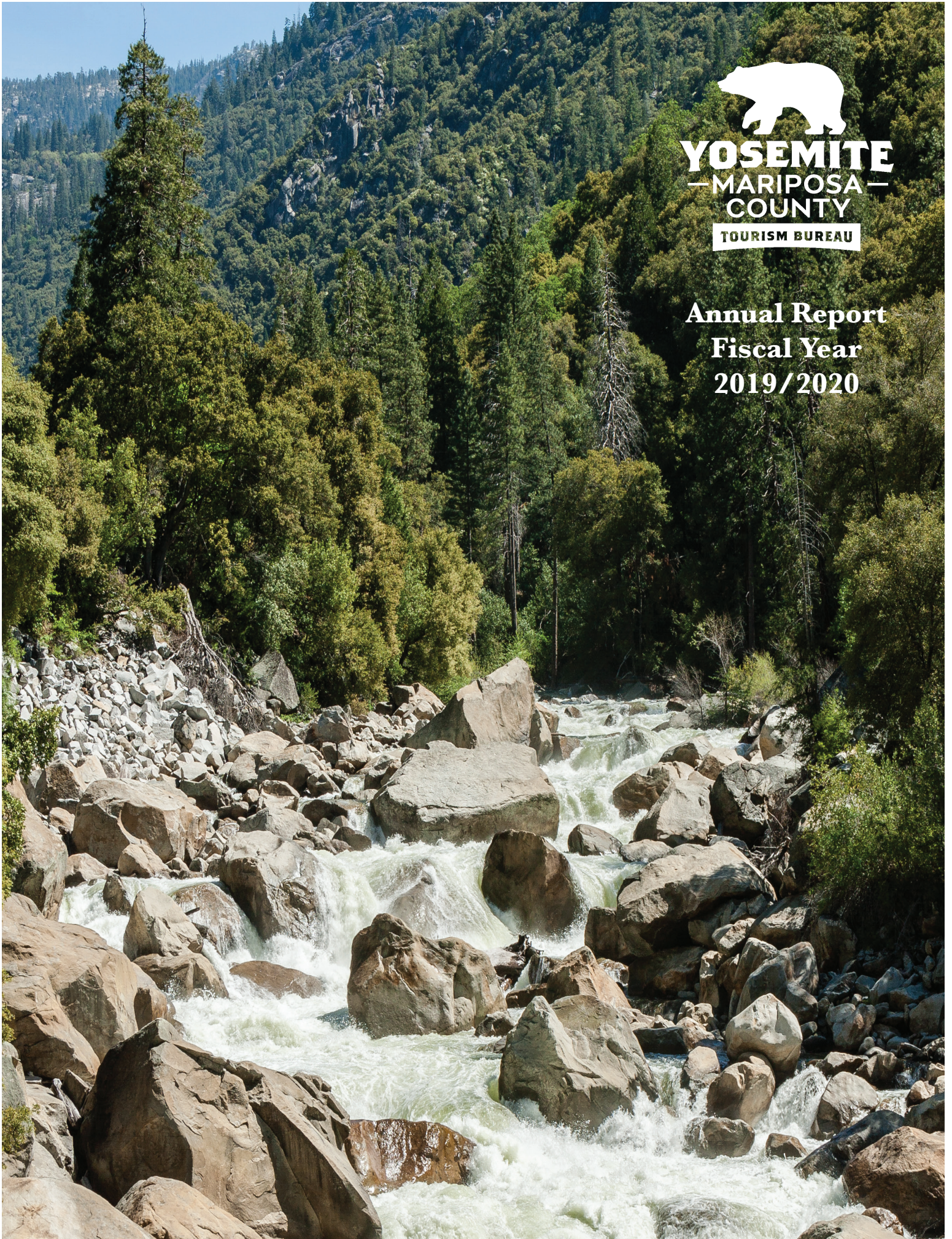




**YOSEMITE**  
— MARIPOSA —  
COUNTY

**TOURISM BUREAU**

**Annual Report**  
**Fiscal Year**  
**2019/2020**



## Dear Lodging And Business Partners,

Initially our 2019/2020 fiscal year was on track to be record-breaking. Q4 visitation was phenomenal and the Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau (YMCTB) and lodging were looking forward to a strong spring and summer. A recap of the 2019/2020 marketing and communications achievements is included as an addendum at the end of this report.

