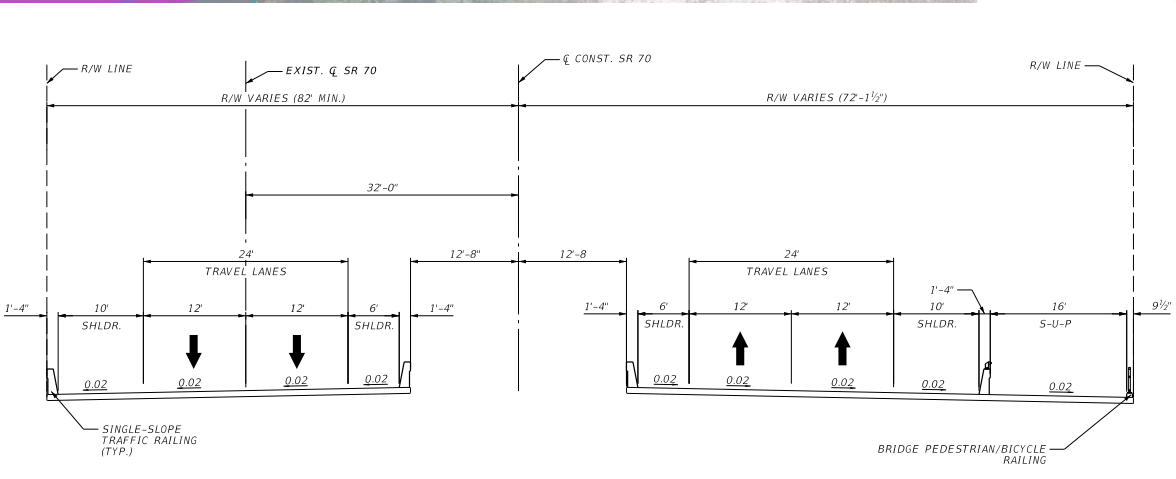
FLORIDA POWER AND LIGHT

BFOT BFOT

CENTURYLINK

FGT EASEMENT

LEGEND



REVISIONS				ENGINEER OF RECORD		STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		ALTERNATIVE 1 CONCEPT PLAN	SHEET NO. 28
DATE	DESCRIPTION	DATE	DESCRIPTION	NICHOLAS JOHN CLAVELO LICENSE NUMBER: 84366 SCALAR CONSULTING GROUP INC. 5713 CORPORATE WAY, SUITE 200 WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA 33407		ROAD NO.	COUNTY		
						SR 70	HIGHLANDS OKEECHOBEE	FINANCIAL PROJECT ID 450334-1-22-01	

APPENDIX C

Florida Master Site File Forms

☐ Original
☒ Update



HISTORICAL BRIDGE FORM

FLORIDA MASTER SITE FILE

Version 5.0 3/19

Consult Guide to the Historical Bridge Form for detailed instructions

Site # HG01236
 Field Date 1-11-2024
 Form Date 1-15-2024
 Recorder # _____
 FDOT Bridge # 910001

Bridge Name(s) SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge Multiple Listing (DHR only) _____
 Project Name CRAS SR 70/Kissimmee River Bridge Replacement Survey # (DHR only) _____
 Ownership: ☐ private-profit ☐ private-nonprofit ☐ private-individual ☐ private-nonspecific ☐ city ☐ county ☒ state ☐ federal ☐ Native American ☐ foreign ☐ unknown

LOCATION & MAPPING

Route(s) Carried/Feature(s) Crossed SR 70 / Kissimmee River
 USGS 7.5 Map Name OKEECHOBEE NW USGS Date 1952 Plat or Other Map _____
 City/Town (within 3 miles) Okeechobee In City Limits? ☐ yes ☐ no ☒ unknown County Highlands
 Township 37S Range 33E Section 25 1/4 section: ☐ NW ☐ SW ☐ SE ☐ NE Irregular-name: _____
 Township _____ Range _____ Section _____ 1/4 section: ☐ NW ☐ SW ☐ SE ☐ NE
 Landgrant _____ Tax Parcel # _____
 UTM Coordinates: Zone ☐ 16 ☒ 17 Easting 501741 Northing 3012899
 Other Coordinates: X: _____ Y: _____ Coordinate System & Datum _____
 Name of Public Tract (e.g., park) _____

HISTORY

Year Built 1966 ☐ approximately ☐ year listed or earlier ☐ year listed or later
 Still in use? ☒ yes ☐ no ☐ restricted use (describe) _____
 Prior Fords, Ferries, or Bridges at this Location

Harding Memorial Bridge (pre-Kissimmee River channelization)

Bridge Use: original and current with dates (standard descriptions: auto, railway, pedestrian, fishing pier, abandoned)
 Original & Current: carries SR 70 over Kissimmee River (Auto)

Ownership history

State Highway Agency

Designers/Engineers _____

Builders/Contractors _____

Text of Plaque or Inscription

"BILLY BOWLEGS III BRIDGE / DESIGNATED BY 1969 LEGISLATURE OF FLORIDA" -- metal upright sign adjacent to NE corner of bridge

Narrative History (How did bridge come to be built? How was it financed?, etc.)

The SR 70 over Kissimmee River bridge was constructed in 1966 to carry SR 70 over the newly channelized Kissimmee River (C-38). A removable span was included in case of larger vessels as it is considered more cost effective than a manned, operable span.

DESCRIPTION

GENERAL

Overall Bridge Design 1. Beam & Girder 2. _____

Overall Condition ☐ excellent ☐ good ☒ fair ☐ deteriorated ☐ ruinous

Style and Decorative Details

Concrete post and lintel style parapet, "Kissimmee River" stamp (NE corner), "1966" stamp (SE corner), metal guardrails affixed to wooden posts

Tender Station Description

Alterations: Dates and Descriptions

None since last recording

DHR USE ONLY

OFFICIAL EVALUATION

DHR USE ONLY

NR List Date

SHPO – Appears to meet criteria for NR listing: ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ insufficient info

Date _____ Init. _____

KEEPER – Determined eligible:

☐ yes ☐ no

Date _____

☐ Owner Objection

NR Criteria for Evaluation: ☐ a ☐ b ☐ c ☐ d (see National Register Bulletin 15, p. 2)

DESCRIPTION (continued)

SUPERSTRUCTURE

Spans: Total Number 7 Total Length(ft) 418Main Spans: Number 3 Length(ft) 40 Width(ft) 31 Roadway width(ft) 22Main Span Design OtherMain Span Materials 1. Steel 2. _____Approach Spans: Number 4 Length(ft) 60 Width(ft) 33 Roadway width(ft) 24Approach Span Design Beam & GirderApproach Span Materials 1. Concrete 2. _____Deck Materials 1. Concrete 2. Steel

