**Synopsis: The High Sierra Trail (39 min) Directed By Chris Smead**

This exciting documentary bounces back and forth between the modern experience of hiking the High Sierra Trail, and the early 1900’s when the trail was created. Join Chris as he drives his friend John to insanity over 6 days in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Together they have some close calls with lightning, climb the highest mountain in the continental US, and discover the history of the trail brought to life via 3d animations created from historic photos.

**The Trail**

The High Sierra Trail is the lesser known little brother to the John Muir Trail. The 72 mile trail starts in Crescent meadow on the western side of the Sierra Nevada, and ends on top of Mt Whitney, the highest peak in the lower 48 states.

The trail takes most people about a week to complete, and is a great alternative for anyone struggling to find 3 weeks to do the full John Muir Trail.

**The History**

The film is narrated by William C Tweed, a 30 year national park service veteran. He eloquently shares the hidden stories of the trail. From the man who envisioned it’s creation, to the reason behind the summit hut on Mt Whitney, and the story of the Kaweah cult colony. There’s much more to the trail than meets the eye.

**The Team Behind the Film:**

Outmersive Films is a newly formed arts collective founded by Chris Smead. He had previously operated solo, under the name “Chris Is Awesome Productions” when the direction of his hobby was unclear. As things turned more serious and other collaborators began joining in, it became obvious that it needed to be reinvented.

Soon after shooting the film and making the trailer, Chris was approached by Bruce Goodman, a professional colorist who had worked on countless Hollywood films as well as Mile, Mile and A Half. Shortly after, Bill Meadows and Alex Knickerbocker (of Mr Robot, Fast and Furious) reached out and offered their post sound talents. Long time friend Jacen Spector joined the show to save Chris from his notoriously terrible marketing skills, and Emma Massick recently joined to help lead marketing and social media management. Gordon Gurley, an experienced videographer and audio engineer has provided a lot of guidance during the project and will be taking a much more active role for the next project. The Outmersive family is growing and we’re excited to see what we can create together.

**The Soundtrack:**

The High Sierra Trail contains 3 opposing elements. History, adventure, and silly antics. These were brought together seamlessly through the musical score. Octopus Arms, a musical collective formed by longtime friend Damien Wendel created the perfect sonic landscape of gritty retro guitars that excited the history lessons, supported the adventurous times, and complimented the silly moments. Octopusarms.bandcamp.com

**Goals for the film:**

The film is currently seeking distribution. In time the hope is for it to be available via popular online streaming platforms. Until then, it will be submitted to festivals and we anticipate many live screening events.

To stay up to date about how to see the film, follow Outmersive Films on social media, and subscribe to the mailer on www.highsierratrail.com

Official Trailer: **Official Trailer: https://youtu.be/Dnkv1uFZuyI**

**Follow Us:**

Official film website: www.highsierratrail.com

The group behind the film: www.outmersivefilms.com

IMDB page: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8363758/

Social:

Facebook.com/outmersivefilms

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Vimeo.com/outmersivefilms

**Fun facts:**

* During the post sound process, Alex Knickerbocker and Bill Meadows didn’t like the trekking poles sounds recorded by the camera mic. So they brought a pair of trekking poles into the studio and recorded them hitting the ground. These sounds were then inserted into the film.
* To illustrate the level of sonic detail by Bill and Alex, here’s an actual text from Bill to Chris during the post sound process: “Was that a red tailed hawk in the background, or more of a 70’s sounding hawk”.
* The day before the hike, Chris’s 4 year old son accidently shut a heavy door on his bare foot. He had to complete the 72 mile hike with a broken toe. This was left out of the film to avoid encouraging irresponsible behavior, which was a major concern of the NPS during the film permit process.
* Chris used a gimbal stabilizer for many of the shots on the trail. His unfamiliarity with the new device caused him to ruin many important shots. In a move of desperation, select individual frames were exported from the bouncy footage as still photos, cut up in photoshop, and then animated in 3D space. This became the goto “look” for the film.
* Over a dozen shots of Mt Whitney near the end of the film were created from a single panorama photo. It was cut up, animated in 3d space, and then composited with clouds, the sun, and a star timelapse to fit the needs of each scene.

**Initial Crowd Reaction:**

On May 5th, 2018, The High Sierra Trail premiered at the Switchback Showcase in Campbell, CA. It sold out 2 weeks before the event.

Some quotes from people at the event:

“I thought it was absolutely amazing. It’s everything I hoped it would be, it’s everything I thought it would be, I think he’s taking it to the next level” -Mark Veteto, co-founder of Four Feet Up.

“I thought it really captured the essence of the High Sierra Trail, and how you can have an adventure in just a week. I loved it” -Jeff Hester, founder of SocalHiker

“It was beautiful, they did a fantastic job. It moved great, it was funny, and the story was amazing”

-Jason Fitzpatrick, co-director of Mile, Mile and a Half

**Next on the Horizon:**

Planning for the next project has already begun. Teaser: It will be a feature length film about a largely unknown trail, and will feature the backstories behind some well-known faces in the outdoor community. Our goal is to double the quality of the story, the videography, and the sound. The director of video at Stanford University will be joining us on the trip and lending us his 20 years of videography experience.