The Bureau continued to build on its success of creating a skilled internal team and relying less on outside agencies; this strategy shifted significant funding directly to advertising and added a greater level of flexibility to our operations.

Before YMCTB's Spring 2020 advertising had a chance to make a real impact, the Bureau – like the rest of the world – was significantly impacted by COVID-19. The Bureau immediately adapted to the reduction in travel caused by California's stay-at-home order, postponed all paid advertising and began to plan for recovery. During the shutdown YMCTB was highly actively working owned and earned market channels as well as crisis communication. During this time the Bureau staff also developed an in-depth marketing plan that will form the basis of our strategic efforts for the next three to five years.

The Bureau restarted paid marketing in early June and saw an immediate return to pre-COVID- level website traffic. The implementation of the online-booking engine Book>Direct on Yosemite.com created a quick

rise in the number of searches for and referrals to lodging. We also implemented a new approach to Special Offers to entice more visitors to include Mariposa County in their vacation planning.

At the same time, Yosemite National Park's temporary day-use pass reservation system drastically decreased the number of visitors seeking lodging outside the Park. The more restrictive Mariposa County specific health order also decreased the room nights available for all lodging types to approximately 50% of capacity. The Bureau created a list of 100 Things to Do in Mariposa County to further increase out of park lodging occupancy, a group that had been especially impacted by limited Park access.

By the end of the 2019/2020 fiscal year, the devastating economic impact of COVID-19 on Mariposa County became more and more apparent. The Bureau budgeted for a much leaner 2020/2021 fiscal year, "cutting to the bone" with the goal of maintaining a similar level of service. On July 16, 2020 Mariposa County administration informed the Bureau that their contribution to YMCTB funding and its three-year contract were being eliminated. At the August 2020 lodging association and YMCTB Board meeting the issue of increasing the TBID arose as a means of lessening the impacts of the Mariposa County's defunding decision impacting 2020/2021. After receiving feedback from the lodging community, the lodging association and YMCTB Board decided to increase the TBID



by one-half of one percent on September 2, 2020.

The Bureau cut the budget even further, eliminating its public relations agency, any paid traditional print and radio media, and its Scandinavian representation, one of four international agencies.

The Bureau's primary focus is now on Yosemite.com, making sure that the nearly 3 million visitors to the site are encouraged to find lodging within Mariposa County. The Bureau will continue to generate compelling content focused on visitors to both Mariposa County and Yosemite National Park.

  
Jonathan Farrington  
Executive Director

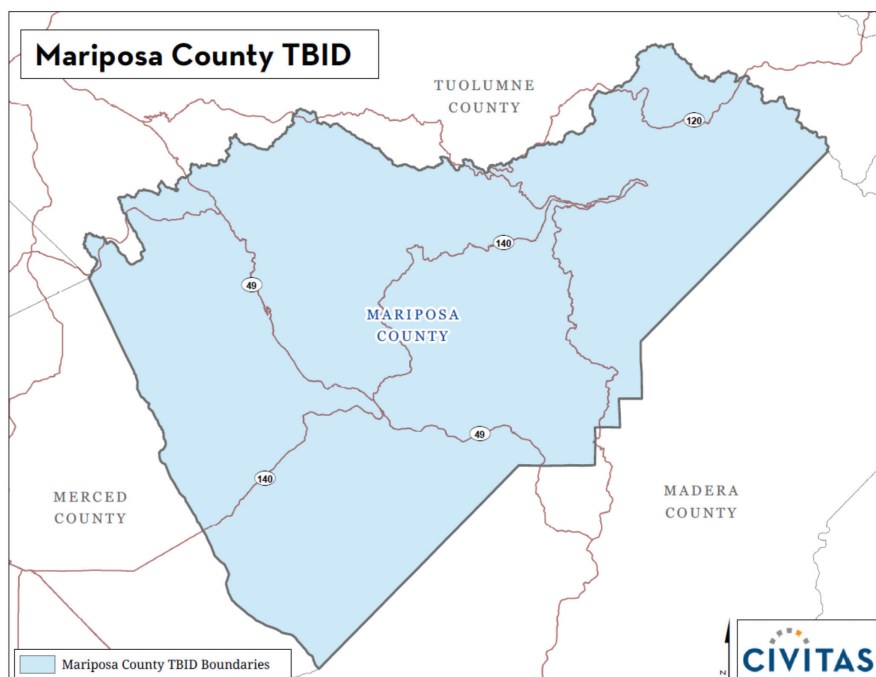
# TBID Assessment

## 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 YMCTB Board of Directors approved a TBID increase of one-half of one percent (0.5%) starting in January 2021. Lodging businesses will therefore be assessed a total of one and a half percent (1.5%). This rate will sunset on December 31, 2022 unless action is taken by the YMCTB Board of Directors in its annual report.<sup>1</sup>

