



# ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year

2014-2015

Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau (YMCTB) is the official destination marketing organization (DMO) for the County of Mariposa. Its function is to manage the branding, sales and marketing efforts for the territory to attract leisure and group overnight stays. The primary focus is to generate room nights during the off-season.

YMCTB is responsible for the creation and implementation of advertising, marketing and promotions across a broad range of media, including television, radio, social media, online, print, event support, international activities and media journalistic engagements.

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# MISSION STATEMENT

The YMCTB 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

- Stimulate economic impact for Mariposa County
- Promote off season overnight visitation
- Educate customers and constituents
- Operate a fiscally sound and effective business
- Foster positive relationships with key stakeholders and partners



## Letter from Terry Selk " Executive Director " Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau

Dear Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Partners:

Reflecting on the past year, it was truly one of exciting transitions and changes. We entered into a partnership with a new AD agency, Augustineldeas, introduced a fresh brand concept, and expanded initiatives to give more options to our constituents.

Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), which constitutes 48% of Mariposa County's general fund, increased by more than 14% in 2014/2015 as a result of strong year-round visitation - a new record!

We met with regional and international journalists generating story leads for the region and hosted travel sellers from around the world providing education on how to promote Mariposa County.

Our public relations efforts this past year included a proactive approach for the Ferguson Project, as well as crisis response for the Dog Rock and El Portal Fires.

Our two websites, YosemiteExperience.com and Yosemite.com generated more than 2 million combined page views. YosemiteExperience.com alone drove more than 34,000 direct booking clicks to lodging partner websites.

With nearly 53% of Mariposa County's employment and earnings coming from tourism, it's more important than ever to ensure the health of this vital sector. We are grateful to our partners for their support and consider it a privilege to represent our extraordinary area to potential visitors and travel industry professionals world-wide.

We thank you for the opportunity to serve our partners and look forward to even more successful years to come.

Sincerely,



Terry Selk  
Executive Director, Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau

