

## **Dean Jackson Testimony**

I would like to thank Clint Owlett for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this panel. I am a landowner, farmer, conservation district board member, and I live in a sensitive water shed area that drains into Mt. Pisgah State Park, three miles south. These things have given me a broad perspective on this topic. In my travels and conversations with other landowners, there seems to be a huge disconnect between landowners who reside alongside streams and creeks, and the ability to maintain them in a timely fashion. It is incredible, in my opinion, the amount of time and money that is wasted in certain situations on stream designs that are ripped apart at the next flooding event, and we have had many in recent years.

What we need is a balanced approach to stream maintenance. What I mean is the ability to use common sense and be able to kill multiple birds with one stone, as they say. Carefully removing gravel bars, downed trees, stumps and rocks, and straightening where necessary to keep water where it belongs. Instead of continuing to erode side to side, cutting massive tonnage of topsoil, gravel, and dirt as well as undercutting trees and shrubs, tipping them into streams and making matters worse. Gravel can be used by landowners, local townships, and the state. Water stays where it belongs because stream channels would have the capacity for a flood.

We use a balanced approach to everything we do as farmers. This includes forest management, growing crops, animal care, and breeding cows. I know there are two sides to every story and every situation. I understand and have always tried to listen to the other side, but usually the other side is not impacted personally. We cannot protect our land, our topsoil, and our streams without the tools to do maintenance in a timely fashion. The ideal time for maintenance is when the surrounding ground is firm and water levels are low. Instead, emergency work is done when conditions are not ideal. I would like to see farmers and landowners rewarded for top management of streams and creeks. Just like we are rewarded for a nice appearing farmstead, quality milk, quality cows, good genetics, no-till cover crops, planting green, the CREP program, sod waterways, sod buffers along streams, diversion ditches, and drain tile where necessary.

We as farmers and landowners understand conservation and stewardship, it is in our DNA. What that means is that we have a strong desire and passion to use the tools and knowledge that we have, and have accumulated from others, to leave a legacy of positive changes behind us when we are gone. I want to thank you all for the opportunity to contribute to this panel. My hope, is that this Policy Development Committee hearing will bring about positive change for a better tomorrow.

Thank you,  
Dean Jackson