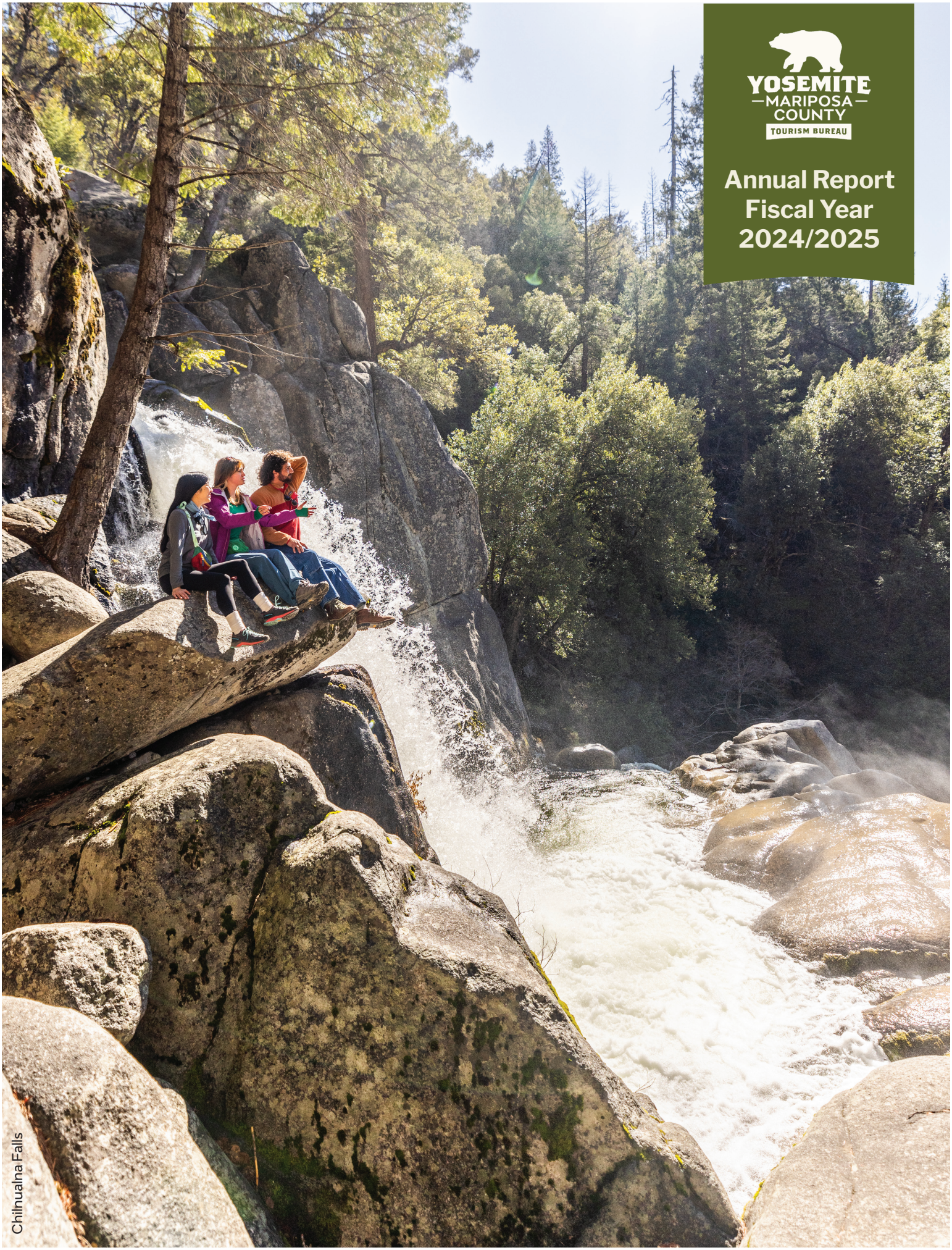


YOSEMITE
MARIPOSA COUNTY
TOURISM BUREAU

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2024/2025

Chilnualna Falls

Dear Lodging and Business Partners,



The overall outlook for the 2025/2026 fiscal year is good. However, there will be significant challenges, headwinds, and change.

These are uncertain times for tourism business owners and managers.

