



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-036

Proposal Title: Steven Marking, Riverlorian in Schools

Project Manager Information

Name: Steven Marking

Organization: Riverlorian Productions LLC

Office Telephone: (612) 293-4067

Email: baritonissimo@yahoo.com

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: I propose to bring my environmental education to 15,000 Students/citizens over a two year period.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$123,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2028

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (G)

Secondary Category: Fish and Wildlife (D)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Statewide

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

This is an opportunity to teach how we established our modern conservation movement, what some of our current issues are, and how to move them forward. The problem is that wetland reclamation of 82 million acres by 1906 continued unabated until this event in 1924. This reclamation has had a serious negative effect on water quality and fish and wildlife decline to this day. Will Dilg and his followers (The Izaak Walton League of America and the National Federation of Women's Clubs) taught our nation to value wetlands as critical habitat.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

The solution is to engage in the process of speaking up for a cause and participating in the democratic process to bring about positive change. Students and citizens will see how joining together with united voices initiates the process of lobbying and passing legislation for their cause. It is also an opportunity to show students how they can participate in conservation efforts, even before they reach voting age.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

Educating today's youth will inspire some to become research scientists, policy makers, forestry managers, park rangers, refuge managers, citizen scientists, and volunteers for environmental NGO's and government agencies.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Movie Screenings

Activity Budget: \$20,000

Activity Description:

Students/Citizens can watch the movie, A Visit From Will Dilg which explains the history of wetland reclamation on the Mississippi River, and explains how a grass roots movement formed a national NGO, the Izaak Walton League, and how that organization partnered with the Women of America (National Federation of Women's Clubs) to pass legislation which formed our first National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The film also has a call to action to speak up for fish and wildlife, to volunteer to help with conservation activities, and to join conservation NGO's.

The movie is available at Kinema.com and any school teacher or administrator can sign up to watch the movie.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
2000 students see the movie	April 30, 2026
5,000 students see the movie	December 31, 2026
9,000 Students see the movie	April 30, 2027

Activity 2: Riverlorian performs A Visit From Will Dilg in schools.

Activity Budget: \$60,000

Activity Description:

Steven Marking goes into schools and universities and does a live stage performance of A Visit From Will Dilg. The movie version is used as a backdrop and the character of Will Dilg is performed live. The 50 minute show is followed by a question and answer session where students learn more about today's environmental issues and what they can do to contribute to positive change. Students can in one session see the history, the present day situation, and hear solution for the future, and be inspired to become actively involved with change, and possibly even choose a career path that is part of positive environmental change.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
10 presentations in schools and universities	December 31, 2026
30 presentations in schools and libraries, community theaters, etc.	May 31, 2027
40 presentations in schools and libraries, community theaters, etc.	December 31, 2027
60 presentations in schools and libraries, community theaters, etc.	June 30, 2028

Activity 3: Travel

Activity Budget: \$17,000

Activity Description:

Travel expenses to go to presentations in schools and community venues in Minnesota

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Travel 1000 miles, 5 overnight stays, 20 meals	December 31, 2026
Travel 3,000 miles, 25 nights lodging, 75 meals	May 31, 2027
travel 4,000 Miles, 50 Nights Lodging, 100 meals	December 31, 2027
travel 6,000 miles, 75 nights lodging, 150 meals	June 30, 2028

Activity 4: Booking/Staff Person

Activity Budget: \$25,000

Activity Description:

Contact schools and community organizations, book performances and screenings, coordinate schedule, travel, hotel stays, to performances.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
book 20 shows, 25 movie screenings	December 31, 2026
Book 40 live shows, 50 movie screenings	May 31, 2027
book 60 shows, 90 movie screenings	December 31, 2027

Activity 5: Printing

Activity Budget: \$1,000

Activity Description:

Tri-fold promotional flyers for the show and movie to be mailed and given out at performances

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete Printing of flyers	July 31, 2026

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

Student and Citizens will be inspired to join non-government organizations such as the Izaak Walton League, Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, or local conservation groups and participate in projects such as Save our Streams, Salt Watch, habitat restoration, invasive species removal, etc. to make positive change throughout their lifetime. Funds for this work will be raised by each individual NGO and by state and federal grants for larger projects.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Steven Marking

Job Title: Riverlorian

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

I travel the Mississippi River and its tributaries, documenting its current state, studying its history, including legend and lore, and I create movies and live presentations to bring the river to an audience. I have documented the full length of the Mississippi River, and created two main projects, Our Mighty Mississippi and A Visit From Will Dilg, and several shorter talks on specific topics, which include: Meet the Mississippi, The Golden Age of Steamboats, 1811 and the New Madrid Earthquakes, The Great flood of 1927, Flowers of the Mississippi, Wildlife on the Mississippi, James Eads and the Engineering of the Mississippi River, The Grand Excursion, Trail of Tears, John James Audubon, Lewis and Clark, 100 Steps to Freedom, Living on the River, Bridges of the Mississippi, The Civil War on the Western Rivers, Logging and Log Rafts on the Mississippi River, The Pearl Button Boom, and Mark Twain. I grew up on the Mississippi River back waters by La Crosse Wisconsin and have been traveling the rivers for 12 years as storyteller and entertainer. My positions with American Cruise Lines are Guest Speaker and Resident Entertainer.

I have a bachelors degree from Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wisconsin and a masters degree from The Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland

Organization: Riverlorian Productions LLC

Organization Description:

Riverlorian Productions LLC combines education and entertainment to enlighten the public about our great American rivers.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Riverlorian/Presenter		travels to and performs presentations, zoom presentation for movie screenings			0%	100		\$80,000
Booking Staff person		books live events and issues contracts, coordinates schedule, assists with screenings.			0%	0.4		\$25,000
							Sub Total	\$105,000
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	50 trips (6,000 miles) 1 person to present at destinations, 150 meals, 75 nights lodging	To bring environmental education to students and communities					\$17,000
							Sub Total	\$17,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Tri-fold pamphlets, Posters	To distribute as public relations materials, posters for library, community events					\$1,000

							Sub Total	\$1,000
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$123,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Total Project Cost: \$123,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [23ccc40f-1e5.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

The PDF describes the specifics and significance of A Visit From Will Dilg. The photos make it easy to visualize the performance vs a film screening....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Financial Capacity Note	973fdea5-737.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Fiscal Sponsorship Letter	db64d205-a17.pdf
Budget Supplements Rate cards	166bdac8-a80.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

Yes

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

Yes, FilmNorth

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

No

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

Yes

Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?

Yes

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:

Rob Schultz from Audubon Upper Mississippi has encouraged me and answered questions, but I completed the application without assistance

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

N/A

