

### AAI to Receive \$10,000 Grant

By Alpine Artisans Inc.

SEELEY LAKE - National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu has approved more than \$30 million in grants as part of the NEA's first major funding announcement for fiscal year 2017. Included in this announcement is a Challenge America grant of \$10,000 to Alpine Artisans, Inc. for the 2017 In the Footsteps of Norman Maclean Festival.

The Challenge America category supports primarily small and mid-sized organizations for projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations—those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics or disability.

“The arts are for all of us, and by supporting organizations such as Alpine Artisans, the National Endowment for the Arts is providing more opportunities for the public to engage with the arts,” said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. “Whether in a theater, a town square, a museum, or a hospital, the arts are everywhere and make our lives richer.”

Alpine Artisans' President Gene Schade said, “We are thrilled that the NEA has selected to support this celebration of the work of Norman Maclean here in Maclean's summertime community of Seeley Lake. Alpine Artisans is in our 25th year of offering a broad menu of art and cultural opportunities to our rural communities in the Seeley, Swan and Blackfoot Valleys. This second Maclean festival gives us the opportunity to bring to our rural area some of the best western authors, Native American speakers, and many of the producers, actors and creative team that brought Maclean's novella, “A River Runs Through It,” to the silver screen.”

The In the Footsteps of Norman Maclean Festival will be held Sept. 8-10, 2017 in Seeley Lake and Missoula, Montana. The theme of this year's Festival is The Story of the Blackfoot.

Over the three days, the festival will focus on the history of the Blackfoot Valley, literature inspired by the Blackfoot River and the process of adapting Maclean's iconic novella, “A River Runs Through It” to the big screen. In addition, this funding enables Alpine Artisans to support the publication of the creative writing journal created by students at Seeley-Swan High School in collaboration with the Missoula Writing Collaborative.

The festival will also feature oral readings of the students' work. SSHS English teacher Lori Messenger and biology teacher Tonya Smith are currently collaborating to create a day of education and service learning alongside the Blackfoot for May 10, 2017. One hundred high school students will investigate river ecology, soils, geology, winter animal adaptations as well as Salish traditional skills. The day will also feature students responding to their experiences through drawing and creative writing.

“We are excited about this opportunity to connect Maclean's novella to their own experience with the river, either from having grown up in its watershed or newly making its acquaintance, for students who have moved here more recently,” said Messenger.

For more information on projects included in the NEA grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](http://arts.gov/news).

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