



WAYNE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## Water@Wayne Seminar Series

Thursday February 21, 2019

2:30 – 4:00pm

Undergraduate Library - Bernath Auditorium Rm. 1400

"Taking Their Water for Our City: Archaeology of New York City's Watershed Communities"

**Dr. April Beisaw**

**Associate Professor of Anthropology  
Vassar College**



**Abstract:** The New York Times regularly runs articles explaining why New York City has “the champagne” of city tap waters -- it comes from pure and rural mountains. But there is nothing natural about NYC’s water. To create the water system, thousands of people lost homes and businesses, and had to sue the City for compensation. To maintain the water system, those living around reservoirs are encouraged to sell their lands, creating landscapes of abandonment where only the wealthy remain. Over the last seven years, my Vassar College students and I have hiked portions of the city-owned watershed to document the ruins of lives cut short by a distant City. In what was left behind, we can begin to estimate the price that rural people paid for providing clean water to City residents. But these properties also attest to an ongoing conflict, as the Department of Environmental Protection’s land use rules are regularly violated by locals who make these City-owned lands work for them.

More information? Contact Dr. Donna Kashian at [dkashian@wayne.edu](mailto:dkashian@wayne.edu)



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