Marketing Plan & Annual Report Recap
Fiscal year 2017/2018

Yosemite Mariposa County
Dear Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Partners,

It’s an honor to return to Mariposa County, this time as a resident and the new Executive Director of the Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau (YMCTB).

First, I would like to acknowledge Terry Selk for the excellent job he and his team did leading the tourism marketing and outreach over the past six years. Terry’s strength and reputation in the International Tourism Markets is widely acknowledged, and we plan to continue a relationship with Terry into the future.

Promoting Mariposa County and Yosemite in several roles over the past 20 years provides me with a unique view of tourism in our region today. We will continue to drive efforts both domestically and internationally, carrying on the efforts of our past Tourism Bureau leadership. What’s old, sometimes becomes new again in marketing. Our new opportunity, is once again our own California drive market. Over the coming year, marketing focus will return to Californians. Californians typically avoid peak season travel to Yosemite. Larger Boomer segments of the California population are retiring, and have the income to travel mid-week, off-season and enjoy repeat visits to our area. Families are primary visitors on weekends, and parents today are more mature and affluent than ever before. Yosemite is a natural, safe environment, and high on the list of places parents want to visit with children to “unplug”.

We will also be placing more emphasis on leveraging Public Relations, Editorial, Newsletters and Social Media in the coming year. These areas of marketing have the most credibility with consumers and a lower cost in marketing investment.

The Ferguson Fire has been a financial hardship for our community. News of the fire internationally and domestically has left Mariposa County and Yosemite visitors “thinking” our region was devastated. Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism has been working hard to rectify that incorrect perception, and we’ll continue to work on returning county visitation to normal peak-season & growing off-season levels.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Letter from Jonathan Farrington, Executive Director
Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau

Find us @YosemiteNation
MISSION STATEMENT
The Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau is the branding, sales, and marketing agency responsible for positioning Yosemite Mariposa County as the destination of choice for leisure and group business for the economic benefit of the region.

KEY STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
• Promote off season overnight visitation
• Educate customers and constituents
• Operate a fiscally sound and effective business
• Foster positive relationships with key stakeholders and partners

TBID STATEMENT
There are no proposed changes to the boundaries or assessed business. The district will continue to include lodging businesses, existing and in the future, available for public occupancy within the boundaries of the County of Mariposa, as shown.
**DOMESTIC CAMPAIGN**
The 2017/2018 campaign included publications such as Bay Area News Group, San Francisco Chronicle, Via Magazine, Westways Magazine, and Sunset Magazine, as well as the streaming music service Pandora and Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART). The campaign also included co-operative advertising opportunities to bring affordable advertising options to our lodging partners. Strategy for the print media campaign included penetrating the San Francisco, Sacramento, and Los Angeles markets through some of the following publications:

**2017-2018 HIGHLIGHTS**

**Bay Area News Group (BANG)**
• Eat, Drink, Play Sunday Feature in the Contra Costa Times, Oakland Tribune and San Jose Mercury News
• Print Campaign reached of 5.7 Million
• eBlasts received 33,331 opens and nearly 3,500 clicks to the Yosemite.com

**San Francisco Chronicle**
• Three (3) half-page ads – one in the special Gold Country Travel Section, the other two were in the main news section
• Ads resulted in 2,034,100 impressions

**Via Magazine**
• Three (3) full-page print ads were run in the Discover Sections inserted into 500,000 copies of the magazine and sent to readers in the Greater Bay Area and Sacramento regions
• Ads resulted in 3,300,000 impressions
• E-newsletter ad in Via’s December e-newsletter resulted in 185,473 opens and 555 clicks to Yosemite.com

**Westways Magazine**
• Two (2) full-page print ads were on the Discover Sections inserted into 500,000 copies of the magazine and sent to readers in Southern California
• Ads resulted in 2,200,000 impressions
**SUNSET MAGAZINE**
- Two full-page print ads for December 2017 and January 2018 issues (special 120th anniversary editions) reached 4.15 Million readers in Northern California.