SUBSTRUCTURE

Abutment Materials 1. Concrete 2. _____Abutment Description Solid, sloped concrete bag abutments w/ concrete capsPier Materials 1. Concrete 2. _____Pier Description Concrete bents w/ two piers w/ footers, concrete cap, & horiz. strut

RESEARCH METHODS (check all that apply)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> FDOT database search | <input type="checkbox"/> Fla. Archives / photo collection | <input type="checkbox"/> newspaper files | <input type="checkbox"/> informal archaeological inspection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HABS/HAER record search | <input type="checkbox"/> property appraiser / tax records | <input type="checkbox"/> city directory | <input type="checkbox"/> formal archaeological survey |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FMSF record search (sites/surveys) | <input type="checkbox"/> library research | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Lands Survey (DEP) | <input type="checkbox"/> cultural resource survey |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other methods (specify) <u>USDA historic aerial photographs (PALMM)</u> | | | |

Bibliographic References (give FMSF manuscript # if relevant, use separate sheet if needed)

Publication of Archival Library and Museum Materials (PALMM), accessible online at:
<http://palmm.fcla.edu/>

OPINION OF RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE

Potentially eligible individually for National Register of Historic Places?

☒ yes☐ no☐ insufficient information

Potentially eligible as contributor to a National Register district?

☐ yes☒ no☐ insufficient information

Explanation of Evaluation (required, use separate sheet if needed)

See continuation sheet.

Area(s) of historical significance (See *National Register Bulletin 15*, p. 8 for categories: e.g. "architecture", "ethnic heritage", "community planning & development", etc.)

1. Engineering 3. _____ 5. _____
 2. _____ 4. _____ 6. _____

DOCUMENTATION

Accessible Documentation Not Filed with the Site File - including field & analysis notes, photos, plans, other important documents

- 1) Document type All materials at one location Maintaining organization Archaeological Consultants Inc
 Document description Files, photos, research, documents File or accession #'s P23089
- 2) Document type _____ Maintaining organization _____
 Document description _____ File or accession #'s _____

RECORDER INFORMATION

Recorder Name Savannah Y. FinchAffiliation Archaeological Consultants IncRecorder Contact Information 8110 Blaikie Court, Ste. A / Sarasota, FL/ 34240 / aciflorida@comcast.net
(address / phone / fax / e-mail)

Required Attachments

- ① USGS 7.5' TOPO MAP WITH BRIDGE LOCATION CLEARLY MARKED
 ② PHOTO OF BRIDGE

When submitting an image, it must be included in digital AND hard copy format (plain paper grayscale acceptable).
 Digital image must be at least 1600 x 1200 pixels, 24-bit color, jpeg or tiff.

CONTINUATION SHEET

8HG01236: The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (FDOT 910001) is a seven span, concrete beam and girder bridge constructed in 1966 in order to carry SR 70 over the newly channelized Kissimmee River (C-38). The peak of the bridge is equipped with a steel, removable span which accommodates the passing of larger vessels while being more cost effective than a manned, operable span. The bridge is in Section 25 of Township 37 South, Range 33 East and crosses the county line between Okeechobee County and Highlands County (United States Geological Survey [USGS] 1952). The overall dimension of the bridge measures approximately 418-feet (ft) long with four approach spans that are 33-ft wide with a roadway width of approximately 24-ft, and three main spans that are 31-ft wide with a roadway width of approximately 22-ft. The approach spans are a concrete beam and girder style superstructure with a concrete deck that has been paved with asphalt, while the main span is a removable steel span. The substructure has solid, sloped abutments comprised of concrete bags. The superstructure is supported by six bents, each comprised of squared concrete headers with two squared concrete piers and footers with a horizontal strut between the piers. Decorative details include concrete post and lintel style parapets with "KISSIMMEE RIVER" stamped onto the northeast corner and "1966" stamped onto the southeast corner of the parapets. Metal guardrails affixed to wooden posts have been installed along the roadway approaching the bridge. In addition, an upright metal sign has been installed adjacent to the northeast corner of the bridge which reads, "BILLY BOWLEGS III BRIDGE / DESIGNATED BY 1969 LEGISLATURE OF FLORIDA."

Removable span bridges include a span that can be completely removed by machinery that is not included as part of the bridge, such as a crane, or can be hinged in an upright position (FDOT 2012). These types of bridges are beneficial at water crossings where large vessels rarely navigate as they do not require staffing and other operational fees that an operable span would require. The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (8OB00336) was constructed in 1966 to accommodate the newly channelized Kissimmee River (C-38). Prior to the channelization, SR 70 was carried over the naturally occurring Kissimmee River by the ca. 1924 Warren G. Harding Memorial Bridge (Orlando Sentinel 1924). Between 1930 and 1938, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) started construction of the Herbert Hoover Dike after authorization by the River and Harbor Act of 1930 (USACE 1996). The Herbert Hoover Dike represents the largest civil engineering project in South Florida designed to control waters in and around Lake Okeechobee and in turn protecting the surrounding communities and agricultural fields from flooding. Development of the dike is comprised of multiple engineering features that include levees, culverts, hurricane gates, pumping stations, and various other water control structures (New South Associates, Inc. 2010). In 1948, the U.S. Congress authorized the USACE to construct the Central and South Florida Flood Control (C&SF) Project, which led to engineering changes to deepen, straighten, and widen the Kissimmee River waterway. The Kissimmee River was channelized by cutting and dredging a 30-foot deep straightway through the river's meanders (Florida Center for Environmental Studies 2018; Grunwald 2006; McCally 1999; SFWMD n.d.). Between 1966 and 1971, the Kissimmee River became canal 38 (C-38) after it was further widened and deepened and received multiple water control structures (SFWMD 2010.). The C&SF eventually became the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).

The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge was first recorded during the 2010 update of *The Historic Highway Bridges of Florida* conducted by Archaeological Consultants, Inc. (ACI) for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and published in 2012 (FDOT 2012; Survey No. 20057). In addition to Florida Master Site File (FMSF) number 8HG01236, the resource was also assigned a FMSF number for Okeechobee County (8OB00336) due to its location on the Okeechobee-Highlands County line. Following this survey, the resource (8OB00336/8HG01236) was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP by the SHPO in 2014. The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (8HG01236) has not been significantly altered since this determination and appears to remain eligible for individual listing in the NRHP under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as an example of a removable span bridge.

CONTINUATION SHEET

REFERENCES

Florida Center for Environmental Studies

2018 The Kissimmee River Restoration History. Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton.
<http://www.ces.fau.edu/riverwoods/kissimmee.php>.

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

2012 The Historic Highway Bridges of Florida – 2010 Update. ACI, Sarasota. Survey No. 20057.

Grunwald, Michael

2006 *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise*. Simon & Schuster, New York.

