



Application

31769 - FY 2016 Folk and Traditional Arts

34242 - The Lost Forty Project

Folk and Traditional Arts

Status: Submitted

Submitted Date: 06/24/2015 2:00 PM

Primary Contact

Legal Name*	Brian		Miller
	<small>First Name</small>	<small>Middle Name</small>	<small>Last Name</small>
Alternate Name			
	<small>First Name</small>	<small>Last Name</small>	
City	St Paul		

Organization Information

Legal Name:

Alternate Name

City

Project Outcomes

Applicant Information

Applicant Organization or Individual Individual

Applicant or Project Classification Individual Artist

Organizations only:

Total Annual Operating Expenses \$0
Total Organizational Staff Full-time Equivalents (FTE) 0

Arts Access and Arts Learning applications only:

Arts Access and Arts Learning applications only:

Contact Hours 0

Public Statement

*If the application is funded, the **public statement** will be posted on the Arts Board Web site and other locations. Write in a factual manner, in the third person, using complete sentences. Example: ABC Organization will collaborate with playwright and actor Jane Doe to create and perform ArtWork, a one woman play that uses poetry to explore social justice issues.*

Public Statement (225 characters max)

Brian Millers Lost 40 Project will celebrate recently discovered 1924 field recordings of traditional folksong from Minnesota via a digital archive, new arrangements of songs, a public "song forum," concerts and workshops.

Outcomes

An outcome statement describes change in knowledge, attitude, skill, behavior, or condition among the people a project is designed to benefit. Refer to Help for information about how to craft effective outcomes.

*State at least one measurable **project** outcome that the applicant intends to achieve. A second outcome is optional.*

Applicant Project Outcome (150 characters max).

Minnesotans will learn and perform traditional folk songs collected long ago from Minnesotans.

State the methods(s) the applicant will use to evaluate progress toward each outcome.

How will the applicant project outcome be evaluated (200 characters max)?

The "song forum" will provide a space for anyone to post video or audio recordings of themselves performing songs from the project. Users will be asked to give their location.

*For each applicant **project** outcome, select an Arts Board **program** outcome that the project will achieve. More than one applicant project outcome can support the same Arts Board program outcome.*

Arts Board Program Outcome

The number of Minnesotans who teach or learn folk and traditional art forms increases.

Applicant Project Outcome (150 characters max).

The project will provide activities highlighting northwoods branch of the Irish tradition.

How will the applicant project outcome be evaluated (200 characters max)?

Attendance at public events will be recorded. Web stats and analytics will capture use of online materials and participation in "song forum."

Narrative

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Applicant Background and Project Description

Applicant Background (1875 characters max)

Provide information as requested in this program's link in the instructions section.

For almost twenty years, I have immersed myself in Irish traditional music by studying, performing and teaching this deep, living art form. My most valuable experiences were in Ireland itself where I learned directly from masters of the tradition. Still, my heart has always been in Minnesota and I am passionate about exploring connections between Irish music and my home state. I have devoted much of the past seven years to a largely-forgotten branch of the Irish tradition with Minnesotan connections: the music of Great Lakes sailors and lumberjacks—what I call “northwoods” music. Folklorists have long noted the dominant Irish influence in this repertoire and I am committed to reviving these old songs and demonstrating the significant connections between logging-era folksong and Irish folksong.

Since 2007, I have researched, learned, arranged and performed northwoods songs. I have found dozens of unpublished recordings and manuscripts of songs sung by Minnesotans and I am enthusiastic about making these accessible, both in raw form and through my own interpretive performances and teaching. With support from the Minnesota Historical Society, regional library consortia and two Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative grants, I have performed northwoods music throughout Minnesota as a duo with Randy Gosa and recorded two CDs accompanied by rich documentary booklets contextualizing the music with stories, photos and local history. This year, Randy and I collaborated with St. Paul singer Norah Rendell on a new album of Canada-sourced material from the same tradition. I have taught northwoods songs at workshops across the Upper Midwest.