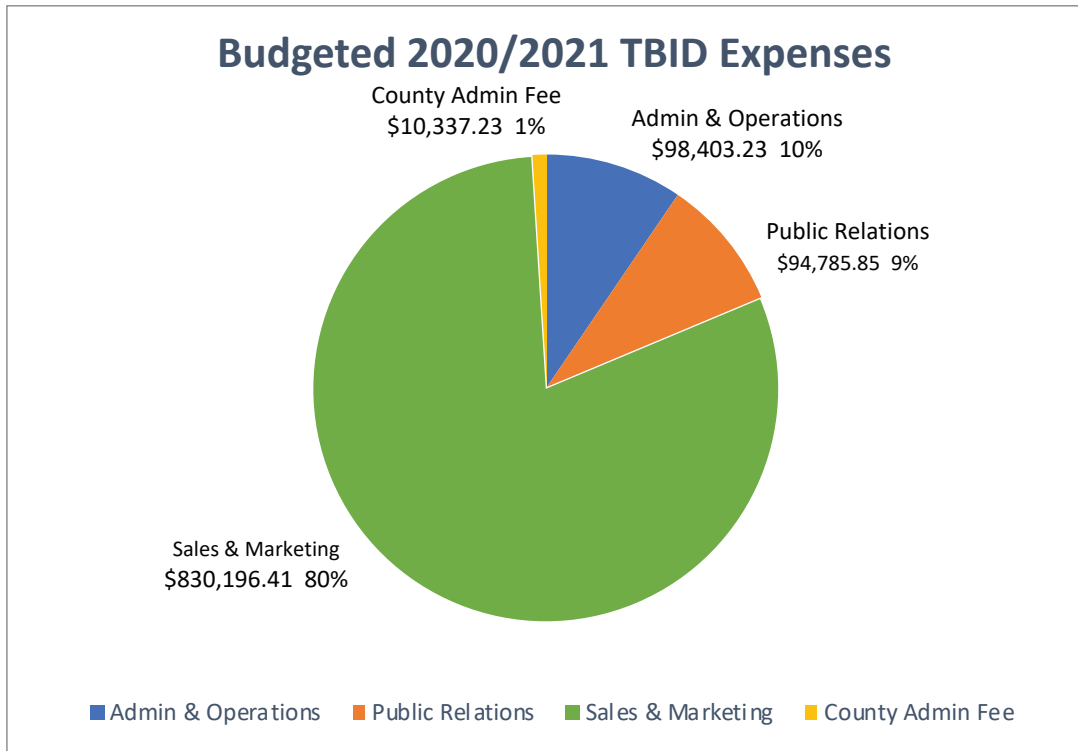
The district will continue to include lodging businesses, existing and in the future, available for public occupancy within the boundaries of the County of Mariposa, as shown.

<sup>1</sup> This change was prompted by the notification from Mariposa County that funding would be eliminated starting October 2020. The YMCTB Board has the ability to make changes of up to 0.5% in the TBID without approval from the members of the lodging community. Despite that authority, the YMCTB Board sought public feedback before making any decisions: a survey of the lodging owners, a community phone call and email feedback. If the County resumes funding for the Tourism Bureau at the same level prior to COVID-19 pandemic, then the additional 0.5% TBID assessment will be rescinded.

# TBID Expenditures: Carryover from 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 Budget

At the end of the 2019/2020 fiscal year, the Bureau had a TBID carryover balance of \$59,081.09, primarily due to the postponement of marketing during California’s stay-at-home orders from March 16 – June 9, 2020.

This carryover, combined with prior years’ reserve funds, will help the Bureau to continue to market the region in 2020/2021. The Bureau has forecasted that the 2020/2021 budget represents approximately 50% of spending compared to prior fiscal years.