McCally, David

1999 *The Everglades: An Environmental History*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

New South Associates, Inc.

2010 Herbert Hoover Dike Documentation and Assessment, Lake Okeechobee, Hendry, Glades, Okeechobee, Martin, and Palm Beach Counties, Florida. New South Associates, Stone Mountain. Survey No. 20620.

The Orlando Sentinel

1924 “Cars Cross Harding Bridge.” *The Orlando Sentinel*, December 14, 1924. Accessed January 16, 2024. <https://www.newspapers.com>.

South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)

n.d. Kissimmee River. South Florida Water Management District, West Palm Beach.
<https://www.sfwmd.gov/our-work/kissimmee-river>.

2010 Canals in South Florida: A Technical Support Document, Appendices A-C. South Florida Water Management District.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

1996 Central and Southern Florida Project for Flood Control and Other Purposes, Master Water Control Manual, Lake Okeechobee and Everglades Agricultural Area, Volume 3. US Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District.

United States Geological Survey (USGS)

1952 Okeechobee NW, Fla. *Photorevised 1972*.



PHOTOGRAPHS







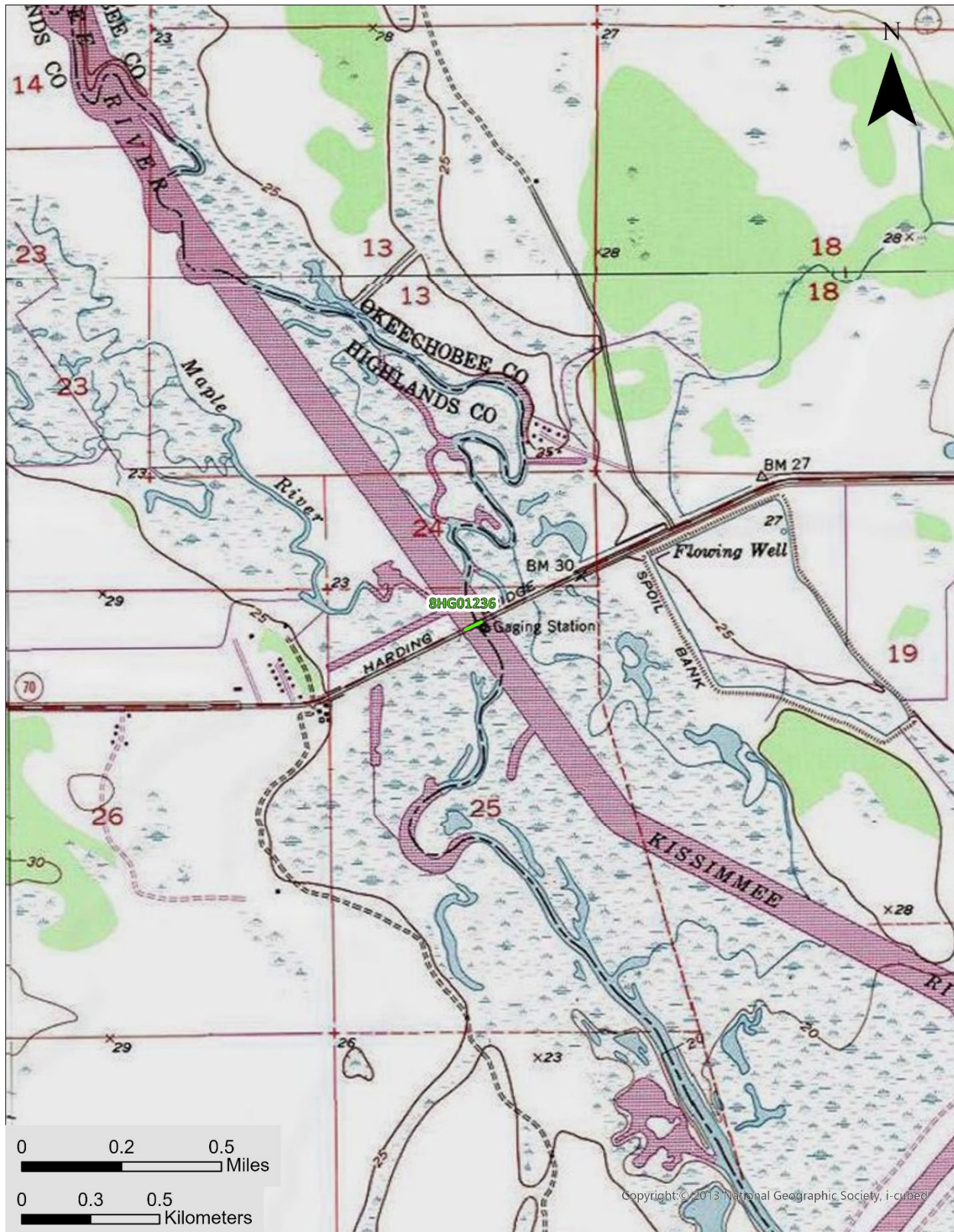


AERIAL MAP





USGS Okeechobee NW
Township 37 South, Range 33 East, Section 25



☐ Original
☒ Update



HISTORICAL BRIDGE FORM

FLORIDA MASTER SITE FILE

Version 5.0 3/19

Consult Guide to the Historical Bridge Form for detailed instructions

Site # OB00336
 Field Date 1-11-2024
 Form Date 1-15-2024
 Recorder # _____
 FDOT Bridge # 910001

Bridge Name(s) SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge Multiple Listing (DHR only) _____
 Project Name CRAS SR 70/Kissimmee River Bridge Replacement Survey # (DHR only) _____
 Ownership: ☐ private-profit ☐ private-nonprofit ☐ private-individual ☐ private-nonspecific ☐ city ☐ county ☒ state ☐ federal ☐ Native American ☐ foreign ☐ unknown

LOCATION & MAPPING

Route(s) Carried/Feature(s) Crossed SR 70 / Kissimmee River
 USGS 7.5 Map Name OKEECHOBEE NW USGS Date 1952 Plat or Other Map _____
 City/Town (within 3 miles) Okeechobee In City Limits? ☐ yes ☐ no ☒ unknown County Okeechobee
 Township 37S Range 33E Section 25 1/4 section: ☐ NW ☐ SW ☐ SE ☐ NE Irregular-name: _____
 Township _____ Range _____ Section _____ 1/4 section: ☐ NW ☐ SW ☐ SE ☐ NE
 Landgrant _____ Tax Parcel # _____
 UTM Coordinates: Zone ☐ 16 ☒ 17 Easting 501741 Northing 3012899
 Other Coordinates: X: _____ Y: _____ Coordinate System & Datum _____
 Name of Public Tract (e.g., park) _____

HISTORY

Year Built 1966 ☐ approximately ☐ year listed or earlier ☐ year listed or later
 Still in use? ☒ yes ☐ no ☐ restricted use (describe) _____
 Prior Fords, Ferries, or Bridges at this Location

Harding Memorial Bridge (pre-Kissimmee River channelization)

Bridge Use: original and current with dates (standard descriptions: auto, railway, pedestrian, fishing pier, abandoned)
 Original & Current: carries SR 70 over Kissimmee River (Auto)

Ownership history

State Highway Agency

Designers/Engineers _____

Builders/Contractors _____

Text of Plaque or Inscription

"BILLY BOWLEGS III BRIDGE / DESIGNATED BY 1969 LEGISLATURE OF FLORIDA" -- metal upright sign adjacent to NE corner of bridge

Narrative History (How did bridge come to be built? How was it financed?, etc.)