For three years, I have published a monthly blog, *Northwoods Songs*, where I provide written music, background information and a videotaped performance of a song each month. In addition, I have done extensive training in digital archives in order to enable me to present field recordings via online digital collections. I will graduate with my Masters of Library and Information Studies this December and I have already prepared a prototype digital presentation of 33 field recordings of Minnesota singers.

Project Description (1875 characters max)

Provide information as requested in this program's link in the instructions section.

In the 1800s, a distinct tradition of singing developed in the *belt of pine* forests stretching from Maine to Minnesota. Irish immigrants took winter jobs in logging camps where men sang to pass the evening hours in the bunkhouses. The same men often worked and sang on Great Lakes ships in the summer. The narrative song tradition carried by the Irish came to have a dominant influence on a new musical style. Older Irish ballads endured alongside new “northwoods” songs, themselves often adaptations of songs that crossed the Atlantic. When the logging era ended, the northwoods song tradition dwindled and much of this regionally-specific repertoire has since been forgotten.

Minnesotan sources for northwoods songs are scarce and what does exist is almost exclusively written material. Audio recordings are much more valuable for documenting such oral traditions. Through my research, I uncovered an invaluable set of wax cylinder field recordings made in 1924 of Minnesota singers performing verses from 48 songs. Languishing in a “miscellaneous box” at the Library of Congress, these recordings were digitized at my request and I hope to use them to revive these songs here in Minnesota. Many of the recordings capture only small portions of much longer songs but, luckily, I have also located complete texts of almost every song thanks to manuscripts written by the singers themselves.

Inspired by the Lost Forty area in northern Minnesota (a rare surviving stand of old growth pine missed by lumber companies), the Lost Forty Project is based around forty songs selected from these field recordings. The project website will include a digital archive of the chosen recordings along with background information and complete song texts taken from manuscripts. The site will also include a “song forum” for users to submit video or audio of their own interpretations of the songs. To demonstrate the concept, I will choose twelve of the songs to arrange with Randy Gosa and these will be released as monthly videos (recorded professionally) on my blog. This is an expansion of my current blog activities which feature very simple self-made videos of me singing unaccompanied. Featured song melodies will also be transcribed to aid learning. Randy and I will also engage the public directly by performing eight concerts and teaching eight workshops throughout Minnesota—all focusing on this repertoire.

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Review Criteria

1. The Quality of the Arts Experience (3750 characters max)

(1) My background makes me uniquely qualified to work for the revival of the “northwoods branch” of the Irish tradition. I grew up in Bemidji—home of the iconic “Paul and Babe” statues, an annual Logging Days festival, two active lumber mills and many families originally drawn to the area by logging jobs. I fell in love with Irish traditional music after hearing it at a folk festival as a teen and reveled in the Irish music community of St. Paul upon moving south in 1998. I made over 15 trips to Ireland in my twenties, intent on learning to sing, play and understand the Irish tradition. There, I learned from several master tradition-bearers including singer Eilís Ní Shúilleabháin and fiddler Liz Doherty. In St. Paul, I was part of a group of musicians that apprenticed with legendary Irish accordion player Paddy O’Brien through weekly meetings at his home. I founded the Traditional Singers Club in 2006 and, through it, learned from several master Irish singers, including Donal Maguire and Len Graham, who I brought to town for workshops. Everything came full circle when Singers Club guest Judy Cook introduced me to Irish-influenced northwoods music at a workshop in 2007. I have since gone back to Bemidji to interview 105-year-old Elsy Maguire who remembers Irishmen singing every Sunday in her dad’s lumber camp near Cass Lake.

(1) For the past four years, my collaborator in this work has been Randy Gosa of Milwaukee. Randy also learned traditional Irish music from tradition bearers in Ireland and the US and has family ties to the early logging industry in northern Wisconsin. Randy is one of the top US-based instrumentalists in Irish music and his musicianship is a huge asset to this project. We have a well-honed approach to crafting creative and sensitive arrangements of material I find through my research.

