

THE TRAIL THAT CHANGED ME

Production Journal - Project Two: Multimedia Storytelling

Project Summary

I created a 2-minute multimedia story about my 2017 Pacific Crest Trail thru-hike. The story follows the journey chronologically from the Mexican border through the desert, the Sierra Nevada, and the Cascades to the Canadian border. All photographs, trail video, narration, and location sound came from my own media collection. No stock-only sequence was used.

Media Collection and Dates

Original photographs and videos were recorded during the 2017 Pacific Crest Trail hike on multiple dates. The narration and Inspiring audio mix were created earlier for Module 6. The final media selection, edit, sound mix, revision, and export were completed on August 9, 2026.

Production Log

Date	Work completed and decisions
2017	Captured original photographs, vertical and horizontal phone video, and natural trail sound throughout the desert, Sierra, and Cascades.
Aug. 9, 2026	Organized the media into three geographic acts. Selected the Southern Terminus and Canadian border images as visual bookends.
Aug. 9, 2026	Built a 28-shot picture edit. Used original video for movement and still photographs for scale, reflection, and transitions between locations.
Aug. 9, 2026	Placed the 1:05 Inspiring narration at 0:20. Added original wind, water, fog, and snow ambience before and after it so the finished story reached the required length naturally.
Aug. 9, 2026	Added title, Sierra, Cascades, and Canada cards. Applied short cross dissolves and subtle movement to still images for visual continuity.
Aug. 9, 2026	Reviewed representative frames, corrected title-card layout, rebuilt incomplete intermediate clips, normalized sound levels, and exported the final master.

Editing Decisions

The final structure is geographic rather than strictly event-based: Desert, Sierra, and Cascades. The early desert section uses open views and exposed trail. The Sierra section uses snow traverses, creek crossings, waterfalls, camp, and night photographs to show both risk and beauty. The Cascades section slows down and emphasizes fog, smoke, forest, and snow before the Canadian border reveal.

Most transitions are 0.6-second cross dissolves. Vertical phone clips are centered over a softly blurred version of the same footage rather than placed against black bars. Still photographs use a restrained push-in so they remain active without looking artificial.

Sound Editing

The Inspiring Module 6 mix provides the main narration and music. It begins after a short desert-sound introduction. Original trail audio from wind, rushing water, fog, and snow is mixed underneath the narration at reduced volume and becomes more prominent after the narration ends. The final mix was normalized for consistent playback and faded toward the ending.

Technical Problems and Revisions

One large Cascades clip could not be opened because its movie index was missing, so I omitted it and substituted other original Cascades footage. The source collection also mixed low-resolution phone video, high-resolution photographs, horizontal frames, and vertical frames. I standardized everything to 1920 x 1080 at 30 frames per second. After an interrupted render left several intermediate clips incomplete, I rebuilt and validated those clips before exporting again.

Final Export

Title: The Trail That Changed Me

Running time: 2 minutes, 3.8 seconds

Video: H.264, 1920 x 1080, 30 fps

Audio: AAC, 48 kHz stereo

Final file: the-trail-that-changed-me.mp4

Reflection

The strongest choice was allowing the original location sound to remain part of the story. It gives the photographs context and prevents the piece from becoming only a narrated slideshow. The final border photograph completes the same visual idea introduced at the Southern Terminus: a person standing at a marker, changed by everything that happened between the two points.