The SR 70 over Kissimmee River bridge was constructed in 1966 to carry SR 70 over the newly channelized Kissimmee River (C-38). A removable span was included in case of larger vessels as it is considered more cost effective than a manned, operable span.

DESCRIPTION

GENERAL

Overall Bridge Design 1. Beam & Girder 2. _____

Overall Condition ☐ excellent ☐ good ☒ fair ☐ deteriorated ☐ ruinous

Style and Decorative Details

Concrete post and lintel style parapet, "Kissimmee River" stamp (NE corner), "1966" stamp (SE corner), metal guardrails affixed to wooden posts

Tender Station Description

Alterations: Dates and Descriptions

None since last recording

DHR USE ONLY

OFFICIAL EVALUATION

DHR USE ONLY

NR List Date

SHPO – Appears to meet criteria for NR listing: ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ insufficient info

Date _____ Init. _____

KEEPER – Determined eligible:

☐ yes ☐ no

Date _____

☐ Owner Objection

NR Criteria for Evaluation: ☐ a ☐ b ☐ c ☐ d (see National Register Bulletin 15, p. 2)

DESCRIPTION (continued)

SUPERSTRUCTURE

Spans: Total Number 7 Total Length(ft) 418Main Spans: Number 3 Length(ft) 40 Width(ft) 31 Roadway width(ft) 22Main Span Design OtherMain Span Materials 1. Steel 2. _____Approach Spans: Number 4 Length(ft) 60 Width(ft) 33 Roadway width(ft) 24Approach Span Design Beam & GirderApproach Span Materials 1. Concrete 2. _____Deck Materials 1. Concrete 2. Steel

SUBSTRUCTURE

Abutment Materials 1. Concrete 2. _____Abutment Description Solid, sloped concrete bag abutments w/ concrete capsPier Materials 1. Concrete 2. _____Pier Description Concrete bents w/ two piers w/ footers, concrete cap, & horiz. strut

RESEARCH METHODS (check all that apply)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> FDOT database search | <input type="checkbox"/> Fla. Archives / photo collection | <input type="checkbox"/> newspaper files | <input type="checkbox"/> informal archaeological inspection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HABS/HAER record search | <input type="checkbox"/> property appraiser / tax records | <input type="checkbox"/> city directory | <input type="checkbox"/> formal archaeological survey |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FMSF record search (sites/surveys) | <input type="checkbox"/> library research | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Lands Survey (DEP) | <input type="checkbox"/> cultural resource survey |
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Bibliographic References (give FMSF manuscript # if relevant, use separate sheet if needed)

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OPINION OF RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE

Potentially eligible individually for National Register of Historic Places?

☒ yes☐ no☐ insufficient information

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Explanation of Evaluation (required, use separate sheet if needed)

See continuation sheet.

Area(s) of historical significance (See *National Register Bulletin 15*, p. 8 for categories: e.g. "architecture", "ethnic heritage", "community planning & development", etc.)

1. Engineering 3. _____ 5. _____
 2. _____ 4. _____ 6. _____

DOCUMENTATION

Accessible Documentation Not Filed with the Site File - including field & analysis notes, photos, plans, other important documents

- 1) Document type All materials at one location Maintaining organization Archaeological Consultants Inc
 Document description Files, photos, research, documents File or accession #'s P23089
- 2) Document type _____ Maintaining organization _____
 Document description _____ File or accession #'s _____

RECORDER INFORMATION

Recorder Name Savannah Y. FinchAffiliation Archaeological Consultants IncRecorder Contact Information 8110 Blaikie Court, Ste. A / Sarasota, FL/ 34240 / aciflorida@comcast.net
(address / phone / fax / e-mail)

Required Attachments

- ① USGS 7.5' TOPO MAP WITH BRIDGE LOCATION CLEARLY MARKED
 ② PHOTO OF BRIDGE

When submitting an image, it must be included in digital AND hard copy format (plain paper grayscale acceptable).
 Digital image must be at least 1600 x 1200 pixels, 24-bit color, jpeg or tiff.

CONTINUATION SHEET

8OB00336: The SR 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge (FDOT 910001) is a seven span, concrete beam and girder bridge constructed in 1966 in order to carry SR 70 over the newly channelized Kissimmee River (C-38). The peak of the bridge is equipped with a steel, removable span which accommodates the passing of larger vessels while being more cost effective than a manned, operable span. The bridge is in Section 25 of Township 37 South, Range 33 East and crosses the county line between Okeechobee County and Highlands County (United States Geological Survey [USGS] 1952). The overall dimension of the bridge measures approximately 418-feet (ft) long with four approach spans that are 33-ft wide with a roadway width of approximately 24-ft, and three main spans that are 31-ft wide with a roadway width of approximately 22-ft. The approach spans are a concrete beam and girder style superstructure with a concrete deck that has been paved with asphalt, while the main span is a removable steel span. The substructure has solid, sloped abutments comprised of concrete bags. The superstructure is supported by six bents, each comprised of squared concrete headers with two squared concrete piers and footers with a horizontal strut between the piers. Decorative details include concrete post and lintel style parapets with "KISSIMMEE RIVER" stamped onto the northeast corner and "1966" stamped onto the southeast corner of the parapets. Metal guardrails affixed to wooden posts have been installed along the roadway approaching the bridge. In addition, an upright metal sign has been installed adjacent to the northeast corner of the bridge which reads, "BILLY BOWLEGS III BRIDGE / DESIGNATED BY 1969 LEGISLATURE OF FLORIDA."

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CONTINUATION SHEET

REFERENCES

Florida Center for Environmental Studies

2018 The Kissimmee River Restoration History. Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton.
<http://www.ces.fau.edu/riverwoods/kissimmee.php>.

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

2012 The Historic Highway Bridges of Florida – 2010 Update. ACI, Sarasota. Survey No. 20057.

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2006 *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise*. Simon & Schuster, New York.

McCally, David

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New South Associates, Inc.