**PANDORA**
Ads and desktop website skin were targeted to San Francisco, Fresno and Orange County specifically, resulting in:
- 5,418,226 digital impressions
- 560,012 reach
- 5,931 clicks

**BART**
- Offline media resulted in 5.4 million impressions
- Mobile targeting produced 1 million digital impressions and 4,546 clicks

**DIGITAL ADVERTISING**
- 24,204,815 impressions
- 7,173 clicks
- 3,280 lodging conversions (clicks to lodging on Yosemite.com)

**INCREMENTAL LODGING SUPPORT CAMPAIGN**
- 333,632 reach
- 1 million impressions
- 2,157 trackable conversions (clicks to lodging on Yosemite.com)
*This campaign was part of a quick turnaround effort to address lodging partner concerns of low numbers in late spring

**CAMPAIGN TOTALS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR OVERVIEW**

**Digital Efforts**
- Total Digital Impressions: 46,988,915 (46+ Million)
- Total Clicks: 69,761

**Print and Offline Media**
- Total impressions: 7.6 Million

**Added Value Totals for the Year**
- San Francisco Chronicle: $43,784
- Sunset Magazine: $188,006
- Via Magazine: $4,860
- Total Added Value: $236,650
Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau will continue to deploy a robust communications strategy in 2018-2019 reaching our targeted audiences through social media, digital, print collateral, public relations, and e-communications. We will increase efforts with e-mail newsletters as a more cost effective way to reach our target audience, as well as social media content. It should be noted that the Ferguson Fire in July/August 2018 had a significant impact on funding.

We will continue to focus efforts on the Yosemite.com website leveraging the massive organic reach of the website url with more authentic content and increased spend on search engine marketing (SEM) in order to gain the greatest market share possible and drive booking to our lodging partners and attractions throughout Mariposa County.

WEBSITE
The Yosemite.com website serves all Mariposa County lodging, dining and attraction partners by offering free listings and information about activities and events throughout the county. It is a crucial tool of information sharing for visitors during crisis situations such as road closures, rock falls and fires.

Highlights July 2017- June 2018

• 1,843,954 in Total User Sessions
  (31% increase compared to last year)

• 6,351,599 Total Page Views
  (49% increase compared to last year)

• Top Ranked Page: Lodging (aside from the Homepage)
Site Performance

Our goal for increased Year Over Year (YOY) growth prior to the Ferguson Fire was at least 10% sitewide. Knowing how the fire impacted traffic, we have refocused efforts and believe that we need to prioritize lodging pages for the coming months. There is a significant amount of opportunity with lodging and we feel that we can grow traffic to lodging pages around 30% (compared to the last 5 months) if we turn our focus there. This could bring us close to last year’s numbers.

July 1, 2018- November 30, 2018 traffic to the site is up 9% but lodging partner referrals are down 45%. While we continue to bring in net new traffic, increasing partner referrals is clearly a priority. In August 2018, partner referrals were down 72% YOY due to the Ferguson Fire but were only down 38% YOY in November 2018. So, we are closing the gap but are still seeing referrals significantly lower than last year. If we continue focusing efforts on lodging referrals, we believe we can close this gap by March or April of 2019.

Although overall site traffic is up 9%, we want to continue to increase net new traffic. This traffic will come from us building out more content around Mariposa, things to do in the Sierra in general and tactics from the recent content audit / gap analysis findings. Content creation will focus on keywords we want to rank highly for, as well as broader content net to bring in first time visitors to the area.

July 1, 2018- November 30, 2018 organic traffic was up 7% year over year, but lodging partner referrals were down 50% due to the fire. Without the fire, our goal was to increase partner referrals which we were estimating closer to 167k referrals for the full year.
Noble Studios, our digital agency, manages many DMO sites and sees cost per clicks in SEM range anywhere from $0.75 to $20. It depends on what the DMO is tracking as a conversion. For most sites Noble manages, they track: partner referrals, OTA clicks, newsletter signups, and visitor guide signups/downloads. The average industry standard for conversion is around $10 (give or take 20%). Our July 2017–June 2018 average cost per click was $0.26 and average cost per conversion was $1.24, which is extremely effective for industry standards.

