

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 888

By Dennis

A RESOLUTION to congratulate Sharon Keen upon being named the 2009 Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year by the Tennessee Forestry Association.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are pleased to specially recognize those outstanding citizens of our State who have committed themselves to sustaining the renewable natural resources of Tennessee in a manner that provides economic enrichment while preserving valuable resources and biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, one such dedicated conservationist is Sharon Keen, owner and operator of the Keen Tree Farm, who was recently named as the 2009 Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year; and

WHEREAS, this annual award recognizes tree farmers who perform an outstanding service in the area of forest and resource management and promote the tree farm program through action and example; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, Ms. Keen, a native Texan with a passion for horseback riding and the outdoors, purchased a 204-acre farm located in Ramer, just a few miles from the Tennessee-Mississippi state line in McNairy County; and

WHEREAS, after purchasing the farm, she sought immediate forestry assistance, and by April of 2001, after securing a written forest management plan, she began instituting several new ideas for the management of the properties' natural resources; and

WHEREAS, imbued with an admirable passion for the natural forests of Tennessee, Ms. Keen has worked assiduously to develop her tree farm into an ideal environment for native tree species to thrive; and

WHEREAS, throughout the farm there are even-aged stands and uneven-aged stands of both pine and hardwood trees, including twenty-eight acres of rich bottomland fields dedicated to hardwoods as part of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and a ninety-four acre pine plantation located on an upslope of the farm; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the beautiful stands of hardwood and pine trees, there have been small group selection clearcuts strategically placed within an older sawtimber stand using a new technique named hardwood corridor thinning; and

WHEREAS, with a major creek bisecting the farm and adding to the general diversity, Ms. Keen is ever vigilant about the water quality on the farm; applying several water quality protection measures, she has several well-installed culverts and streamside management zones to help ensure the overall water quality on the farm; and

WHEREAS, with wildlife and recreation also being an important facet to the Keen Tree Farm, Ms. Keen has established two new wildlife plots and dedicated a portion of the CRP acreage to wildlife habitat, providing ample opportunity to view a variety of wildlife in their natural surroundings; and

WHEREAS, she has also created several roads and trails throughout the property which not only function as secure fire breaks, but they also serve as running trails, hiking trails, management access, and horseback riding trails, giving Ms. Keen and her mother, Janice Keen, several places to ride their beloved horses; and

WHEREAS, an avid bird watcher, Ms. Keen has also established several special plantings accompanied with numerous bird feeders around her home, creating an entertaining show, for bird enthusiasts and ornithologists alike; and

WHEREAS, always looking for ways to improve her farm, she has welcomed advice on conservation and forestry practices not only from professional consulting foresters, but also from experts at the Tennessee Division of Forestry and the University of Tennessee Extension Service; and

WHEREAS, an active member of the McNairy County Forestry Association and the Alcorn County Forestry Association in Mississippi, Ms. Keen practices sustainable forestry on

her farm, making improvements that seem minimal, but prove to be monumental over an extended period of time; and

WHEREAS, recognized for her sound forestry practices and her great love of the outdoors, she has been featured in several noteworthy forestry publications and journals, including *Alabama Treasured Forest Magazine* in 2007; and

WHEREAS, following in the footsteps of Thoreau and Leopold, Ms. Keen has created her own Walden Pond, turning her farm into a veritable forestry classroom; sharing her enthusiasm for trees with forestry students, nature lovers, new acquaintances, and old friends, all visitors to the Keen Tree Farm can be assured of enjoying the finest of Tennessee's natural beauty; and

WHEREAS, Sharon Keen is a fitting recipient of Tennessee's 2009 Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year award, and her commitment to responsible stewardship of the land is most assuredly deserving of special recognition by this General Assembly; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we congratulate Sharon Keen upon being named the 2009 Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year by the Tennessee Forestry Association and thank her for her dedicated and thorough understanding of our State's precious renewable resources -- our forestland and wildlife habitat.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.