2010 Herbert Hoover Dike Documentation and Assessment, Lake Okeechobee, Hendry, Glades, Okeechobee, Martin, and Palm Beach Counties, Florida. New South Associates, Stone Mountain. Survey No. 20620.

The Orlando Sentinel

1924 “Cars Cross Harding Bridge.” *The Orlando Sentinel*, December 14, 1924. Accessed January 16, 2024. <https://www.newspapers.com>.

South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)

n.d. Kissimmee River. South Florida Water Management District, West Palm Beach.
<https://www.sfwmd.gov/our-work/kissimmee-river>.

2010 Canals in South Florida: A Technical Support Document, Appendices A-C. South Florida Water Management District.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

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United States Geological Survey (USGS)

1952 Okeechobee NW, Fla. *Photorevised 1972*.



PHOTOGRAPHS







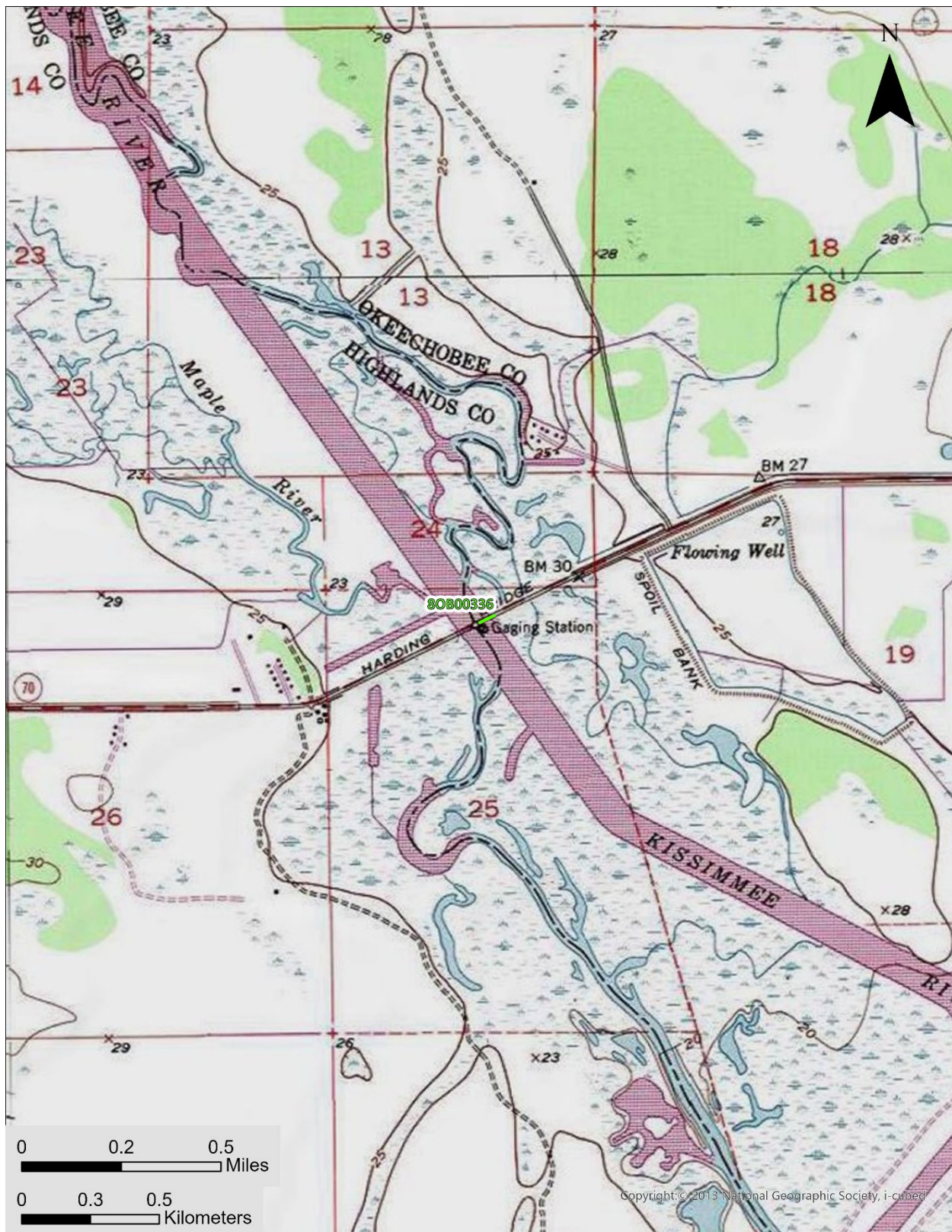


AERIAL MAP





USGS Okeechobee NW
Township 37 South, Range 33 East, Section 25



APPENDIX D

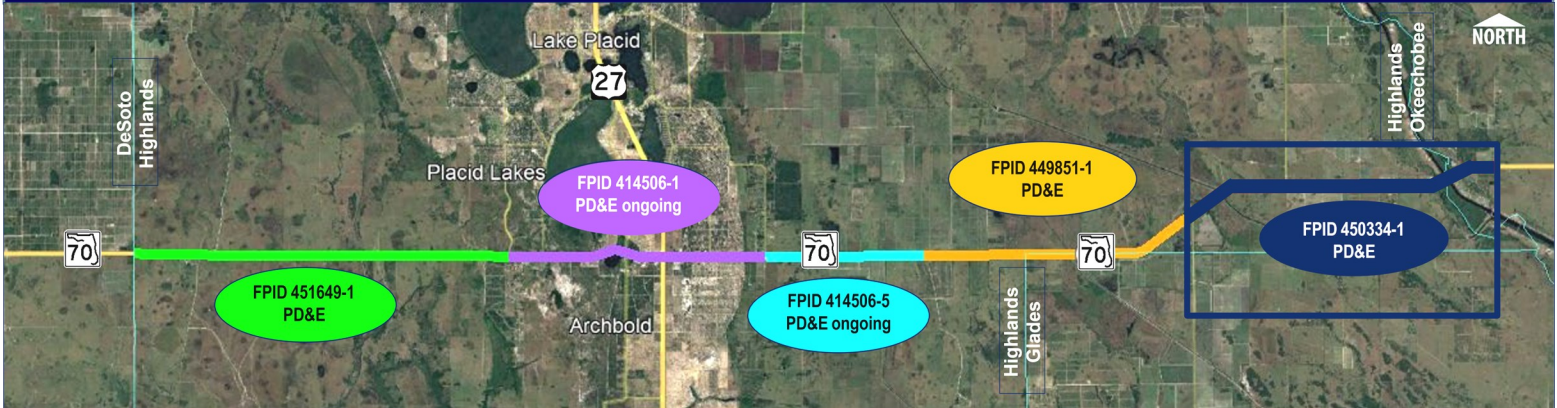
Public Coordination



Newsletter No. 1

www.swflroads.com/project/450334-1

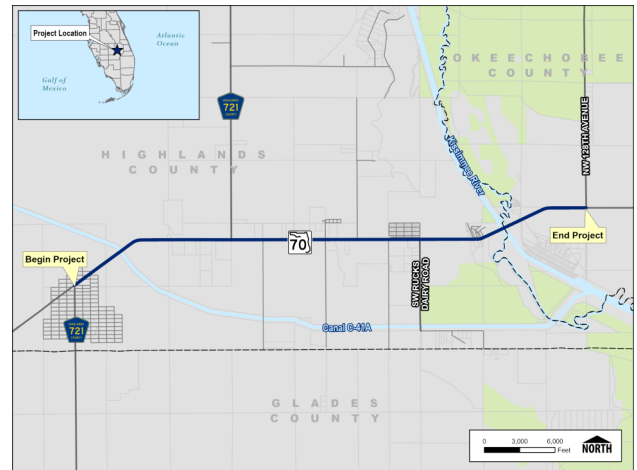
May 2023



The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One is conducting Project Development and Environment (PD&E) studies for proposed improvements to the State Road (SR) 70 corridor in Highlands and Okeechobee Counties. The intent is to provide additional roadway capacity and enhance safety along the SR 70 corridor, a major east-west roadway spanning the state. The project limits for each of these PD&E studies are shown above. For the project shown within the blue box on the map (FPID 450334-1), which is the focus of this PD&E study, the limits extend approximately 8.6 miles from CR 721 South to CR 599/128th Avenue in Highlands and Okeechobee Counties. The project area is shown in greater detail on the right side of this page.

During the PD&E process, FDOT will develop alternatives and provide opportunities for your input. Alternatives under consideration include widening SR 70 from a two-lane undivided roadway to a four-lane divided roadway with multi-modal facilities (i.e., a shared use path) along the project segment. Each alternative will be evaluated to determine social and environmental impacts, safety enhancements, additional right-of-way, and traffic performance.

The purpose of the study is to select a preferred alternative that will be advanced to the design phase. Throughout this process, FDOT will consider a “no-build” option which assumes no improvements to SR 70 other than routine maintenance. If the study results in the selection of a “build” alternative, the project can proceed to a design phase, for preparation of construction plans. You are encouraged to participate in the SR 70 PD&E Study. As the study progresses, we will use the input we receive from the community to develop and refine alternatives. We invite your questions and comments which can be submitted through the project website or by contacting the FDOT Project Manager.



Contact Us

David C. Turley, P.E., Project Manager

Florida Department of Transportation

801 North Broadway Avenue

Bartow, Florida 33830

Phone: (863) 519-2255

Email: david.turley@dot.state.fl.us

Website: www.swflroads.com/project/450334-1

FDOT solicits public participation without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.



SR 70 PD&E Study
from CR 721 South to CR 599/128th Avenue
 David C. Turley, P.E.
 Florida Department of Transportation
 801 North Broadway Avenue
 Bartow, FL 33830

Project Schedule

Over the next several months, project activities will include collecting data, developing alignment alternatives, and evaluating potential social and environmental effects of the alternatives. The project team will present these alternatives at an alternatives public meeting, tentatively scheduled for early 2024. A formal public hearing is tentatively scheduled for late 2024. You will receive notifications through the mail prior to each meeting. After the public hearing, FDOT District One will submit project documents to the FDOT Office of Environmental Management for Location and Design Concept Acceptance.

Para Preguntas En Español