## **2020/2021 Annual Budget**

Significant budget cuts have been made, including:

- Public Relations Agency 360viewPR has been eliminated, impacting:
  - Domestic earned media will be curtailed.
  - Pitching for the Film Commission will end.
- Augustine Agency has been cut, so that any traditional advertising placements will be managed in-house.
- All upcoming print media has been eliminated.
- The annual “Above the Fog” radio campaign will not take place.

- All direct mailing of travel planners has been cut.
  - The Sponsorships / donations budget supporting local events and nonprofits will be cut.
  - AtlanticLink, a Scandanavian international agency, has been cut completely.
  - All international co-op budgets have been held for the first half of 2020/2021 and will only be reinstated if the financial and international situation improves.
  - 90% of trip travel and trade shows have been cut.
- Reliance on in-house staff to accomplish the work of the Bureau is more important than ever.

# Goals for 2020/2021

Given the current financial environment and emphasis on public health, YMCTB will focus on the following goals to provide effective marketing to lodging partners:

**1. Focus on the California Drive Market as the primary audience for 2020 – 2022.** With domestic and international travel at an all-time low, California residents are the target of the majority of advertising at least through 2022.

**2. Continue to build the lodging and tourism brand of Yosemite Mariposa County** with a focus on history and culture. This effort concentrates on non-Yosemite guests and repeat visitation as well as extending visitor overnight length of stay.

**3. Perform regular “gap analyses” to benefit lodging.** In order to plan when to deploy YMCTB funds so that lodging community can benefit the most, the Bureau will need to better understand when future reservations are lowest and in most need of a boost. Using periodic occupancy forecasts

from local properties, the Bureau will combine this information with other analytics to develop additional data-driven strategies.

**4. Capitalize on “guerilla marketing” by increasing use of owned media channels.** Utilizing its eCRM (Electronic Customer Relationship Management) assets and social media followers, the Bureau will implement effective marketing strategies with emails, social media posts, and other outreach channels.

**5. Continue to rely on earned media channels –** such as public relations activities, editorial coverage, social influencers, media FAM trips, international trade and travel trade – to spread the word about Yosemite Mariposa County Lodging.

**6. Develop additional content for Yosemite.com** via blogs, a strong emphasis on video, and photographs, understanding that most available imagery is not focused on areas outside of Yosemite National Park.



# 2019/2020 Leadership

## **Board of Directors**

**Jeff Bray**

*Aramark/Yosemite Hospitality*

**Kim Brisack**

*Coulter Cafe & Big Table Ranch*

**Ron Halcrow**

*Yosemite Plaisance Bed N Breakfast*

**MaryAnn Huff**

*Community Member*

**Victoria Imrie**

*Yosemite Ziplines and Adventure Ranch*

**Dan Lyle**

*Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite*

**Christian Mueller, Board Vice Chair**

*The Redwoods at Yosemite*

**Donna Nassar, Board Secretary**

*Community Member*

**Candy O'Donel-Browne**

*Community Member*

**Douglas Shaw, Board Treasurer**

*Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort*

**Kevin Shelton, Board Chair**

*Yosemite Resorts*

## **Marketing Committee**

**Jeff Bray**

*Aramark/Yosemite Hospitality*

**Kim Brisack**

*Coulter Cafe & Big Table Ranch*

**Michael Broderick**

*Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite*

**Lisa Cesaro**

*Aramark/Yosemite Hospitality*

**Scott Gediman**

*Yosemite National Park*

**Yuli Gotsev**

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**Douglas Shaw**

*Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort*

**Kevin Shelton**

*Yosemite Resorts*

**Emerald Wong**

*AutoCamp Yosemite*

## **Board Liaisons**

**Merlin Jones**

*Mariposa County Board Supervisor, District IV*

**Marshall Long**

*Mariposa County Board Supervisor, District III*

## **Advisory Council**

**Scott Feister**

*Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce*

**Scott Gediman**

*Yosemite National Park*

## **Tourism Bureau Staff**

**Jonathan Farrington**

*Executive Director*

**Julie Hadzega**

*Travel Trade & Operations Manager*

**Tony McDaniel**

*Communications Manager*

**Craig Polson**

*Social Media & Content Curator*

**Ellen Bergstone Wasil**

*Marketing & Creative Manager*

# 2020/2021 Leadership

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**Jason Brannan**

*AutoCamp Yosemite*

**Kim Brisack**

*Coulter Cafe & Big Table Ranch*

**Lisa Cesaro**

*Aramark/Yosemite Hospitality*

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