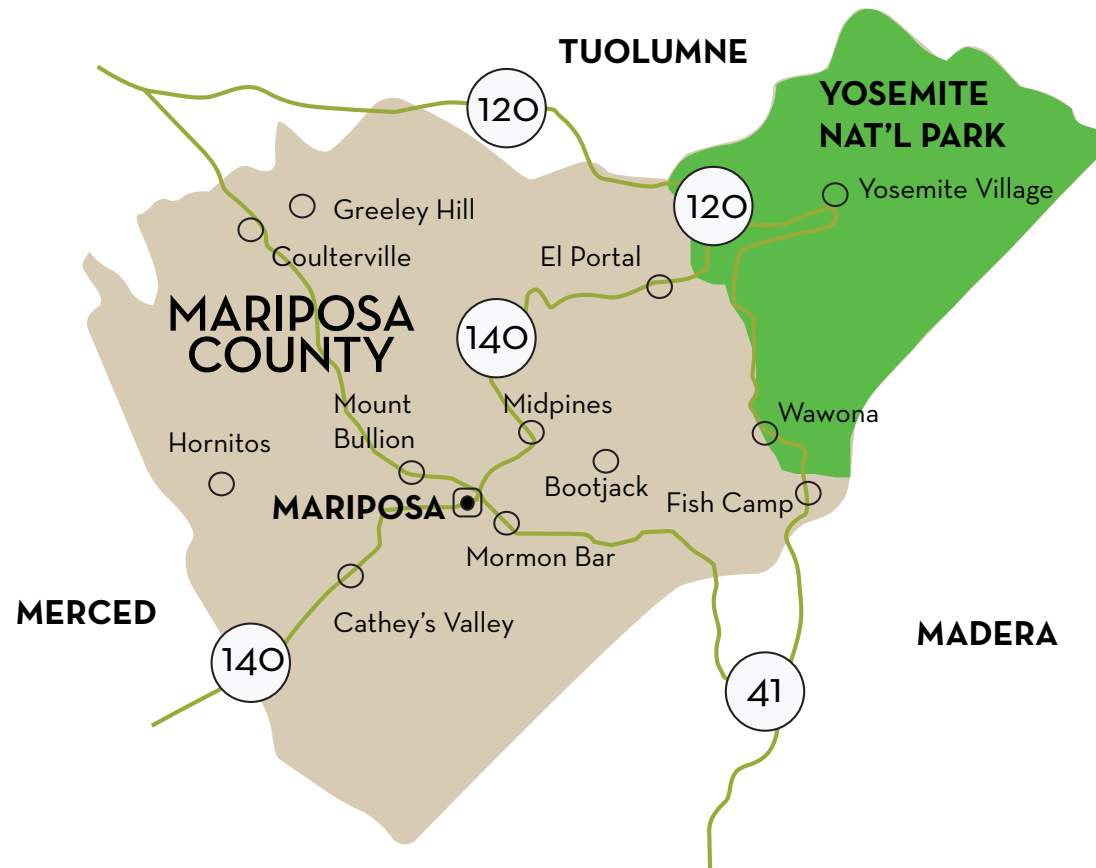
find me @: Yosemite Nation





# TBID STATEMENT

There are no proposed changes to the boundaries or assessed businesses. The district will continue to include lodging businesses, existing and future, available for public occupancy within the boundaries of the County of Mariposa, as shown below.



TRADITIONAL PRINT AND DIGITAL

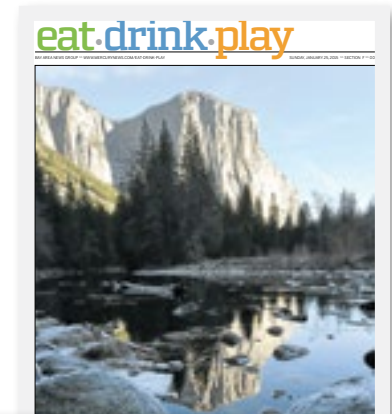
# ADVERTISING

**PRINT HIGHLIGHTS** The 2014/2015 print campaign included publications such as SF Gate, Bay Area News Group, Sactown Magazine and more.



## BAY AREA NEWS GROUP (BANG) EAT, DRINK, PLAY, SUNDAY FEATURE

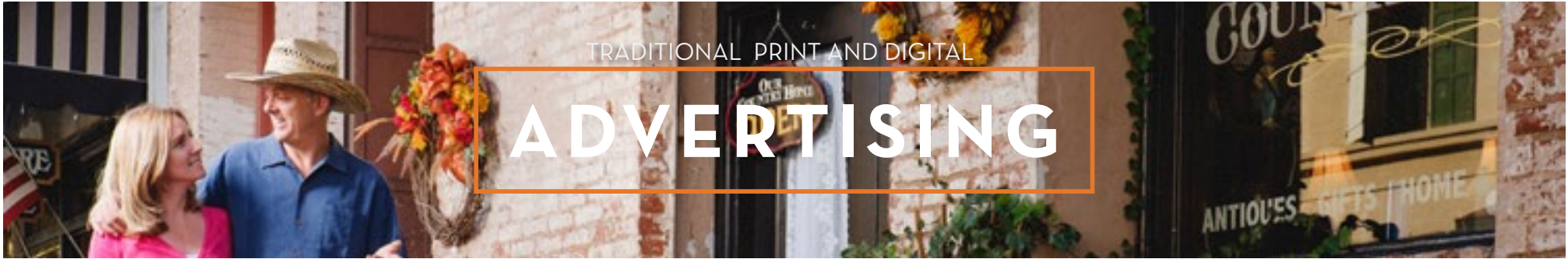
- 11 Pages of editorial
- Over 1.4 million impressions
- Geographic coverage - Greater San Francisco Bay Area
- Extended coverage with use of stories on cbs.com & SFGate
- Cost of advertising within section for YMCTB at \$5,000 commitment: .0035 cpm (Cost per Thousand)
- Average cost per partner at average \$560 commitment: .0004 cpm



## SF GATE WEEKEND WARRIOR CAMPAIGN

- 100% share of voice on all stories relating to the outdoors, travel, hiking, biking, etc.
- More than 3 million impressions
- Additional bonus values of more than \$4,500





## DIGITAL & PRINT HIGHLIGHTS

Digital advertising provides an unmatched opportunity to drive direct online bookings and target our audience.

