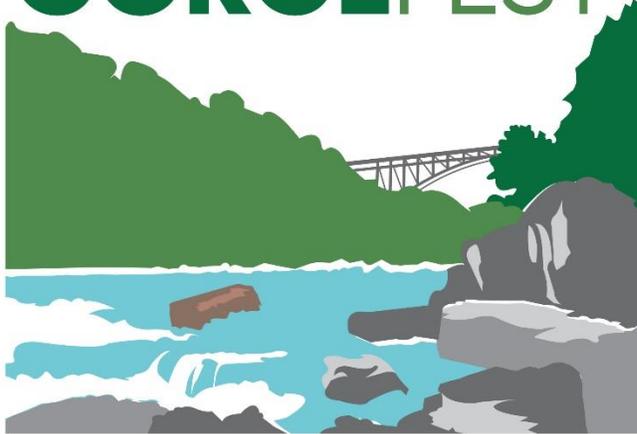


# GORGEFEST



**What is GorgeFest?** It is a one-day event (June 18th) at Whirlpool State Park featuring all of the exciting organizations listed below. There will be tours, hikes, and other activities for the entire family. Each participating organization will staff a table with lots of fun ways for you and your families to participate and learn about the Niagara Gorge and its amazing wildlife, natural environment, geological and cultural history, and more. Keep reading to discover what opportunities our event partners are offering. If you would like to sign up for a

hike, walk, or tour, you can do so on the day of the event.

**Where will it be held?** Whirlpool State Park (Niagara Scenic Parkway, Niagara Falls, NY 14303).

**When will it be held?** Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> from 11:00-1:00 p.m.

1. With the **Buffalo Museum of Science**, you will learn all about the native invertebrates that you'll find along the gorge, see the museum's living collection, and, if the weather cooperates, witness a very special insect release.
2. Join **Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper** to learn about the Niagara River watershed, the importance of restoration, and to enjoy fun, hands-on activities for the whole family.
3. Bring your kids to the **Castellani Art Museum** table for an inspirational art making activity.
4. Join **New York State Parks** and one of their talented naturalists while exploring the cultural and natural history of the Niagara Gorge, using the artifacts and hands-on displays found in the Gorge Natural History Room!
5. **The Aquarium of Niagara** celebrates our region's natural wonder. Join them at GorgeFest and meet some of the freshwater creatures that call Western New York (and the Niagara Gorge) home, view amazing artifacts, and gain a deeper appreciation for the local environment.
6. **Niagara University** professors and students will have hands-on activities for guests to learn about salamander genetics and microscopic crustaceans found in the Niagara River. Guests can also sign up to participate in a gorge walk.

7. Get to know all the best hiking and biking trails, important ecological and historic preservation projects, and other can't miss attractions along **the Niagara River Greenway**.
8. Join **Penn Dixie Fossil Park and Nature Reserve** as they present the past & recent geology of Niagara Gorge. All children who visit their table will get a free Penn Dixie admission voucher as well as a real fossil to take home.
9. Niagara Falls is rich in American history. Freedom seekers and abolitionists were active in the city, and **the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center** houses a trove of information about their work. Learn why their stories are important and how they connect with the Niagara Gorge's past, present, and future.
10. **The Western New York Land Conservancy** is restoring the Gorge by removing invasive plant species and replacing them with native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers. Learn more about this work, why it matters, and what's next. Sign up for a tour with the Land Conservancy's Restoration Ecologist, Dr. Andy Lance.
11. How do invasive plants impact the Niagara Gorge? What can you do in your own yard or community to provide birds, insects, and pollinators with the native species they need to thrive? Learn everything you need to know about invasive species, forest pests, the Niagara Gorge, and you with **WNY PRISM**.
12. Did you ever wonder what happened to injured animals? Join **WNY Raptor and Wildlife Care, Inc.** and learn from our local experts, who rehabilitate injured wildlife, educate on wildlife conservation, and contribute to the scientific community through research. At GorgeFest, you may even get the chance to meet a live ambassador!
13. Seasoned local historian **Justin Higner** will lead two history tours, one heading north and one heading south, and share his wealth of knowledge on what's real, what's imagined, and what's mythological with the Niagara Gorge.
14. **Jennifer Hillman and Bill McKeever: *Secret Places of Western New York: 25 Scenic Trails*** (book table) will discuss their new and updated edition of Bruce Kershner's classic guide to Western New York's little-known secret treasures. Following GorgeFest, Jennifer and Bill will join Kyle Semmel of **the Land Conservancy** for a tour of the Stella Niagara Preserve in Lewiston.