Si usted necesita información de este proyecto en español, por favor comuníquese con el Sra. Karina Della-Sera de la Oficina del Departamento de Transporte de la Florida, por teléfono al (863) 519-2750. También puede usar el correo electrónico: karina.dellasera@dot.state.fl.us.

Study Activities	2023				2024				2025	
	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring
Study Begins	●									
Data Collection										
Project Newsletters		▲			▲			▲		▲
Coordination and Development of Alternatives										
Alternatives Public Meeting					★					
Refine and Evaluate Alternatives										
Finalize Draft Study Documents										
Public Hearing								★		
Finalize Study Documents for FDOT										
OEM Approval (Location and Design Concept Acceptance, or LDCA)										●

Preliminary - subject to change

SR 70 PD&E Study
From CR 721 South to CR 599/128th Avenue in Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, FL
David C. Turley, P.E.
MS 1-40
Florida Department of Transportation
801 N. Broadway Ave
Bartow, FL 33830



You're Invited to the SR 70 PD&E Study Alternatives Public Workshop!

FDOT is sending notices to all property owners and businesses within a minimum of 500 feet of the project location, as well as, interested persons and organizations. Feedback to FDOT regarding this project is encouraged. **While comments about the project are accepted at any time, please send your comments emailed or postmarked by June 25, 2024, to be included in the formal workshop record.**

FDOT solicits public participation without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. People who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Cynthia Sykes, District One Title VI Coordinator at least seven days prior to the alternatives public workshop via phone at (863) 519-2287 or e-mail at Cynthia.Sykes@dot.state.fl.us.

<https://www.swflroads.com/project/450334-1>

Contact Us

FDOT encourages the public to participate in the SR 70 PD&E Study alternatives public workshop. If you have questions regarding the project or workshop, please contact the FDOT Project Manager, David C. Turley, P.E., via phone at (863) 519-2255. Formal comments, to be included in the public record can be sent to the FDOT Project Manager via email or mail using the contact information listed below.

Email: David.Turley@dot.state.fl.us

Mail: David C. Turley, P.E.

MS 1-40

Florida Department of Transportation

801 N. Broadway Ave

Bartow, FL 33830

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022, and executed by FHWA and FDOT.

SR 70 Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study

From CR 721 South to CR 599/128th Avenue

Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, Florida

June 2024

Financial Project ID No. 450334-1

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One, began a Project Development & Environment (PD&E) study in late 2023. The intent of the study is to evaluate proposed improvements along an 8.6-mile segment of SR 70 from CR 721 South to CR 599/128th Avenue in Highlands and Okeechobee Counties. This study will evaluate potential roadway expansion alternatives to address the need for improved traffic safety conditions, continued maintenance of the important east-west connection and to accommodate increasing freight activity along the project corridor. This includes evaluating alternatives to widen the existing two-lane undivided roadway to a four-lane divided roadway, with the addition of paved shoulders and turn lanes. The project will also consider multi-modal improvements, such as a shared use path, along the corridor.

UPCOMING ALTERNATIVES WORKSHOP

The FDOT, District One, invites you to attend the SR 70 PD&E Study alternatives public workshop. Attendance options include the in-person workshop on June 11, 2024, at Indian River State College in Okeechobee and the virtual workshop (live online) on June 18, 2024. The public workshop is being conducted to present information about the preliminary alternatives and provides the opportunity for the public to express their views about the project. The same material will be displayed at both the in-person and online workshops and will also be posted on the project website.