The strategy for the print media campaign included penetrating the San Francisco, Sacramento, and Los Angeles markets through these different platforms:

- Quantcast
- Search & Display
- SF Gate
- Weekend Sherpa
- BANG Newspapers
- Email Blasts
- SF Chronicle Travel Section
- KCBS Radio

## RESULTS INCLUDED:

- 65% increase in overall audience sessions from November to December
- 74% increase in users from November to December
- Added value editorial during winter campaign, which was equivalent to over \$15,000 in paid media buys
- 10% of the total Fall/Winter budget was in bonus media

### Fall/Winter Campaign

**17,127,339** Impressions Delivered  
37,007 clicks  
CTR. 22% (Click Through Rate)  
*Compared to 0.09% industry standard*

### Spring Campaign

**17,034,134** Impressions Delivered  
23,895 clicks  
CTR .14% (Click Through Rate)  
*Compared to 0.09% industry standard*

*Results from website traffic [yosemiteexperience.com](http://yosemiteexperience.com)*



CO-OP PROGRAMS

# ADVERTISING

## CO-OP PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The co-op programs provide lower cost advertisement opportunities to our partners which attracted all levels of participants:



### Some of the participating partners:

- Balanced Rock
- Delaware North Companies (DNC)
- Casto Oaks Winery
- Bett's Gold Coin
- Native Earth
- The Redwoods in Yosemite
- Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite
- Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort
- Yosemite Conservancy
- Yosemite West Lodging
- Yosemite Scenic Wonders Vacation Homes
- Yosemite West Vacation Homes
- Yosemite Ziplines and Adventure Ranch



Providing For Yosemite's Future





## CONSUMER TRADESHOWS

The YMCTB participates in two major consumer trade shows per year: The Los Angeles Travel and Adventure Show in Long Beach, and The Bay Area Travel and Adventure Show in Santa Clara.

### Each show is attended by more than 15,000 people.

The “Yosemite Experience Pavilion” spans over ten booths and includes a rock-climbing wall in the center. The pavilion consists of partners from Madera, Mammoth, Mono, Tuolumne counties as well as Delaware North and Sequoia Kings Canyon. The YMCTB booth is located front and center at the entrance to each show and has been named winner of “Best in Show” for four consecutive years.



## TRAVEL TRADESHOWS

YMCTB participates in several “travel trade” shows each year such as Go West Summit and IPW (International Pow Wow). These shows allow us to meet one-on-one with Tour Operators, Travel Agents and Journalists from United States and the world. We also attend tourism marketing and technology conferences to keep up with ever changing trends in the industry.



*“Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau is the best contributor to our businesses and community that I have seen in my 28 years in Mariposa County. From DAY ONE you have promoted our growth and given us new and stronger revenue streams.”*

*-Donna Davis, General Manager, The Redwoods in Yosemite*







The YMCTB retains representation services in the core markets of Australia, France, Germany, Scandinavia and the UK under the partnership umbrella of the California Tourism office (Visit California). Each agency serves as the YMCTB's in-market voice to the media, travel trade and consumer. Primary activities include pitching story ideas, facilitating media visits to the area, conducting training sessions with frontline travel agents, presenting itinerary and product ideas to tour operators, and supporting consumer-direct promotions with partners such as airlines, tour operators and consumer products.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

### Familiarization (FAM) tour visitation from all markets

-  **Australia:** Highlighted in several prominent consumer campaigns including Qantas Holidays, Travel Inspirations, Flightcentre and others.
-  **France:** Launched a French language website and Facebook page prominently featuring the Yosemite/Mariposa County area as part of a broader High Sierra region promotional effort.
-  **Germany:** Partnered with a major tour operator for high visibility in a seasonal selling campaign, *48 Hours In*, which garnered a 12% increase in room night bookings for Mariposa County properties.
-  **Scandinavia:** Carried out extensive public relations and media efforts garnering in excess of \$348,300 in media value.
-  **United Kingdom:** Partnered with a tour operator for a seasonal campaign that generated approximately \$97,000 in room night revenue and local spending. Partnered with Nissan in a nationwide film promotion featuring *Valley Uprising* with a total reach in excess of 90,000 viewers with 10 million impressions and media value in excess of \$500,000. An approximate incremental booking value of \$50,000 was realized.
-  **YMCTB accommodated 103 international & domestic travel agents and journalists in Mariposa County.**

