



United States Department of Agriculture

*Natural Resources Conservation Service Earth Team*

# Volunteer Showcase

## *Middle Schooler Volunteers to Help Endangered Species*

Middle school student, Katherine Reed wants to save endangered species. To help do that, she is working on a Wetland Reserve Enhancement (WRE) project as an Earth Team volunteer at the Orchard Bog Preserve in Shady Valley, Tennessee. The WRE is designed to maintain the preserve's unique high elevation wetland, one of only two places in Tennessee that cranberry plants naturally inhabit. It is also home to at least 25 other rare plants and animals, including the threatened Bog Turtle.

Katherine helped a team collect cranberries and sphagnum moss for propagation at the Plant Materials Center in Alderson, West Virginia. Later, those plants will be used to quicken the succession of the restored wetland in order to create an ideal Bog Turtle and cranberry habitat back in Tennessee at the Orchard Bog Preserve.

This WRE project includes the Natural Resources Conservation Service, other Earth Team volunteers, The Nature Conservancy, the Knoxville Zoo, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and private land owners.

Katherine will use her Earth Team experience to create a unique and informative school project. As part of her project, she also visited Michael Ogle, Curator for the Department of Herpetology and



*Katherine Reed at the Bog Turtle Exhibit in the Knoxville Zoo.  
Photo by Todd Reed.*

Ornithology at the Knoxville Zoo, to obtain more information on the Bog Turtle and the necessities of its habitat.

She will use this along with information acquired from interviews with Charles McQueen, Shady Valley Preserves Manager from The Nature Conservancy and a resident of the area, and John Vandevender from the Plant Materials Center to

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compile a complete report on the area and the WRE project.

Katherine intends to raise awareness of her project through area schools. She feels that the Earth Team is a wonderful opportunity for expanding her knowledge of the environment and to give back to her community. She plans on becoming even more involved in the Earth Team.



*Katherine Reed holding a sample of cranberries at the Nature Conservancy's Orchard Bog Preserve in Shady Valley. Photo by Todd Reed.*



*Katherine Reed, Jason Hughes (District Conservationist), and Anthony Kheil (Resource Soil Scientist) at the Nature Conservancy's Orchard Bog Preserve in Shady Valley, evaluating the plants at the wetland site. Photo by Todd Reed.*



*Katherine Reed and Todd Reed (Area Resource Conservationist) collecting plant samples at the Nature Conservancy's Orchard Bog Preserve in Shady Valley. Picture by Anthony Kheil.*

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***Helping People Help the Land***