Prior Year Impacts

In order to focus on what lies ahead, we need to learn from the past. Generally speaking, the first three quarters were unremarkable regarding travel and tourism visitation. International visitation was projected to be down aproximatly10% for the year and remained 20% below 2019 pre-COVID visitation due to the high value of the US Dollar compared to currencies from our primary inbound markets. Additionally, there have been continued issues with inflation and the cost of living worldwide.

The largest unknown for 2024/2025 was the outcome of the US presidential elections and what, if any, impacts would be experienced. Without an in-depth review, it's safe to say the reactions of the domestic and international media, the focus on Yosemite, National Parks, and Immigration, all had a profound impact in reducing visitation to the US and Yosemite Mariposa County. Many of the media's headlines were sensational, and the reporting lacked context, often mixing accurate and inaccurate accounts. Ultimately, international visitors canceled trips and stayed away. YMCTB has worked to correct or provide context to reduce the brand tarnish that has occurred.

As we transition from the fiscal 2024/2025 year to 2025/2026, many of the prior issues are carried over and work continues to shore up visitation to our region.

2025/2026

The Tourism Bureau focuses on six core elements and more than two dozen tactical areas for marketing. That said, two fundamental tasks are crucial to achieving success for our constituents during uncertain times like these.

- The primary goal is to drive revenue: to attract tourists and visitors to Mariposa County, primarily during the off-season and shoulder seasons to fill lodging rooms. We (YMCTB) are the rainmakers. It is our role to help our partners meet their financial needs.
- The second goal is to provide our constituents with intelligence on market conditions. We help you plan, take advantage of business opportunities, or batten down the hatches when times are tough. The job of the Tourism Bureau during tough times is to remain aggressive in our marketing and outbound approach, to maximize inbound travel over our competitors.

The challenges are clear:

- Yosemite's reservation system for the coming year has yet to be announced. We're reasonably sure the vehicle reservation system will differ from prior years, so YMCTB's communication and education efforts for the public and our constituents are vital.
- The US dollar exchange rates overseas in our primary markets are restricting inbound long-haul tourism. The exchange rates are dropping favorably for inbound travel, but only slightly lower as of October 2025.
- The current political situation, with proposed tariffs, negative press on National Park staffing, and Visa and ESTA requirements, is impacting visitation and creating nationalistic barriers.

Fortunately, Yosemite Mariposa County is one of the most desirable places on the planet to visit. Our natural, stunning beauty and vast open spaces in nature, combined with our rich indigenous and Gold Rush/Western history, make us a highly desirable place on our planet to visit.

The business plan is adaptable. As this summary

was written, a debate is underway over the proposed Yosemite vehicle reservation plan. If a reservation system is implemented so late in the season, it will have negative, possibly catastrophic impacts on the park visitor experience. With the new Secretary of the Interior's SO 3434 order, we have hope that more input from the gateway tourism and business communities will help craft a plan that protects the park and local economy.

YMCTB will continue to focus on increasing visitation between September and May, increasing mid-week Sunday through Thursday overnight lodging stays will focus on both individual and group leisure travel to offset peak-season international visitor losses, albeit at a lower average daily rate. Weekday and weekend conference and meeting group bookings, which are not dependent on access to Yosemite, are a way hotels and motels can fill their rooms.

There is a need to diversify offerings at all lodging business types. It is incumbent on our constituents to create value, foster cultural immersion, offer engaging activities, and provide curated experiences. We are blessed to have Yosemite as an attraction and resource in our county! At the same time, Yosemite can no longer be referred to as the "Golden Goose" as it has been for decades. There are too many challenges to only rely on "the park". Tourism businesses need to adapt by offering more than Yosemite as the draw and compete with Sierra Nevada towns that lack Yosemite while attracting visitors from key California regions through repeat visitation and hospitality relationships. Offering more "things to do", activities, education, history, and cultural engagement. We will continue to develop "speed bumps" to slow travelers down and see that there is a lot more to Yosemite Mariposa County than the national park.