*In addition to the direct in-market activities from our own offices, Yosemite/Mariposa County was the benefactor of several programs sponsored by Visit CA and Brand USA, the nation's tourism marketing program.*

# COMMUNICATIONS

Potential visitors make their trip-planning decisions based on information from many sources – advertisements, web research, referrals from friends and family, and more. Wherever they go to plan their trips we want to be there. In 2014/2015 we executed a robust communications plan to engage visitors across multiple communications channels.

- HIGHLIGHTS:**
- **306,351** Total User Sessions
  - Increase of 8.66%
  - 765,863 Total Page Views
  - 34,000 Direct Booking Clicks to Lodging Partners

YosemiteExperience.com  
*Compared to last year*

- HIGHLIGHTS:**
- **498,103** Total User Sessions
  - Increase of 30%
  - 1,452,044 Page Views

Yosemite.com  
*Compared to last year*

## WEBSITES

YosemiteExperience.com is the primary website for Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau. It serves all lodging partners by offering free listings and information about activities and events throughout the county. In addition it serves as a crucial tool in information sharing for visitors during crisis situations such as road closures.

**Yosemite.com remains one of the top ranked Google sites for Yosemite-related searches. The website is open to advertisers from the entire Yosemite region, and provides a valuable platform for Mariposa County constituents at a discounted rate.**



**Total combined traffic was more than 2 million page views**



# SOCIAL MEDIA

## HIGHLIGHTS

Social media and E-Newsletters reach out to our audiences and build engagement over time, encouraging sharing, as well as first time and repeat visitation.



**84,878** likes on Yosemite Nation



**52,000+** followers on Twitter



**3,630** followers on Instagram



**1,000+** followers on Pinterest



## E-NEWSLETTER

The E-newsletter is sent every month to an organic subscriber list of 20,000. We promote county-wide events, deals and provide seasonal updates to encourage repeat visitation.

Open rate: 24% (industry average 20%)

Click rate 4% (industry average 1.7%)





# EVENTS

We are proud to support local events through a combination of direct funding for promotions, in-kind marketing and advertising opportunities, as well as promotion on our social media channels, public relations efforts, and website.

## SUPPORT FOR LOCAL EVENTS

- Art & Wine Festival
- Blazin Hog
- Bracebridge Dinner at The Ahwahnee
- Butterfly Festival
- Candy Cane Run
- Chef's Holidays at The Ahwahnee
- Civil War Reenactment
- CoyoteFest
- Earth Day at Yosemite
- John Muir Festival
- Mariposa County Fair
- Mariposa Evenings at the Arts Park
- Yosemite/Mariposa Hot Rod & Car Show
- Pioneer Wagon Train
- Sausages N Suds
- Songwriting Retreat
- Storytelling Festival
- Sustainability Conference
- Vintner's Holidays at The Ahwahnee
- Wellness Retreat at Tenaya Lodge
- Yoga Jambalaya
- Yosemite Music Festival





**A variety of resources were developed in 2014/2015 to assist visitors planning their trips to Yosemite Mariposa County and provide valuable information to constituents, as well as to serve as a resource to our partners.**

## TOWN MAP

A redesigned town map was developed to better serve visitors, and was distributed free of charge to area lodging partners and merchants.



## TRAVEL PLANNER

This 64-page printed travel planner is also available on our website for easy download. The travel planner provides in-depth information on Mariposa County and Yosemite. The travel planner has been distributed to international offices and tour and trade events.



## MINI-PLANNER

The mini-planner is a six-page brochure that is available for distribution to high volume outlets such as trade and tour shows as well as regional visitor centers, such as those in Los Angeles and San Francisco.