IN-PERSON OPTION:

Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Anytime between 5 – 7 p.m.

Indian River State College (Dixon Hendry Campus)

2229 NW 9th Avenue

Okeechobee, FL 34972

This will include a looping video (no formal presentation), and the project team will be available for discussions.

LIVE ONLINE OPTION:

Register in advance: <https://tinyurl.com/450334-1-SR70>

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

6 – 7 p.m.

This event will include a viewing of the project video and a live question-and-answer component with the project team. Please review the materials on the project webpage before attending the virtual event (<https://www.swflroads.com/project/450334-1>). Materials will be posted by **June 4, 2024**.

GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

Project information such as frequently asked questions, the project schedule and kickoff newsletter are available for viewing on the project website at <https://www.swflroads.com/project/450334-1>.

ONLINE REGISTRATION

To attend online on June 18, 2024, please register in advance through one of the following methods:

☐ Visiting <https://tinyurl.com/450334-1-SR70>

☐ Scanning the QR Code on the right

☐ Visiting the project website at:

<https://www.swflroads.com/project/450334-1>

Once registered, attendees will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the workshop online.



For more information, contact: FDOT Project Manager David C. Turley, P.E. | (863) 519-2255 | David.Turley@dot.state.fl.us

Para Materiales del Proyecto En Español

Para ver este boletín y otros materiales del proyecto en español, visite el sitio web del proyecto en www.swflroads.com/sr789/longboatkey o contacte Sra. Karina Della Sera de la Oficina del Departamento de Transporte de Florida por teléfono al (863) 519-2750. También puede usar el correo electrónico: Karina.Dellaser@dot.state.fl.us



ALTERNATIVES PUBLIC WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Date: In-Person – June 11, 2024; Online – June 18, 2024

Time: In-Person – 5:00 PM; Online – 6:00 PM

Location: In-Person – Indian River State College (Dixon Hendry Campus);
Online – GoTo Webinar

Attendees: In-Person – 11 Citizens and 3 Elected/Appointed Officials; Online – 8 Citizens, 1 Elected/Appointed Official, and 1 Agency Representative

Public Officials: In-Person – Terry Burroughs (Okeechobee County District 5 Commissioner), Dowling Watford (City of Okeechobee Mayor), and Noel Stephen (Okeechobee County Sheriff); Online – Tyler Wadsworth (Legislative Aide to Erin Grall, District 29 Senator)

Media: N/A

Staff in attendance: In-Person FDOT District One Staff (7 in attendance): Brooke Feagle, Nikki Gilmer, Jeffrey James, Michael Sherron, David Turley, Melissa Slater, and Kathern Cothorn

Online FDOT District One Staff (8 in attendance): Brooke Feagle, Adam Rose, Jeffrey James, David Turley, Melissa Slater, Catherine Bradley, Siobhan Gale, and David Scarpelli

In-Person and Online Consultant Staff (8 in attendance): Louis Sicon, Denys Avila, Kristin Caruso, Nick Clavelo, Michael Dorweiler, Rudy Gotmare, Dara Jarvis, and Marybeth Van't Hul

Summary

FDOT conducted the [Alternatives Public Workshop](#) to present information about the preliminary alternatives and provide the opportunity for the public to express their views about the project. The public meeting was conducted in both an in-person and online format. The in-person meeting facility was selected because [of ADA facilities present, room capacity, and ample parking available](#). Additionally, meeting materials were posted to the project webpage (<https://www.swflroads.com/project/450334-1>) on June 4, 2024.

In-Person Option

Tuesday, June 11, 2024
Anytime between 5 – 7 p.m.
Indian River State College (Dixon Hendry Campus)
2229 NW 9th Avenue
Okeechobee, FL 34972

Live Online Option

Tuesday, June 18, 2024
6 – 7 p.m.
<https://tinyurl.com/450334-1-SR70>

A total of 11 citizens and 3 elected officials signed in at the in-person meeting. A total of 8 citizens, 1 elected official, and 1 agency representative joined the online meeting. This provided a total of 24 people that attended the Alternatives Public Workshop.

The Public Workshop was advertised in the following manner:

- Email to Elected Officials – Distributed on 5/13/2024
- Email to Appointed Officials – Distributed on 5/13/2024
- Email to Interested Parties – Distributed on 5/13/2024
- Email to ETAT Members – Distributed on 5/14/2024
- Newsletter to Property Owners – Mailed on 5/16/2024
- Florida Administrative Register – Published on 5/31/2024
- FDOT Public Notice Website – Published on 5/21/2024
- Legal Advertisement – Published in Lake Okeechobee News on May 29, 2024 and in Highlands News-Sun on June 4, 2024

At the start of both events, meeting attendees were provided with a handout and the project team explained the comment process. Both events provided the opportunity to view a project video and ask questions to the project team.

The following project-related information was on display at the meeting:

- Roll plots of Alternatives
- Project location Map
- Floodplain Map
- Typical Sections
- Project Video
- Welcome and Thank you Boards
- Schedule and Funding
- Evaluation Matrix
- Comment Board
- Title VI
- Federal and State Regulations

Separate tables for right-of-way, adjacent project, and FDOT process information was available to the public at the in-person meeting.

At the online workshop, 12 project-specific comments were submitted which the study team answered live at the GoTo Webinar. At the in-person meeting, attendees were able to leave written comments. All other comments were submitted either by email, website, or by mail. Four comment forms were received at the in-person meeting and zero were received during the 14-day comment period following the meeting, ending June 25, 2024.

From the comments submitted (in-person and online), please see below a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) or statements that were provided by the public about the project:

- Expressed the need for the widening of SR 70
- Pleased with the proposed design at SW 144th parkway
- Expressed the need for a noise wall and guardrail
- Preference for Alternative Two (one person)
- Stated to keep the historical designation of the Kissimmee River bridge
- Access, specifically related to the southern portion of the project

- Anticipated relocations associated with either alternative
- Existing and proposed elevation at the Kissimmee River Fishing Resort

APPENDIX E

Highlands County Historic Preservation Commission Agenda and Letter

**HIGHLANDS COUNTY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR AGENDA**

MEETING PLACE:	Government Center Board Room, 600 S. Commerce Ave., Sebring, Florida 33870
MEETING TIME:	2:30 p.m.
MEETING DATE:	Thursday, August 21, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Opening Protocol
- B. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum
- C. Introduction of Members, Staff and Guests

II. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. April 16, 2025, Meeting Minutes

III. OLD BUSINESS

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. HPC-25-02: CRAS - 8248 Sun 'n Lake Boulevard, Sebring
- B. HPC-25-03: CRAS - FDOT SR 70 Kissimmee River Bridge Project
- C. HPC-25-04: CRAS – 4225 Gerona Avenue, Sebring

