

2026 ORBA SUMMIT



Field Trip Guide



TOURING THE HELLBRANCH RUN RESTORATION SITE & LEARNING MORE ABOUT EFFORTS TO PROTECT THE BIG DARBY WATERSHED



Join the [Stream + Wetlands Foundation](#), the [Ohio Environmental Council](#), and the Big Darby Coalition to learn more about efforts to restore and protect the Big Darby watershed with a hiking tour of the Hellbranch Run Stream and Wetlands Restoration site on Wednesday, October 14 from 1:00-4:00pm. Participants will meet at the Columbus Convention Center by 12:30pm to check in. Transportation to and from the restoration site will be provided; the charter bus will meet at the corner of High and Goodale Streets.

The Stream + Wetlands Foundation has restored and permanently protected approximately 400 acres of wetland habitat and nearly 12,000 linear feet of streams within the Big Darby watershed near Columbus, Ohio. This tour will focus on the Hellbranch Run Stream and Wetlands Restoration site located just 20 minutes southwest of downtown Columbus. This former corn and soybean field was converted back to wetland during late 2021 into 2022, and it is now in its fifth full growing season. Featuring ~150 acres of restored wetland habitat and 2 full stream channel restorations, this project is an excellent example of how natural areas can be brought back after decades of farming and human development. Today, the Big and Little Darby Creeks are the highest-scoring stream mainstems in Ohio, according to Ohio EPA data. Doug Babcock, Ohio Environmental Council, and Anthony Sasson, Big Darby Coalition, will serve as co-hosts to provide more background of the Big Darby Creek and the Big Darby Accord—a voluntary, multi-jurisdictional agreement adopted in 2006 to protect the Big Darby Creek watershed while coordinating development, infrastructure, and conservation efforts across jurisdictional boundaries. They will also share how state and federal regulatory mechanisms and requirements provide a foundation for conservation and restoration throughout the Big Darby watershed, forming the basis of protections like the Big Darby Accord.

Please note: There are unimproved, grass trails and there may be standing water and/or low stream crossings, so it's recommended to wear waterproof hiking boots or knee boots. Bring sunscreen and bug spray. Water and light snacks will be provided. The tour will include approximately 1.5 miles of walking with plenty of stops to observe and discuss the wetland and stream restoration process.