With integrated search (SEO+SEM) we ensure that our competitors are not stealing our SEM traffic, but we also see better results for SEO. SEO is the foundation for good SEM and when you have each set up properly, you have a better chance of getting high-quality traffic and improving conversion rates. Once you have an SEO-friendly site and sponsored ads that are targeted properly using the right keywords, you have more chance of showing up at the top of paid searches. But you have to have your SEO in place in order for Google to see you as a credible website. For reference: (www.digitalmarketininstitute.com)

**Yosemite.com**

Why we still need to focus efforts on SEM even though we have the domain name Yosemite.com:
- Delivers significant results in terms of Click Through Rate, Cost Per Click, etc... within SEM campaigns.
- If the user searches for any word in the domain name, the word or words will get highlighted in the domain name drawing more attention to those ads.
- The presence of keywords being searched in the domain name and the increased CTR leads to a better Average Quality Score in ranking algorithms. (Quality score plays a role in ad rank, which determines how many impressions and clicks the ad will receive).
- Strengthens the brand in the eyes of the customer.
- URLs are a minor ranking factor search engines use when determining a page or resource’s relevance to a search query. While they do give weight to the authority of the overall domain itself, keyword use in a URL can also act as a ranking factor.
**Ecommunications**
The monthly Enewsletter reaches an average of 31,000 subscribers with travel tips, events, and more for travelers headed to Mariposa County. It consistently outperforms industry standards for open and click rates. In the coming year, subscriptions to the Enewsletter will be utilized more as a call-to-action in advertising efforts and seasonal social media campaigns to grow the current list of subscribers.

| Avg Opens | 5,116 |
| Avg Clicks | 667 |

**Public Relations**
In 2018-2019, we plan to strengthen our Public Relations strategy, gaining coverage through domestic and international media outlets, leveraging partnerships, and gaining more presence through traditional journalists and non-traditional influencers. We continue to learn from past experiences and adapt our crisis response strategy, while always anticipating the next challenge. As of 11/15/18, the Tourism Bureau is interviewing for retained Public Relations representation.

**2017-2018 Highlights:**
- Yosemite Mariposa County hosted 12 media familiarization tours (FAMS).
- Provided a local Mariposa delegate to attend Tourism Expo Japan.
- Participated in a Co-op marketing effort with Visit California during the of 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. Components included film shoot for Korean reality show Battle Trip, newsletters and social media. Overall impressions:
  - Impression: over 56MIL
  - Reach: over 55MIL
  - Engagement: 475K
  - AD Value: over $7.7MIL
Attended the Media Marketplace at the International Pow Wow (IPW) regarding new product developments in Mariposa County (AutoCamp, SkyDive Yosemite, new cabins at Tenaya Lodge,) to connect with dozens of media representatives from around the world.

In 2018-2019, YMCTB will continue to welcome the opportunity to host important travel trade and media representatives but will narrow the window of focus to October-April as a result of the growing occupancy in the shoulder months of September and May. Staff will attend selected exhibitions and events that provide cost-effective face-to-face engagement with key media representatives.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Yosemite Mariposa maintains several platforms including Facebook and Instagram. Social media is an opportunity for increased engagement in 2018/2019 and one area of experimentation will include using LinkedIn for business to business and conference marketing.

**FACEBOOK**

**Total Fans – 92.8k**

**INSTAGRAM – 20k Followers**

**TWITTER – 48.6k Followers**

**PINTEREST – 1.6k Followers**

*LOCAL YMCTB FACEBOOK PAGE - 1,295 FANS*
Trade

Trade and Consumer Initiatives

Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau maintains a strong presence in the travel industry by both working with trade professionals (commercial tour operators and travel agents) and by direct interaction with consumers. Whether staff are attending a trade or consumer travel show or hosting a group of travel professionals, these interactions help to educate our potential visitors on four-season availability, property offerings, access and attractions.

Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau hosted several trade familiarization tours (FAMS) for travel agents and tour operators to educate them as to Mariposa County’s tourism attributes, with a specific emphasis on the off-season. In fact, we have adopted a policy to not host any travel writer or trade representative during key peak season periods. This year, we hosted a total of 100 clients representing more than ten countries. This resulted in a direct spend of $27,742.36 to Mariposa lodging, dining and attractions.

