

SIGN-ON LETTER

Dear Ohio EPA Director Vogel:

As local elected leaders throughout Central Ohio, we join together with the Ohio Environmental Council and its partners in the call to designate Big and Little Darby Creeks as Outstanding National Resource Waters.

An ONRW designation is necessary to preserve what makes Darby so special. ONRW status would stop new sources of pollution from discharging directly into the Darby. These streams provide critical habitat to multiple federal- and state-listed endangered and threatened species. Unfortunately, some of the federally-listed species, including mussels, have declined in recent decades within the Darby Watershed.

The Creeks, or simply the “Darby,” are national gems, providing our region with one of the most biodiverse watersheds in the world. Every year, tens of thousands of school children from our communities experience the Darby and learn about fish and aquatic life in a hands-on-way. But these childhood experiences and the Darby’s rare fish and freshwater mussel populations are threatened by looming development pressures.

Communities across Central Ohio, and beyond, value the Battelle Darby Creek and Prairie Oaks Metro Parks as essential places of recreation, in part due to the Creek flowing through their lands. We must preserve these waterways so future generations can benefit from them, just as we do today.

As elected leaders, we know the importance of balancing economic growth with sustainability. Central Ohio will continue to grow, making protections for special places like the Darby all the more important. We support a future for the region where communities thrive alongside natural spaces, and designating Big and Little Darby Creeks as Outstanding National Resource Waters moves us toward that goal.

Respectfully submitted,

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