

Congress in 1942, construction of the canal did not begin until 1964. The project was halted by President Nixon in 1971 after several lawsuits based on environmental concerns were filed seeking an injunction to the project. About 25 miles of the 110-mile project were built: the cross-country section from the St. Johns River to the Ocklawaha River, part of the route along the Ocklawaha River, and a small section at the Gulf of Mexico ending at the dammed Lake Rousseau. The completed infrastructure included three of the five planned locks, all three planned dams, and four of the 11 planned bridges. High bridges like this one were built over the canal, as well as several over the Ocklawaha River where it was not widened to the canal.¹¹⁵

This bridge exists as a living relic to the planned endeavors of Congress to connect the Gulf and Atlantic Intracoastal waterways through the Cross Florida Barge Canal. It remains one of the four constructed bridges for the project. The bridge is newly recommended NRHP-eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Transportation for its association with the proposed Cross Florida Barge Canal. It is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a high integrity example of a continuous steel girder bridge.



Photo 5-44. SW 117th Avenue Bridge, Miami-Dade County (No. 874307)

SW 117th Avenue Bridge over North Canal

Miami-Dade County
FDOT #874307, 8DA11918

This 1937 through girder bridge carries SW 117th Avenue over the North Canal (C-104) near Homestead. The single 51-foot span carries a cast-in-place concrete deck between two simple steel girders, which also serve as the bridge railings. The bridge rests on rubble and poured concrete retaining walls. The non-navigable North Canal predates the 1948 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Central and Southern Florida flood control project, but was later incorporated

into this system. This may be Florida's only remaining steel through girder bridge that is used to carry automobile traffic. The SW 117th Avenue Bridge appears to retain its historic physical integrity. Therefore, this bridge is newly recommended NRHP-eligible under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a rare example of its type.

¹¹⁵ Department of the Army, *Cross Florida Barge Canal Restudy Report Summary* (Jacksonville, FL: Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers, 1976), 1, 7.