Consumer Trade Shows

Staff participated in two major consumer trade shows, the Bay Area Travel and Adventure Show in Santa Clara and the LA Travel and Adventure show in Los Angeles. At these events we partnered with the surrounding regions; Madera, Mammoth, to create a “Yosemite Experience Pavilion” that consisted of ten booths and a virtual reality attraction.

Travel Trade Shows

In addition to hosting trade sellers in the destination, staff also engages with them at exhibitions during scheduled business appointments.

IPW – International POW WOW

U.S. Travel Association’s IPW is the travel industry’s premier international marketplace and the largest travel trade business exchange on US soil. Buyer attendees represent independent, group, MICE/incentive and special interests from over 70 countries. Three days of intense pre-scheduled 15-minute appointments provide the platform for more than $4.7 billion in future travel to be negotiated between some 1,000 U.S. travel organizations from every region of the USA and more than 1,300 buyers.
INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND MEDIA

Approximately 25% of Yosemite’s annual gate represents travel from foreign countries. In an effort to make sure Mariposa County obtains its fair share of overnight visitors from this valued market segment (stay longer, spend more money), the Tourism Bureau retains representation services in primary core markets of Australia, France, Germany, Scandinavia and the United Kingdom under the partnership umbrella of the Visit California Tourism office. Each agency serves as Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau’s in-market voice to the media, travel trade and consumers and executes a varied scope of work in the respective market.

Some of the key highlights achieved by these offices in 2017-2018 include:

AUSTRALIA

• GoPro Social Media Campaign
  Four GoPro advocates from Australia travelled to Yosemite to create content for Yosemite Tourism and GoPro Australia and New Zealand social media channels. 53 advocate posts have received a combined engagement of 89.3k and an estimated reach of 2.6 million. Four native post have received a combined 8.3k and a reach of 106k.

• Expedia Campaign
  This campaign is the first time YMCTB has engaged an OTA in the Australian market. Typically, we have been restricted by the cost of campaigns with OTAs, but were able to proceed in this instance. Through this campaign, targeted highly relevant consumers who were actively looking for travel to the US, and specifically California, through display advertising and retargeting, supported by strong content and social media.

KOREA

Visit California South Korea 2018 Olympics Project

TV Production Project
Battle Trip TV Shoot
Air Date: February 17 & 23
Running Time: 120 mins
Destinations Covered: Northern California (San Francisco, Napa Valley, Yosemite Mariposa), Southern California (LA, Huntington Beach, Greater Palms Springs)
In line with the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, Visit California organized a TV shoot project with the nation’s most popular travel reality show called “Battle Trip” to position California as a year-round outdoor destination and to show two different ways of enjoying winter in both Northern and Southern California.

For the shoot, two A-list male celebrities visited Northern California to engage in cool weather activities visiting San Francisco, Napa and Yosemite whereas two A-list female celebrities visited Southern California including Los Angeles, Palm Springs and Huntington Beach to experience various activities that can be done in warm weather. The two regions “battled” against each other in front of an audience of 100 people to showcase both itineraries.

Audience Size: over 31M
AD Value: over 2.5M

GERMANY
YMCTB participated in a co-op marketing campaign with German tour company America Unlimited. The campaign consisted on lighted city posters, microsite and social media elements.

SCANDINAVIA
Scandinavian Sales Days
•Three travel shows in three days: Swanson’s (B2C) in Sweden, FDM (B2C) in Copenhagen, Denmark and USA Travel Show (B2B) in Copenhagen, Denmark.
•5,000 consumers and 250 travel industry leaders, agents and media participated in the events.
•Brand USA co-hosted USA Travel Show underlining the importance of the Scandinavian market to USA.
•U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark, Ms. Carla Sands, participated as key-note speaker at the opening of USA Travel Show 2018.

UNITED KINGDOM
•UK Journalist wrote a great article in Psychologies Magazine about winter in Mariposa County.

In 2017-2018, the YMCTB will continue to retain the current international marketing efforts through the established offices and plan to carry out selective consumer direct cooperative marketing campaigns with key tour operators and media outlets, which have not yet been defined.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LOCAL EVENT SUPPORT

Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau is proud to support local events through a combination of cash donations, in-kind marketing support and advertising. In 2018-2019 our plans to support existing and new events will be primarily based on their ability to attract overnight visitors in the off season.