*“Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau has been integral to our outreach efforts. As a small non-profit with a negligible marketing budget, we rely heavily on YMCTB to help extend our reach. From representing us at travel shows to featuring us in their newsletter, we have noticed a visible bump in the programs they aid us in promoting. We trust representatives from YMCTB carry our message, given their high level of professionalism and keen sense of networking. We are grateful for the amplification that YMCTB provides to our programs.”*

*Adonia Ripple, General Manager Yosemite Operations  
Yosemite Conservancy*





## MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

**Over the 2014/2015 fiscal year, our efforts generated more than 96,400,000 earned media impressions.**

From coordinating individual press trips to ongoing proactive media relations capitalizing on events and timely news hooks, Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau successfully executed an effective public relations campaign producing strong results for the year. Our team built a solid foundation of relationships with targeted media, supporting Yosemite/Mariposa County as a strong player in the travel industry. This strategic approach has enabled the team to meet goals in raising awareness about Yosemite/Mariposa County key messaging, such as four season accessibility, lodging and Mariposa County as a whole. Our team hosted 9 international and domestic travel journalists in 2014/2015 generating broad coverage.



## CRISIS RESPONSE

We are consistently highlighting the natural beauty and accessibility of our destination, but occasionally natural disasters and other crisis situations call for an immediate and coordinated response. When situations such as the Dog Rock or El Portal fires close down our major roadways, our public relations efforts help keep regional and even international media informed so that impacts to visitation are mitigated. As work was planned for the Ferguson Project, our proactive efforts ensured that visitors and the local community were aware of the facts about the project as the development was underway.







COMMUNITY

# ENGAGEMENT

## OVERVIEW

### NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK

YMCTB joined destinations nationwide in celebrating National Travel and Tourism Week spreading the word about “The economic impact on Mariposa County”.

### MARIPOSA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

- MultiMedia - As part of a career building program, YMCTB staff engaged the MCHS multimedia students on a project to produce a sample tourism video.
- MCHS Band - Sponsored trip to Washington, DC.

### UPPER MERCED WATERSHED COUNCIL

The drought is a serious issue affecting all aspects of our economy. In an effort to help address drought concerns, Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau partnered with the Upper Merced River Watershed Council on a project to provide free drought information materials to all hotels, including in-room hotel tent cards.

### BOARD PARTNERSHIPS

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

- Yosemite Gateway Partners
- Upper Merced River Watershed Council
- Citizens Advisory Committee for the Transit feasibility Study
- High Sierra Visitors Council
- YARTS Advisory Committee
- Gold Country Visitors Association
- Visit CA Rural Tourism Marketing Committee
- Visit CA Branding/Content Committee
- SYTA (Youth Foundation)
- Yosemite Transportation Coordination Committee



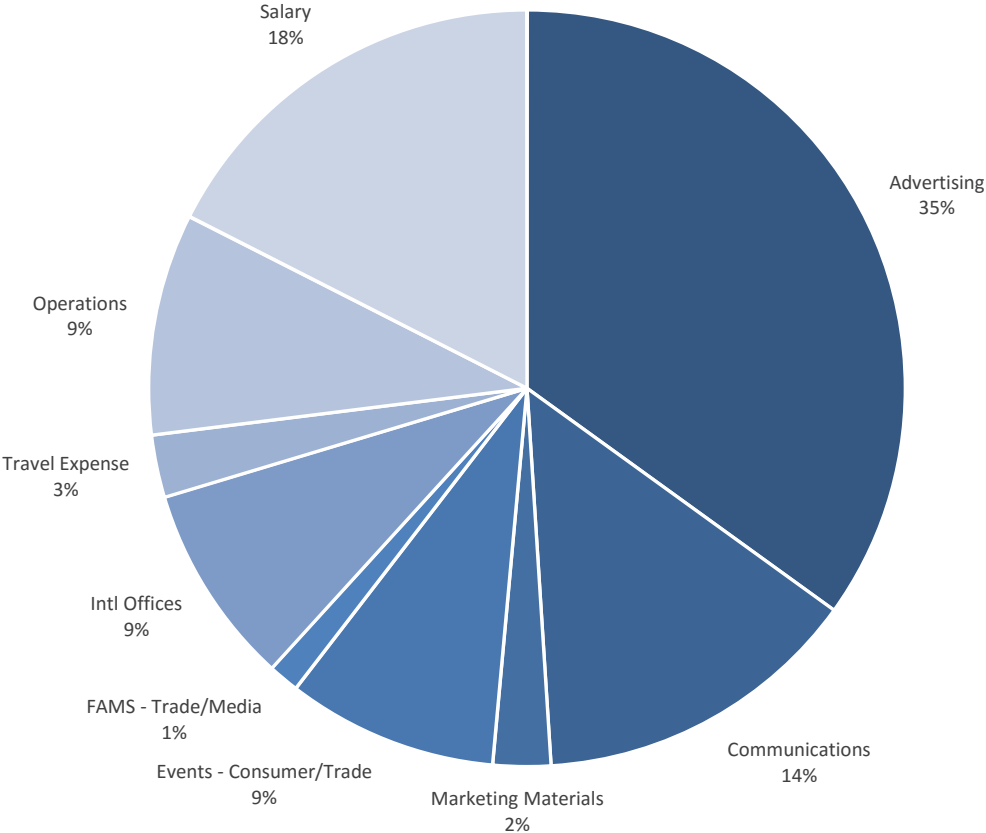
## PARTNERSHIP WITH TOWNSEND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**YMCTB, in partnership with the Mariposa County Government and the Mariposa County Economic Development Corporation retained TPA to assist in a variety of projects affecting resident lifestyle and visitor experiences.**