(3) Logging and loggers dominated Minnesotan commerce and cultural identity during the industry’s boom years of the late 1800s. This legacy continues today with festivals and historic sites from Stillwater to Bemidji celebrating “logging days.” Paul Bunyan and plaid-clad lumberjacks are used as light-hearted symbols of Minnesotan identity on everything from beer cans to MNSure ads. (6) These pop culture portrayals obscure the fact that many loggers were hard-working immigrants who carried with them rich traditional art forms. Though celebrated in many localities around Minnesota, Irish culture is rarely connected to our logging history. Reviving northwoods songs returns the Irish cultural community to a key storyline of Minnesotan history. (3) Almost everywhere Randy and I perform, we are approached by Minnesotans who connect deeply to our work and have family stories about logging work and/or Irish heritage.

(4) The Lost Forty Project will greatly impact the future of northwoods music. The field recordings are some of the earliest in existence of singers from the northwoods tradition. They are among the earliest recordings of English-language folksong from Minnesota. (6) Making them accessible as digital audio, reuniting their melodies with texts from the manuscripts and singing and teaching them around Minnesota will provide unprecedented access to this forgotten music. The digital archive will be the most important resource for Minnesotan northwoods music since Franz Rickaby’s 1926 *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy*. The revival of northwoods music expands the scope of Irish traditional music by reinvigorating repertoire and history that has been forgotten.

(5) Randy and I will perform eight concerts around the state featuring project songs and slide shows of historical photos to contextualize the songs and stories. Randy and I use artful song-arranging techniques and musicianship to help make the songs engaging to modern audiences while maintaining the authenticity of the material. At eight workshops (four taught as a duo and four by myself alone), attendees will learn songs, song arrangements and techniques for arranging old songs. Workshop attendees will be encouraged to learn a song and contribute a recording to the song forum online. Visitors to the digital archive will learn directly from recordings of source singers themselves. The song forum will encourage users to learn songs and share their own interpretations online.

2. Commitment To and From the Community (3750 characters max)

(1) This project is rooted in Minnesota's Irish music community. Irish traditional music has enriched the lives of Minnesotans since before statehood and its importance continues today with a growing number of musicians playing and singing, dozens of thriving Irish cultural organizations supporting Irish music and popular events such as the Minnesota Irish Fair. Many Irish-Minnesotans study their genealogy and are interested in the history of Minnesota's Irish specifically. The popularity of the "50 Years of Irish Music in the Twin Cities" display at the 2014 Minnesota Irish Fair showed a hunger for tracing the history of this music in Minnesota. The Lost Forty Project addresses the strong interest that Minnesotan Irish musicians have in the history of the Irish tradition in this place.

(1) Also, many Minnesota families and communities were touched by the logging industry. Logging companies drew settlers to the state and helped found cities and towns just as new industries continue to attract newcomers to Minnesota. This project addresses Minnesotans' interest in that aspect of family and state history while celebrating the fact that all immigrants and newcomers carry cherished cultural expressions. These cultural expressions help us better understand the people that carry them.

(2) Minnesotans with family and community ties to this music will be invited to support the project through a Kickstarter campaign. Irish community organizations and historical societies throughout the state have supported my work in the past by providing venues and promotion help. Past partners include: The Minnesota Historical Society, The Pine County Historical Society, The Irish Music and Dance Association, the St. Louis County Historical Society, the Center for Irish Music, the Moose Lake Area Historical Society, the Irish Fair of Minnesota, the Virginia Area Historical Society and the North Beltrami Heritage Center. These groups will facilitate the public component of this project by providing venues and promotion.

(3) The Irish music community of Minnesota will be invited to participate directly the artistic experience of the project website by submitting video and audio of themselves performing songs from the Lost Forty collection. I already know of several musicians in the region who have learned songs from my blog or from my CDs and one recently posted a video to Facebook of his version of a song. Through concerts, workshops and my blog, I will encourage more Minnesotans to learn and interpret these songs themselves and contribute recordings to song forum on The Lost Forty Project website.