Old town Mariposa

Jonathan Farrington
CEO / Executive Director

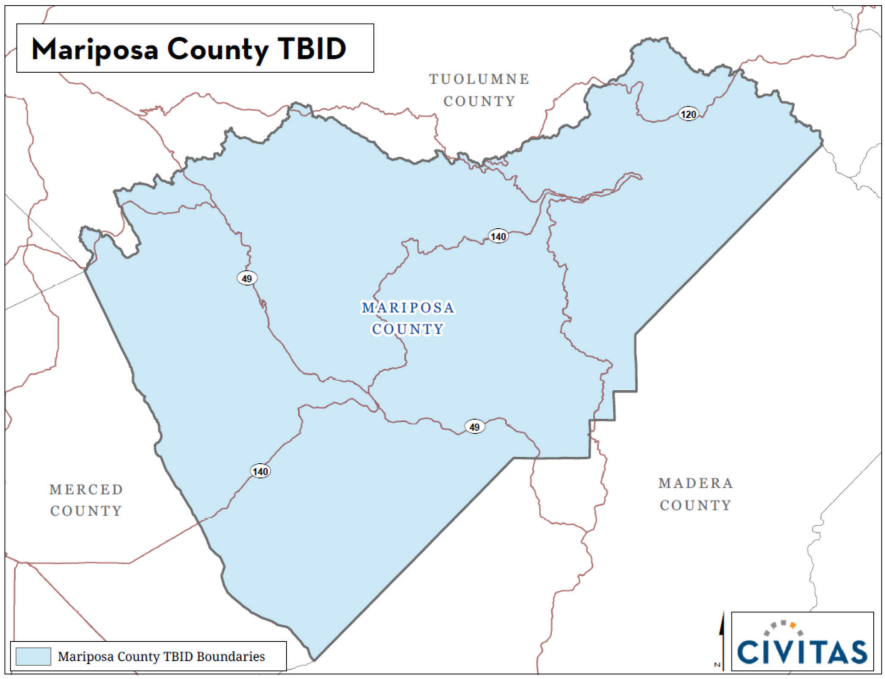
TBID Assessment

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

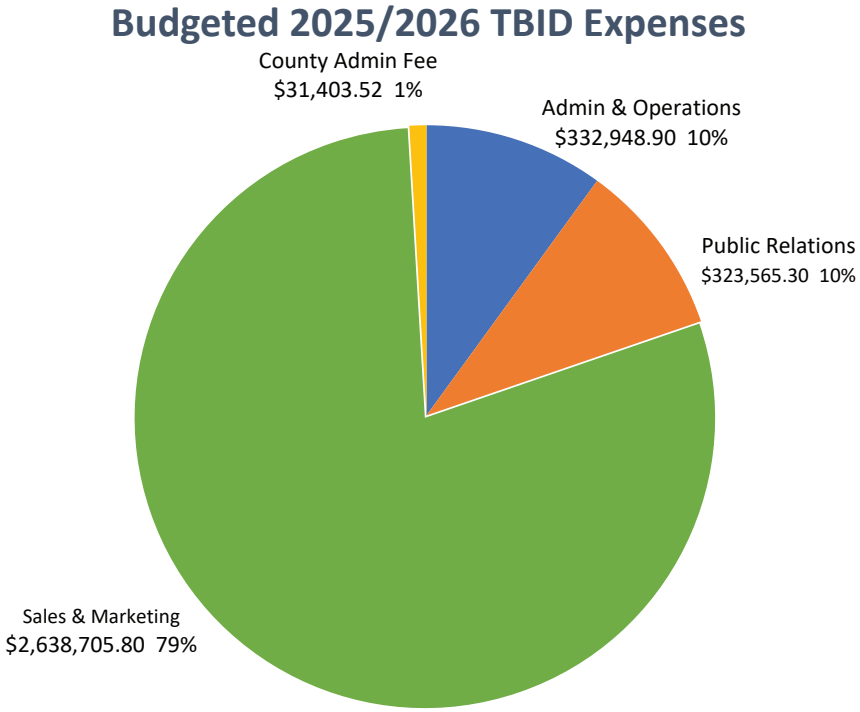
There are no proposed changes to the boundaries or assessed business. The TBID assessment rate for the 2025/2026 year is 1.5%.

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.

TBID Expenditures: Carryover from 2024/2025 and the 2025/2026 Budget

At the end of the 2024/2025 fiscal year, the Bureau had a TBID carryover balance of $62,810. This amount will be invested in the coming fiscal year. After years of deficit spending, utilizing prior COVID-19 year carryover balances, this fiscal year's revenues of $3,062,202 exceeded the plan by 7% and were $201,702 above the original budget. YMCTB increased expenditure throughout the year to offset increased revenues. However, at the end of the fiscal year, the carryover balance of $62,810 remained to be invested in the new fiscal year.

