

LISA RAINWATER, PHD



Lisa Rainwater is the Executive Director of The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, located in Arkville, New York. Hired in July 2008, Rainwater oversees nine staffers who work in the Center's four main programmatic areas: Natural Resources, Education, Regional Planning, and Arts & Culture. Rainwater lives in Woodstock, NY at the foot of Overlook Mountain in the Catskills.

The Catskill Mountain Region is an historic and sacred place that nurtures the soul and spirit of those who call it home and serves as a rejuvenating respite for visitors. As people seek to find common ground in a century inundated with new and often isolating technologies, the Catskills offers a strong sense of community living and opportunities for young and old to come together to celebrate shared values. In 2009, the Catskill Center will celebrate its 40th anniversary. Over four decades, the Center has worked on behalf of nature lovers, local businesses, artists, communities, and school children across the region. Rainwater sees the Center's anniversary as an opportunity to reflect on the impact the Center has had on the region and to set a vision for the next forty - aiming even higher to build strong communities, regional partnerships, and to protect our sacred places.

Prior to joining The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, Lisa Rainwater was engaged in community organizing on issues such as affordable education, women's equality, ecofeminism, safe and healthy communities, and environmental protection. Her work has been featured in national broadcasts, publications, and numerous media outlets. She is a published author and translator.

CIVIC DEMOCRACY

In the 1990s, Lisa Rainwater was catapulted into the world of civic action while serving as Student Senate Vice President at Winona State University in Minnesota. She actively organized students to fight to keep the costs of higher education affordable and lobbied against cuts in student grants and loans in the Halls of Congress.

As a graduate student at the Universities of Oregon and Wisconsin (1994-2002), she represented teaching fellows and graduate student teachers with their respective unions to ensure equitable pay scales and affordable health care across the board.

In 2002 she was a spokesperson for *Cities for People!*, a coalition of organizations and community groups that objected to the corporatization of the 2002 US Mayors' Conference. In this capacity, she assisted in the organization of a People's Conference, which addressed community concerns such as health care, childcare, reproductive rights, environmental protections, development and sprawl, and labor.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

Lisa Rainwater believes that critical issues facing our environment interconnect with key issues affecting women – pollution and health; consumerism and women's economic power; population growth and reproductive care; protection of green space and protection of family. She has worked with women across the country to provide them with the tools needed to create the greatest impact for social and political change through community organizing and empowerment.

In 2000 Rainwater embarked on her career as a community organizer and promoter of civic action, when she was elected President of the Madison NOW (National Organization for Women) chapter. During her tenure she revitalized the defunct chapter, organized a street performance/rally for women's reproductive rights at the State Capitol, and founded an Eco-Feminist taskforce, which educated women on the interconnected relationships between women's and children's health and the health of the environment. She was a member of the Wisconsin NOW Executive Committee, a delegate to the 2002 National Conference for the National Organization for Women, and served as an advisor to the Wisconsin Women's Network.

In 2002 Rainwater became Project Coordinator for the Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition, comprised of 72 citizen, environmental, public health, and public interest groups working to close the Indian Point nuclear power plant, located 24 miles north of New York City. In this capacity, she worked with local community groups to develop direct actions, organized public events, oversaw fundraising efforts, spearheaded public outreach campaigns, including a documentary film, and developed messaging for

various media campaigns. In addition, she served as spokesperson for the coalition and worked with local, state and federal elected officials on policy and legislative initiatives.

From 2003–2007 Rainwater served as the Indian Point Campaign Director for the New York environmental group Riverkeeper, the primary organization leading the efforts to shut down Indian Point and stop a twenty-year license extension. Her efforts directly led to New York State becoming the first in the nation to intervene in a nuclear power plant relicensing proceeding. In 2007 Rainwater was promoted to Policy Director for Riverkeeper. Her work included community strategizing, policy and legislative initiatives, lobbying, serving as campaign spokesperson for radio, television, print, and documentary films, fundraising, and message development.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Lisa Rainwater has also served as a consultant to a variety of community groups and organizations seeking to create better communities.

In 2004 Rainwater served as an environmental advisor to *NY, America's Imagine Festival, a Festival of Arts, Issues and Ideas*, which coincided with the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York City.

From 2003 - 2007, Rainwater was a board member of *PAVE (Promoting Awareness, Victim Empowerment)*, a multi-chapter organization that uses social, educational, and legislative tactics to shatter the silence of sexual violence. In July 2006 Rainwater launched *The Binding Project* with her friend and colleague, Angela Rose. The Binding Project seeks to unite people across the United States by empowering them to take ownership over zip tie bindings and other forms of restraint often used by perpetrators as a means of control and power. Anchored in Chicago and New York City, *The Binding Project* blends education, art, and dialogue to establish a community of empowerment by creating a focal point for the shared healing and strength of those dedicated to shattering the silence of sexual violence.

From September 2005-August 2006 she was a member of the Executive Committee for the *New York Physicians for Social Responsibility*.

EDUCATION

Lisa Rainwater received her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (German Studies), her M.A. from the University of Oregon (German), and her B.A. from Winona State University (Psychology/German).

Rainwater's dissertation, *The Rosa Myth: Representations of a Revolutionary in 20th Century German Culture*, is an exploration into how German artists, writers, scholars, musicians,

community organizers, and politicians mythologized Rosa Luxemburg and her work for their own gains during the tumultuous 20th century.

Rainwater honed her public speaking skills while teaching at the University of Oregon and the University of Wisconsin for nearly a decade with courses on German language and culture, Scandinavian literature, writing and composition, and folklore. Her research has won awards and been published in a variety of national and international scholarly journals.