(4) All project activities will be crafted to connect Minnesotans to the cultural context and meaning of the music. I will purchase a projector and screen so I can show historical photos at the concerts as a way of illustrating historical context and song themes. The focus on source singers who lived in Minnesota allows me to connect to audiences through the story of the singers themselves which I have researched extensively. I will use distinctly "Minnesotan" aspects of their biographies to draw in audiences interested in local and family history. Singer Michael Dean was: a survivor of the famous Hinckley fire of 1994; an avid hunter and fisherman; a jovial, yet tough, bartender; and a generous host of midwinter parties at his house in Hinckley (with fiddlers and dancing). He lived in several Minnesota towns including Hinckley, Pine City, Willow River, Moose Lake and Virginia and was a fishing buddy of lumber baron, and state park namesake, William O'Brien. In booking concerts and workshops, I will especially concentrate on locales where singers lived to maximize interest in these stories.

(5) When booking all concerts and workshops, I will assure that all venues are accessible to persons with disabilities. For the website and blog I will follow the guidelines of the American Foundation for the Blind to assure that audio and textual components are accessible to blind users.

(6) The extreme rarity of the field recordings at the center of this project makes it a unique opportunity for the Irish community of Minnesota and anyone interested in Minnesota history. However, rather than present them as museum pieces, this project allows Randy and me to bring this valuable repertoire into the vibrant current Irish music scene of Minnesota in a compelling form that will inspire people to learn the songs themselves. This will enrich the Irish music community of Minnesota.

3. Project Administration (3750 characters max)

(1)(2a) I have administered several grants including two MNSAB grants and will plan and administer this project myself. In the final semester of my Masters of Library and Information Studies this fall I am taking a project management course that will further prepare me to fulfill this role. My MLIS degree has also prepared me to do the digital archive component of this project and the project will build on an existing prototype collection I made for a class. In addition, I have over ten years of experience designing and maintaining websites for various bands and organizations.

(5) One professional development activity that will be part of this project is a consultation with Norah Rendell to improve my ability to effectively evaluate this project (see next section).

(3) I will hire an experienced graphic designer to create professional full color posters and postcards to advertise public events and print these materials. I will coordinate with presenters to publicize all concerts and workshops using print and broadcast media, posters and social media. I will promote the digital archive and forum through my blog and at performances and workshops. I will also publicize online components through social media as well as folklore, Irish music, library/archives and history mailing lists and message boards. The Irish Music and Dance Association will continue to release a print version of my blog each month in their newsletter.

(4a) Artist wages and fees for rehearsals, workshops and performances are based on a good living wage for artists and calibrated based on similar past work done through the Minnesota Historical Society. Fees for web and digital archive design, writing and editing are all at fair market value. Video shooting, poster design and consultation cost are all fair prices based on quotes from those services.

(4b) Over 17 years of performing Irish music all over Minnesota and 7 years of working to revive the northwoods tradition, I have built a strong network of friends and supporters throughout the state. I will call on this community via social media, email and in person to support this project via the Kickstarter. I will also use this network (including several historical societies, several Irish cultural organizations and a few key public library consortiums) to book and promote performances and workshops. I will raise \$5000 via the Kickstarter campaign. A successful 2013 Kickstarter campaign for \$8000 in support of a similar project, The Minnesota Fiddle Tunes Project, shows that this goal is realistic. The final \$1200 will come from income earned through my 2011 Arts Board funded CD *Minnesota Lumberjack Songs* that I have set aside for this project. That CD has sold over 1000 copies and earned \$14,000 profit since its release.

(4c) Most concerts and workshops will be paying gigs. Performance and workshop income will be a source of earned revenue. From past experience, I am confident that I can get an average of \$50 per workshop and \$250 per concert from the venues I will work with. I have been careful to balance artistic with administrative costs in my budget.

