

# The Garden Club of Virginia's Annual Conservation Forum



Architect Richard Price shows garden club members the sustainable community of River Bluff in Charlottesville as forum chairman Karen Jones, (second from L) looks on.

The Garden Club of Virginia held its 51st Annual Conservation Forum at the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business in Charlottesville on Nov. 6.

Speakers included Larry Schweiger, president and chief executive officer of National Wildlife Federation; Chris

Miller, president of the Piedmont

Environmental Council, and Rachel Flynn, director of community development, who led the intensely public and creative development of Richmond's new Downtown Master Plan. Stewart Schwartz, executive director of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, was the moderator.

Mr. Schweiger discussed how the implementation of a national plan to reduce climate-change pollution and invest in America's clean energy economy can be the driver for creating sustainable communities across the country, reducing their carbon footprint, while creating good, clean energy jobs that strengthen communities. Mr. Miller talked about integrating land conservation, local agriculture, historic tourism, land use and transportation solutions in Virginia's Piedmont. Ms. Flynn discussed creative design and planning to revitalize Richmond's historic downtown area. Together the speakers offered creative strategies with which cities and towns can fundamentally reduce their ecological footprints while at the same time become more livable, economically viable places.

The forum was open to the public and many conservation groups were present, including Dan River Basin Association, National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, the Piedmont Environmental Council and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.