- **Caltrans Transportation Planning Grant** - Program to improve connectivity and mobility within the central historic district of Mariposa
- **Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program** - Program to receive funding for infrastructure related to electric vehicles including charging stations.
- **CalRecycle Rubberized Pavement Program** - Program to improve parking lots and roadways at the Mariposa County Fairgrounds.
- **John Muir Geotourism Center** - Working with the JMGC and County of Mariposa on a potential application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund through the Department of Parks and Recreation for efforts related to geotourism in and around Greeley Hill and Coulterville.
- **Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements** - Project to acquire funding for sidewalks and curb and gutters will be installed along various streets in Mariposa.
- **Hotel Jeffrey Relief and Restoration Efforts** - Conducted outreach with several state and federal agencies regarding eligibility of the private enterprise for funding.
- **Integrated Regional Water Management Program Grant Application** - Assisted in re-submitting application to seek funding for water and line improvements in Coulterville, Yosemite West and Fish Camp.
- **Farmer's Market Promotion and Outreach funding** - Working with Mariposa County and Central Sierra EDD to solicit funds to enhance current Farmer's Market promotion.
- **Vacation Rental Housing Legislation** - Successfully helped stop both bills related to local tax receipts and web hosting platforms.



**YMCTB Expenditures  
2014-2015**





# 2014/2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Dan Jensen - Chair**  
DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite

**Jonathon Farrington - Vice Chair**  
Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite

**Douglas Shaw - Treasurer**  
Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain  
Resort

**Sara Zahn**  
Hotel Jeffery

**Barbara Robinson - Secretary**  
Indian Peak Ranch / Mountaintop Hideaway

**Kevin Shelton**  
Yosemite Resorts

**Donna Nassar**  
Yosemite/Mariposa Bed &  
Breakfast Association

**MaryAnn Huff**  
Northern Mariposa County  
Business Coalition

**Donna Davis**  
The Redwoods in Yosemite

**Brian Bullis**  
Mariposa Fairgrounds and  
Exposition Center

**Damian Riley**  
Mariposa County Chamber  
of Commerce



## YOSEMITE/MARIPOSA COUNTY TOURISM BUREAU ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Roger Biery**  
*Economic Development Corporation*

**Kevin Cann**  
*Mariposa County Supervisor, District IV*

**Scott Gediman**  
*Chief, Media & External Relations Public Affairs  
Officer - Yosemite National Park*

**Merlin Jones**  
*Mariposa County Supervisor, District IV*

## YOSEMITE/MARIPOSA COUNTY TOURISM BUREAU STAFF

**Terry Selk** - Executive Director

**Julie Hadzega** - Sales & Marketing Coordinator

**Noel Morrison** - Communications Manager

**Windy Howell-Gonzalez** - Administrative Assistant

## CONTACT

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