(6) Project Timeline: **January:** Refine project timeline and plan. Design website (archive and forum). Select first few songs to be featured on blog and work on arrangements. Record video and prepare first blog post. Purchase supplies and equipment. Begin contacting presenters and booking dates. **February:** Release first video/blog post. Plan Kickstarter Campaign. Consult with Norah Rendell and prepare evaluation materials. Solicit three musicians to post videos to seed the forum. Continue booking concerts and workshops. **March:** Kickstarter campaign. Second blog/video post. Launch partial version of website with seed videos on forum. Public events begin. Administer evaluations at events. **April:** Complete digital archive online. **April-December:** Public events. Promoting forum. Monthly blog/videos. **December.** Compile evaluations, event statistics and web analytics. Prepare final budget. Twelfth blog/video post on December 31st.

4. Evaluation and Assessment (3750 characters max)

(1a) The Lost Forty Project will increase interest in and knowledge about the northwoods branch of the Irish tradition and change audience attitudes about lumberjacks and Minnesota history. Workshop attendees will learn to sing traditional northwoods songs. Website users, workshop attendees and concert goers will all be encouraged to learn songs from the archive and to post video or audio to the song forum where they will, in turn, inspire others to learn and contribute.

(3) These project outcomes contribute to Arts Board program outcomes that the number of Minnesotans who learn folk and traditional art forms increases and that the variety and number of folk and traditional arts activities in which Minnesotans can participate increases.

(1b) In consultation with Norah Rendell, I will develop a written evaluation form and administered it to workshop and concert attendees. In addition, I will assess the reach of my blog, digital archive and song forum by using website analytics, Facebook likes and YouTube view counts. I will solicit more in-depth feedback electronically from the folklore, Irish music and Minnesota history communities (all active groups online) by posting about my site and blog on forums and message boards and asking for feedback from users directly. In addition, I will document all public events with photographs. I will keep records of attendance at all events and save an archive of promotional materials as well. The forum itself is a tool for documenting Minnesotans who learn and develop versions of Lost Forty songs.

(2) Written evaluation forms will be constructed to measure changes in audience attitudes about the history and musical tradition presented. Written evaluations will also ask about interest in learning songs. The song forum will document Minnesotans learning and developing versions of songs. Various web stats and analytics will capture interest in and use of online materials. Solicited feedback from online communities will help shape the project to serve community interests and needs.

(4a) The evaluation plan will be designed by me in consultation with experienced arts administrator Norah Rendell. I will be responsible for its implementation. (4b) Norah Rendell has administered evaluations for grants, events and general operations at the Center for Irish Music for the past seven years. I have been involved with reading and assessing written evaluations for the CIM's weekend-long teaching and performance event for several years also. (4c) Randy Gosa will help distribute and collect written evaluations at public events. Otherwise, Randy will not be involved in evaluation activities.

(5) Written evaluations will be read each month as they accumulate from events. This information will inform the design of succeeding events. Adjustments may be made in the ratio of talking vs. singing or the use of the historical photo slide show. Forum participation will be monitored and low participation will trigger active pursuit of musicians interested in learning songs and posting online. The evaluation of this project as a whole will guide future performance and archive work.

Arts Board Request

Arts Board Request

\$24,961

Validate Financial Information

Verify that these four statements are true before marking this form complete. If any of these four statements are false, click Edit and make corrections.

- Difference is \$0.*
- Arts Board Request + Regional Arts Council Grant(s) is less than or equal to the maximum allowed.*
- Applicant Cash Match is greater than or equal to the minimum required.*
- Arts Board Request is within range.*

1. Difference

\$0

\$33,561

\$33,561

2. Arts Board Request + Regional Arts Council Percentage

74.38%

75% is the Maximum Arts Board + Regional Arts Council Funding.

3. Applicant Cash Match Percentage

25.62%

25% is the Minimum Applicant Cash Match.

4. Arts Board Request

\$24,961

Arts Board Request must be between \$5,000 and \$75,000.

