This self-guided kayak tour will take you along historic waterways in the Niagara River Watershed and provide information about how these waters were used in the past.

**Difficulty Level:** Moderate - Difficult depending on the wind conditions on the Niagara River

**Distance Traveled:** 3 miles (approximately 2.5 hours)

**LAUNCH**

Head to Griffon Park and enter the parking lot area for the Kayak Launch.

**Nearest address:**
9670 Buffalo Ave, Niagara Falls, NY 14303

**Link:** [https://goo.gl/maps/Gyoe4mQeKk7ga7r96](https://goo.gl/maps/Gyoe4mQeKk7ga7r96)

Bathroom building on site.

**ROUTE**

Launch at the roller launch into the **Little Niagara River**. Turn left from the launch and paddle out toward the Niagara River. Follow the shoreline of Cayuga Island. Turn right back into the Little Niagara River at the Northern end of the Island and return to the launch at Griffon Park.
Land and water traveled on during this paddle is the ancestral home of the Haudenosaunee, who still live close by.

**THE FLOW OF WATER**

The Great Lakes were formed when mile-thick glaciers melted over 10,000 years ago. These lakes hold 21% of the Earth’s fresh surface water and form a large chain of lakes flowing from Lake Superior, to Lake Ontario, to the St. Lawrence River, which then flows into the Atlantic Ocean.

**WATERWAY TRAVEL**

Griffon Park is named after a sailing ship, *Le Griffon* that was built on Cayuga Island under the direction of French explorer Rene-Robert Cavelier de La Salle in the late 1600’s. The intent of the ship was to travel throughout the Great Lakes to facilitate fur trading. *Le Griffon* successfully sailed across Lake Erie, Huron and Michigan and other inland waters. On a return voyage, *Le Griffon* disappeared and was never found.

There have been several changes made to the Great Lakes and connecting waterways to allow for quicker travel by ships moving people and goods. Niagara Falls and nearby rapids created a huge obstacle resulting in the search of alternative routes. In the 1800’s, the Erie Canal was built and became the new travel route from the Atlantic to the Great Lakes.

The modification of the Great Lakes and surrounding waterways for travel created many water quality issues; including the introduction of invasive species, which have disrupted food-chains and destroyed natural habitat.

While paddling on the Niagara River take some time to reflect on history of the waterway and the many changes it has experienced. Waterway trails, although they may be damaged today, can be restored and maintained while retaining their function as the center of a healthy and thriving blue economy teaming with aquatic life.

For more information visit
[www.bnwaterkeeper.org/tours](http://www.bnwaterkeeper.org/tours)