



**Elisabeth Haub
School of Law**
PACE UNIVERSITY



NRDC
NATURAL RESOURCES
DEFENSE COUNCIL

“Working with the student attorneys at the Food and Beverage Law Clinic was incredibly valuable for our fledgling business. Tyler and Giancarlo put together a reference guide that answered questions we didn’t even know we should be asking. This guide will be a roadmap for us as we bring our brewery to life.”

– Tess Hart, Co-Founder, Triple Bottom Brewing Company, Clinic Client

Pace-NRDC Food Law Initiative

The Pace-NRDC Food Law Initiative (FLI), a partnership between the Elisabeth Haub School of Law (Pace Law) and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), seeks to grow the legal capacity for our regional food system by training lawyers and law students, and by providing direct pro bono legal services.

Launch of the Food and Beverage Law Clinic

In January 2017, Pace Law launched the Food and Beverage Law Clinic with the generous support of the Sands Family Foundation and Constellation Brands. The Clinic is the first in the country entirely dedicated to providing direct, transactional legal services to food and beverage-clients. Under faculty supervision, law students in the Clinic represent farmers, food and beverage entrepreneurs, and nonprofit organizations seeking to improve our food system. The Clinic’s legal services help clients expand access to local, healthy food in underserved communities, start or expand mission-driven business ventures, steward the preservation and transitioning of farmland for future generations of farmers, and implement innovative and sustainable production, processing, and distribution practices.



Clinic Students visiting client Bhumi Farms Seva in East Hampton, NY

“We’re trying to do something that hasn’t been done before. The Food and Beverage Law Clinic has really helped us not only in understanding all the legal issues but also in organizing and thinking through larger issues around community, sovereignty, and ownership.”
– Dennis Derryck, Founder & President, Corbin Hill Food Project, Clinic Client



NRDC attorney Jennifer Grossman meets with a Catskills farmer

2017 Food Law Initiative by the Numbers

- 12 clients served
- 14 students trained in clinic
- 25 students trained in other food & ag law courses
- Outreach to more than 35 farms, food businesses, and NGOs to assess legal needs and gaps in services

Select 2017 Clinic Clients

Back Paddock Farm (New Paltz, NY) produces 100% grass-fed beef and log grown mushrooms. The Clinic is representing the farm in its negotiation of a farmland lease in order to secure a new long-term location for its operations.

Common Ground Farm (Wappingers Falls, NY) is a nonprofit farm dedicated to food access, food justice, and education. The Clinic is assisting the farm in expanding its farm-to-school program, including potentially facilitating procurement arrangements between neighboring farmers and local school districts.

Corbin Hill Food Project (New York, Bronx & Schoharie Counties, NY) was established in 2010 with a mission to provide fresh produce to those who need it most. The Clinic represents CHFP on the structuring of a new initiative involving farm-based community gathering programs and community ownership of farming operations, including by advising on legal entity choice, tax exemption, and corporate governance.

Essex Farm (Essex, NY) is a 1,100 acre diversified farm located in in the Champlain Valley in Essex, New York. It offers a full-diet, year round community-supported agriculture (CSA) program with each share providing enough food for an entire family to have three meals a day, seven days a week. The Clinic advises the farm on legal matters associated with its CSA operations.

New York Cider Association is a trade association created to foster community amongst, and act as the collective voice and organizing body for, apple growers and cider makers throughout New York State. The Clinic is assisting the Association in preparing educational materials on beverage laws.

Other Highlights from 2017

- FLI Faculty Director Margot Pollans and NRDC Food Law Staff Attorney Margaret Brown selected for Hunter New York City Food Policy Center “40 under 40 Rising Stars in Food Policy.”
- Clinic hires Emily Kenyon, a recent NYU Law graduate as a full time fellow for the 2017-2018 academic year. The fellowship was funded by Kirkland & Ellis.
- Pace Law expands its curriculum to include Agriculture Law & the Environment in addition to existing courses on Food Systems Law, Animal Law, and Public Health Law.
- FLI hosts sold out event featuring former Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Kathleen Merrigan. GrowNYC cohosted the event.



Jon Brown with clinic students at Bedford 2020

Select 2017 Presentations

Jon Brown, Pace Food and Beverage Law Clinic Director, presents at Sharing Scholarship, Building Teachers Conference at Albany Law School, the Bedford 2020 Food Forum, the Canadian Bar Association Environmental, Energy & Resources Law Summit, the National Farm Viability Conference, and the Fordham Urban Law Journal Urban Food Policy Colloquium.

NRDC attorney consultant **Jennifer Grossman** presents at American Farmland Trust *On Solid Ground* conference, Hudson Valley Farmlink, E2 New York “Farming for the Future,” and Catskill Center for Conservation and Development.

NRDC attorney **Margaret Brown** presents at Urban Food Policy Forum on Litigation as a Strategy for Defending and Advancing Food Policy and on panel for film, *Wasted: the Story of Food*.

FLI Faculty Director **Margot Pollans** presents at SlowFood NYC Annual Food Almanac and Bedford 2020 Food Forum. She also spoke to the Mt. Kisco Food Pantry Board about SNAP and to a group of farmers at Stone Barns about the 2018 Farm Bill.



Margaret Brown and Margot Pollans at Hunter “40 under 40” Awards Ceremony