Project Revenue*Provide an explanation in the text box for every line item with a dollar amount entered, or enter "N/A."***Project Earned Income**

\$2,400

Project Earned Income Percentage

7.15%

Concert fees: average \$250 per concert for 8
concerts = \$2000Workshop fees: average \$50 per workshop for 8
workshops = \$400**Applicant Cash or Other Income**

\$6,200

18.47%

\$5000 Kickstarter campaign (pending) + \$1200
past CD sales cash (committed)**Regional Arts Council Grant(s)**

\$0

0%

N/A

Subtotal Other Income

\$8,600

25.62%

Arts Board Request

\$24,961

74.38%

Subtotal Project Revenue

\$33,561

100.0%

In-kind means the value of goods and services donated to the project that would otherwise be paid for in cash. Artist compensation cannot be listed as in-kind contributions. The in-kind amount will be copied to the expense section of this form.

In-Kind \$0

Total Project Revenue \$33,561

Project Expenses

Provide an explanation in the text box for every line item with a dollar amount entered, or enter "N/A."

Artist Compensation \$18,000

Artist Compensation Percentage 53.63%

Concerts: 2 performers @ \$500 per concert x 8 concerts = \$8000;

Workshops(duo): 2 instructors @ \$250 per workshop x 4 = \$2000;

Workshops(solo): 1 instructor @ \$300 per workshop x 4 = \$1200;

Song Arrangement/Rehearsal Time: 2 musicians @ \$15 per hour x 80 hrs = \$2400;

Transcribing songs 12 blog posts, 1hr each, \$20/hr = \$240;

Blog writing and formatting time for 12 blog posts, 2hrs each, \$20/hr = \$480;

Video editing time: 12 videos, 2hrs each, \$20/hr = \$480;

Digital Library Design and Preparation; 80 hrs @ \$20/hr = \$1600;

Online song submission forum design, administration: 80 hrs @ \$20/hr = \$1600;

Other Project Personnel \$2,400

Other Project Personnel Expenses 7.15%

Professional Video Shooting: 12 song videos x \$200 per video = \$2400

Travel \$6,061

Travel Percentage	18.06%
	4 nights lodging @ \$100/night = \$400;
	In-State Mileage: 2800 miles @ \$0.575/mile = \$1610;
	Per Diem for duo for concert days: 8 days @ \$32 per day = \$256;
	Randy Gosa travel from Milwaukee to St. Paul: 10 trips (including rehearsals/video shoots), 660 miles @ \$.575/mile = \$3795
Space	\$400
Space Expenses Percentage	1.19%
	Rental for some venues (concerts and workshops)
Materials and Supplies	\$600
Materials Percentage	1.79%
	Music notation software upgrade: \$400; Video editing software: \$200
Promotion and Marketing	\$1,000
Marketing Percentage	2.98%
	Graphic Designer for posters: \$500. printing, promo cd mailings, online event posting time: \$500
Planning and Evaluation	\$1,400
Planning and Evaluation Expenses Percentage	4.17%
	Brian Miller project planning time: 20 hours at \$20/hr = \$400;
	Brian Miller evaluation development consultation with Norah Rendell: \$200;
	Brian Miller evaluation development, administration, collection: 40 hours at \$20/hr = \$800;

If purchasing equipment, the total amount requested must be less than \$5,000.

Equipment Purchase \$1,100
Equipment Expense Percentage 3.28%

Projector and Screen for concerts and workshops:
\$1100

Equipment Rental \$0
Equipment Rental Percentage 0%

N/A

In-kind expense will be filled in automatically with the value the applicant entered into the in-kind revenue field.

In-Kind \$0
In-Kind Expense Percentage 0%

Other \$200
Other Expenses Percentage 0.6%

historical photo use permissions for supplemental
slide shows/web design.

Administration \$2,400
Administrative Expenses Percentage 7.15%

Brian Miller project administration: 120 hours at
\$20/hr = \$2400

Total Project Expenses \$33,561
Expenses Total Percentage 100.0%