

MERLE H. BISHOP, FAICP, CPM

1105 South Floral Ave. – Bartow, FL 33820

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EDUCATION

Post Graduate Coursework:
Systems Ecology/Resource
Management University of
Florida (1973-1975)

BS, Forestry, Resource
Management and Forest
Recreation; University of
Florida (1971)

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATIONS

American Institute of Certified
Planners (#5296, 1986)

CERTIFICATIONS/TRAINING

Certified Public Manager,
Florida State University (2002)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Planning
Association (APA)

- AICP College of Fellows
Oversight Committee
- AICP Certification Exam Task
Force

APA Florida Chapter

- President (2010-12)
- Exec. Committee (2006-12)
- State-wide Planning Official
Training Team
- Legislative Policy Committee
- Sustainability Committee
- Emerging Topics Committee

National Society of Certified
Public Managers

HONORS/AWARDS

APA Florida Chapter,
Distinguished Contribution to
the Chapter Award, (2014)

AICP College of Fellows (2003)

Xi Sigma Pi, National Honorary
Forestry Fraternity (1971)

EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

Mr. Bishop has over 49 years' experience in providing quality planning, growth management, economic development services, and leadership. He is skilled in building, motivating and leading productive, results-oriented teams to achieve tangible and implementable results. He has a proven reputation for finding practical solutions and providing no-nonsense explanations of complex planning concepts and development requirements.

REPRESENTATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

City of Bartow, FL – Planning & Zoning Board Commissioner 10/2022 – Present
Appointed to advise and recommend to the City Commission regarding applications for Comprehensive Plan Amendments, rezoning, conditional uses, site plans, and other special designation for property within the City.

Pennonni Associates Inc. – Senior Planner (Part-time) 4/2019 – Present
Merle leads the firm's planning practice in Florida providing professional planning services to public and private clients. He serves as "City Planner" providing "on-call" services to the City of Eagle Lake, FL. Provide "expert witness" services for Todd Welty, PC, (National Tax Controversy Counsel); expert advice and assistance related to several economic development initiatives in Winter Haven, FL; planning expertise to Highlands County, FL; the City of Lake Wales, FL; the Village of Estero, FL; and the Town of Lake Placid, FL.

City of Winter Haven - Growth Management Department Director 8/2013 – 4/2019
Oversaw the growth management functions for a vibrant, rapidly growing central Florida City with a population of over 50,000. This included comprehensive planning, zoning, land use and economic development, engineering, transportation planning, building permitting & inspections, two Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs), the CDBG program, and a regional airport (Gilbert Field).

Kimley-Horn and Associates - Senior Planner/Project Manager 1/2008 – 7/2013
Provided planning services to public & private clients throughout Florida, including Polk, Gadsden, and Volusia Counties. Participated on a three-member team to create a "Complete Streets" Policy and Handbook for the Polk Transportation Planning Organization. Prepared a Master Plan for a 16,000-acre resource based, recreation resort known as "Streamsong," which was approved by Polk County and developed by The Mosaic Company on reclaimed phosphate mined land.

Polk County BoCC - Growth Management Director 11/2003 – 12/2007
Managed the planning functions of Polk County, FL, including comprehensive planning, land development (zoning), Transportation Planning Organization (MPO), county engineering, building permitting & inspections, code enforcement and four Community Redevelopment Areas (CRA). Served on the Polk TPO Technical Advisory Committee including Vice-Chairman and Chairman. Served as the County representative on the Central Florida Regional Planning Council.

Polk County BoCC - Planning Division Director**10/1995 – 11/2003**

Managed a professional staff of 25 planners to provide comprehensive planning and land development regulation services for a large Central Florida County. Rewrote the County's zoning regulations to create a unified code which changed the County's approach to land development regulations from that of traditional (Euclidean) zoning to boarder, mixed land uses classifications consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies and future land use map.

Polk County BoCC - Community Development Department Director**05/1984 – 10/1995**

Managed the County planning program which included comprehensive planning, transportation planning, zoning, building permits & inspections, code enforcement, engineering services, social services, and the CDBG program. Worked with a large, diverse citizen's advisory committee to rewrite the Comprehensive Plan. Prepared the "Critical Area Management Plan," which established land use politics and a future land use map for the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern. The Plan establishes policies and regulations, which protect resources of the Green Swamp, especially wetlands, groundwater and wildlife habitat. The Plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 1994 as part of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Polk County BoCC - Various positions from Assistant Planner to Assistant Planning Director**04/1975 – 05/1984**

Managed the County's planning functions, including preparation of the County's first Comprehensive Plan and a comprehensive rewrite of the zoning code. Initiated and led a local planning assistance program to provide planning & zoning services to four small municipalities. Principal author of the County's first recreation and open space master plan, which included recommendations for recreation Level of Service standards, identification of recreation deficiencies, and recommendations for providing future recreation and open space. Worked with the Florida Department of Community Affairs (FDCA) in the development of state legislation for the "Green Swamp" Area of Critical State Concern. This effort included the development of specific language for proposed legislation requiring protection of this environmentally sensitive area. The Bill provided for development of local land development regulations and the establishment of a "Critical Area Management Committee."

University of Florida, Center for Wetlands – Graduate Assistant**08/1973 – 03/1975**

Worked on research regarding the impact of cypress (domes) wetlands on pine-flatwoods forest. Created a detailed land use and vegetative cover map of Alachua County, FL. Participated in a graduate, multi-disciplined planning studio which involved development of GIS mapping and data analysis for the County. This was used to perform data analysis on different growth scenarios for Alachua County and the City of Gainesville. An optimum growth pattern was identified based on environmental impacts using an "Ian McHarg" land use analysis method. The work performed by the Center for Wetlands and the planning studio were the forerunners of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Florida.

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry – Forester**11/1971 – 8/1973**

Worked as a Forester in the Division's Bureau of Education for six months. Supervised a topographical survey for a proposed recreational water impoundment area within the Blackwater River State Forest. Worked as a County Forester for Orange and Osceola Counties advising landowners on forest management practices. Worked closely with city/county agencies on urban forestry and environmental issues. Worked with the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council on projects including a recreation facility survey. Designed and performed the first tree canopy assessment for the City of Orlando, FL. This survey provided valuable data on urban forestry and tree protection efforts within the City. Results of the survey were reported in the Orlando Sentinel newspaper.

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- 2013 – 2021 – "AICP Ethics Cases of the Year" American Planning Association, Florida Chapter Annual Conference.
- 2015 – 2021 – "Planning Official Training" American Planning Association, Florida Chapter Annual Conference.
- 2017 - "Measuring Success of Parks & Public Spaces" Florida Recreation & Parks Association (FRPA), Central Florida Chapter.
- 2017 - "The Economics of Parks & Recreation" Florida Recreation & Parks Association (FRPA), Annual Conference, Orlando, FL
- June 2015 - "Guiding Growth and Development for Maximum Benefit: What Makes a City Great?" Florida City/County Managers Association (FCCMA), Annual Conference, Tampa, FL
- April 2013 - "Resiliency: Beyond Sustainability" American Planning Association (APA) – National Conference, Chicago, IL
- June 2013 - "Great Public Spaces in Florida" Florida City/County Managers Association (FCCMA), Annual Conference, Orlando, FL
- June 2012 - "Envisioning 2020 Future of Florida Local Government" Florida City/County Managers Association (FCCMA), Annual Conference, Bonita Springs, FL