V. COMMISSION PROJECTS

- A. DOS Historic Grant Update

VI. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Member Update
- B. Historic Spotlight Display Case

VIII. CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

IX. ADJOURNMENT

NEXT MEETING: October 16, 2025 (subject to change)

All interested persons are invited to attend. Any person who might wish to appeal any decision made by the Historic Preservation Commission of Highlands County, Florida, in public hearing or meeting is hereby advised that he will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made which will include the testimony and evidence upon which such appeal is to be based. The Board of County Commissioners of Highlands County, Florida, does not discriminate upon the basis of any individual's disability status. This non-discrimination policy involves every aspect of the Board's functions, including one's access to, participation, employment or treatment in its programs or activities. Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation as provided for in the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 286.26 Florida Statutes should contact Human Resources, ADA Coordinator at: 863-402-6509 (Voice), or via Florida Relay Service 711, or by e-mail: HRMANAGER@highlandsfll.gov. Requests for CART or interpreter services should be made at least 24 hours in advance to permit coordination of the service. One or more County Commissioners may be present at the meeting.



HIGHLANDS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

501 S. Commerce Ave., Sebring, Florida 33870

(863) 402-6650

historic@highlandsfl.gov

www.highlandsfl.gov

HIGHLANDS COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Type: Cultural Resource Assessment Survey	HPC Meeting Date: 8/21/2025
Planning File: HPC-25-03	Case Name: SR 70 Over Kissimmee River Bridge Replacement Project
Consultant: Archaeological Consultants, Inc. and Scalar Consulting Group, Inc.	Property Owner: Florida Department of Transportation, District One
HPC Agenda Item: 4B	Case Staff Member: Rachael Navarrete

Request: The Applicant is requesting comments from local historical organizations on a project to replace the SR 70 bridge over the Kissimmee River, which has been determined will have an adverse effect on identified historic resources.

General Location: SR 70 over the Kissimmee River, approximately 4.37 miles east of CR 721 and 1.33 miles southwest of NW 128th Avenue in Okeechobee County.

Recommended Motion:

Move to authorize the Chair to sign the prepared response letter.

Staff Summary:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 1, is completing a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study of SR 70 from CR 721S in Highlands County to 128th Avenue in Okeechobee County. This study is evaluating the widening of the existing undivided 2-lane roadway to a median-separated 4-lane facility with a shared-use path. This project requires the replacement of the Kissimmee River Bridge which has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The Kissimmee River Bridge is identified in the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) as Site 8HG01236 (also classified as Site 8OB00336 for Okeechobee County)

As part of the PD&E Study, a Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (CRAS) was prepared by Archaeological Consultants, Inc. (ACI) to locate and identify any historic resources within the project's Area of Potential Effect (APE) at the bridge location and to assess their significance in terms of eligibility for listing in the NRHP. For the purpose of this survey, the historical/architectural APE was limited to the footprint of construction of the SR 70 Over Kissimmee River Bridge replacement. (A separate CRAS has been prepared for the mainline roadway alignment.) The survey was completed by ACI in July 2024 and the report was transmitted to the Planning & Zoning Division on July 21, 2025.

The CRAS report also identified the Kissimmee River C-38 Canal as a potential historic resource, however the majority of the resource is located outside the APE of the project and a survey of the entire resource was outside the scope of this project. The survey determined that there is insufficient information to make a determination of eligibility for the Kissimmee River C-38 Canal, but that the scope of the project would not significantly alter the existing conditions of the Canal, therefore the proposed undertaking would have no adverse effect on this potential resource.

The CRAS report concluded that the proposed undertaking **will have an adverse effect** on the SR 70 Over Kissimmee River Bridge. The SHPO concurred with this determination on July 17, 2024. Subsequently, the project team drafted a Section 106 Case Study Report to analyze the adverse effects, which will soon be sent to the SHPO for review and comment.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is currently in preparation to resolve the adverse effects of this undertaking. The project consultants, Scalar Consulting Group, are requesting comments from local historical organizations for consideration and inclusion in the MOA.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on the findings of the CRAS report, staff agrees that the proposed undertaking will have an adverse effect on the SR 70 Over Kissimmee River Bridge. Staff has prepared a response letter, which is recommended to be signed by the Chair and submitted for inclusion in the Memorandum of Agreement to resolve the adverse effects of this undertaking.

Attachments:

Exhibit 1: Excerpt of Cultural Resources Assessment Survey



**HIGHLANDS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

501 S. Commerce Ave., Sebring, Florida 33870

Office (863) 402-6650 Fax (863) 402-6651 www.highlandsfl.gov

August 21, 2025

Scalar Consulting Group, LLC
12620 Telecom Drive
Temple Terrace, FL 33637

Re: FDOT PD&E Study: SR 70 from CR 721S to 128th Avenue
FPID 450334-1-Kissimmee River Bridge Replacement

To Whom It May Concern:

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is honored with the critical responsibility of safeguarding the county's historic and cultural resources. Our mission is to rigorously review, protect, and advocate for these irreplaceable assets throughout the planning and development processes that occur within Highlands County, ensuring that decisions honor the community's heritage while balancing necessary growth and infrastructure improvements.

In response to your request for review, the HPC has evaluated the Cultural Resources Assessment Survey and Report that was submitted to us pertaining to the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) proposed project to replace the existing Kissimmee River Bridge on State Road 70 (SR 70). The proposed scope of work involves demolishing the existing bridge and constructing two new bridges - eastbound and westbound - with the goal of widening the roadway into a median-separated four-lane highway with a shared-use pathway.

The HPC recognizes the significance of the Kissimmee River Bridge, which has previously been determined eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to its engineering importance as a removable span bridge. Additionally, a segment of the Kissimmee River C-38 Canal within the project area has been newly identified as a potential historic resource, though further information is needed to assess its eligibility.

While all project alternatives involve demolition of the existing bridge, the Commission advises that efforts be made to preserve the legacy and historical significance of the Kissimmee River Bridge, if at all possible. This could include interpretive signage or other appropriate measures to ensure that the bridge's significance continues to be recognized.



**HIGHLANDS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

501 S. Commerce Ave., Sebring, Florida 33870

Such efforts should be incorporated into the project's Memorandum of Agreement as mitigation for the adverse effects, if no alternative options to preserve the existing bridge are attainable.

Given these considerations, the HPC concurs that the proposed project will result in adverse effects on historic resources within the Area of Potential Effect. We recommend that appropriate mitigation measures, including detailed documentation of the existing bridge and interpretive efforts, be incorporated into the project's Memorandum of Agreement to address the impacts.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important project. Please contact us if further clarification or assistance is needed.

Respectfully,

Kathy Couturier, Chair
Highlands County Historic Preservation Commission