YMCTB provided support for the following events and projects:

- Butterfly Mural
- Casa
- Civil War Days
- Coyote Fest
- Detwiler Fundraising Event
- Go West Festival
- Las Mariposas Civil War Days
- Made in Mariposa
- Mariposa Adopt a Highway
- Mariposa Butterfly Festival
- Mariposa Clean Sweep
- Mariposa Downtown Décor
- Mariposa Facelift with Americorps
- Mariposa Yosemite Hot Rod and Custom Car Show
- Music on the Green Summer Concert Series
- Rotary Art & Wine Festival
- Sausage & Suds
- Taste of Mariposa
- Trans Valley Youth Football League Super Bowl

Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau staff provide guidance on several boards and committees to support a wide range of initiatives locally as well as regionally, to bring opportunity and visibility to Yosemite Mariposa County.

AFFILIATED COMMITTEES

- Citizens Advisory Committee for the Transit Feasibility Study (TAC)
- DMA West (Destination Marketing Association)
- Gold County Visitors Association
- Golden Chain Highway revitalization committee
- High Sierra Visitors Council
- Las Mariposas Revitalization & heritage Committee
- Made in Mariposa
- Main Street Mariposa
- Mariposa Chamber of Commerce
- Visit CA Branding/Content Committee
- Visit CA Rural Tourism Marketing Committee
- YARTS Advisory Committee
- Yosemite Gateway Partners

Adopt a Highway
2017/2018 Board of Directors

Kevin Shelton, Board Chair
Yosemite Resorts
Barbara Robinson, Board Secretary
Indian Peak Ranch Mountain Top Hideaway
Douglas Shaw, Board Treasurer
Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort
Jeff Bray, Board Treasurer
Aramark/Yosemite Hospitality
Donna Nassar, Board Member
Bed & Breakfast Association
Paul Ratchford, Board Member
Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite
Sara Zahn, Board Member
Hotel Jeffery
MaryAnn Huff, Board Member
Northern Mariposa County
Dane Carlson, Board Member
Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce
Christian Mueller
The Redwoods at Yosemite

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Scott Gediman
Yosemite National Park
Candy O’Donel
Community Member

Marketing Committee

Scott Gediman
Yosemite National Park
Jeff Bray
Aramark/Yosemite Hospitality
Kathrin Poetter
Community Member
Yuli Gostev
The Redwoods at Yosemite
Victoria Imrie
Yosemite Ziplines and Adventure Ranch
Donna Nassar
Bed & Breakfast Association
Douglas Shaw
Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort
Kevin Shelton
Yosemite Resorts

2017/2018 Expenses

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Board Liaison

Merlin Jones
Mariposa County
Board Supervisor, District IV
Kevin Cann
Mariposa County
Board Supervisor, District II

Staff

Terry Selk
Executive Director
Noel Morrison
Communications Manager
Laura Wattles
Communications Manager
Julie Hadzega
Travel Trade & Operations Manager
Carrie Kidwell
Administrative Assistant
2018/2019 Board of Directors

Kevin Shelton, Board Chair
Yosemite Resorts

Christian Mueller, Board Vice Chair
The Redwoods at Yosemite

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Yosemite Ziplines and Adventure Ranch

MaryAnn Huff, Board Member
Northern Mariposa County

2018/2019 Leadership

Advisory Council

Scott Gediman
Yosemite National Park

Candy O’Donel
Community Member

Marketing Committee

Scott Gediman
Yosemite National Park

Kim Brisack
Coulter Cafe & Big Table Ranch

Lisa Cesaro
Aramark/Yosemite Hospitality

Jeff Bray
Aramark/Yosemite Hospitality

Kathrin Poetter
Community Member

Yuli Gostev
The Redwoods at Yosemite

Victoria Imrie
Yosemite Ziplines and Adventure Ranch

Donna Nassar
Bed & Breakfast Association

Douglas Shaw
Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort

Kevin Shelton
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Marshall Long
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