The 2025/2026 budget was developed with the same intent - to spend all TBID income for the year, ensuring that lodging partners receive the maximum benefit from the Bureau's marketing efforts. The total budgeted expenditures for 2025/2026 are $3,145,072.



2025/2026 Annual Budget Notations

YMCTB's budgeted expenditures has increased 5% in 2025/2026 over actual expenditures the prior year.

The 2025/2026 budget includes some shifts:

- We have added a Tourism Development Director, whose primary purpose is to increase the county's market share of international visitors and meeting/conference group bookings. .
- We continue to place less emphasis on traditional print and radio in favor of more digital media as online advertising is more effective in driving revenue, and more attributed and accurately tracked in terms of its efficacy.
- We will invest in additional market research/ actionable visitor data, to validate our effectiveness and to help us determine the best ways to reach potential visitors.

As always, maintaining flexibility is critical during these times as conditions can change significantly with little notice.

- Wildfires, rock falls, potential government shutdowns, extreme weather events, and other unforeseen challenges can significantly disrupt the tourism economy with little to no notice.
- The Board of Directors has given the CEO / Executive Director discretion to increase or decrease the budgeted expenses up to $200,000 given the unpredictable nature of the region.

Goals for 2025/2026

As mentioned earlier, our overall goal for the year is to increase travel from September through May with a special emphasis on midweek travel (Sunday through Thursday) to drive revenue to lodging properties and tax revenue to Mariposa County. We will strengthen our impact on domestic and international leisure travel for individuals and conferences, meetings and group bookings.

Our staff continue to update our 3-year rolling marketing strategy and plan. For the 2025/2026 plan year, we have set goals intended to continue to increase our efficacy. The Board of Supervisors has already been provided with a copy of this 2025/2026 Marketing Plan, a proprietary document. **In addition to our ongoing multi-pronged marketing strategies,** the following are specific goals for 2025/2026:

Continue to improve Yosemite.com. As our primary asset, driving traffic to Yosemite.com is our highest priority. We will continue to optimize our content for search engines, write new and relevant content, and make other improvements to ensure that the site offers an outstanding user experience and provides hundreds of thousands of referrals to our lodging partners. We are implementing a robust, updated seasonal story calendar, incorporating more video content and developing new visual assets. We will continue to enhance the website with technology such as Wander maps and curated landing pages for specific audiences to boost lodging referrals and partner visibility. As we work to keep the website secure and optimized, we'll also explore AI-powered search and chatbot features.

Invest additional resources in actionable visitor data. We will deliver timely research and data to constituents on travel trends, visitor behaviors, and market shifts to help them adapt. Our adoption of the Datafy (which tracks visitor geolocation and spending data) along with AirDNA (which monitors bookings for vacation rentals) and Smith Travel Research, now referred to as Costar (which tracks hotel bookings) will inform our marketing decisions and help us provide additional data to our partners.

Strengthen Travel Trade Presence. With the addition of a new Tourism Development Director, we will expand our participation in trade shows and missions while deepening ties with inbound operators. We will maintain our presence in the UK, Germany, Australia, and Scandinavia while cultivating new potential markets (France, India).



The orchard at Sierra Cider

Grow Conferences, Meetings & Group Bookings. We will reenter the meetings and group trade event schedules for direct sales, we are updating tools for meeting planners to boost referrals and leveraging LinkedIn outreach. We aim to grow the number of group bookings and conferences through our new Tourism Development Director and trade partnerships.

Support Local Lodging Constituents. We will continue and build on our free offerings to constituents and provide paid opportunities such as co-op marketing and advertising on Yosemite.com. Our Special Offers program has matured into a key



Lake McClure in northwestern Mariposa County

feature on Yosemite.com that drives a large amount of traffic to our site. We will maintain 20 or more concurrent special offers throughout the year.

Enhance Community & Government Relations. We will continue to strengthen relationships by expanding local communications, and building stronger ties with our community. This year we will again be hosting town halls with constituents in various areas around the county. We will continue our presence at festivals and events in Mariposa County to better engage our community members in understanding who we are and what we do.

Champion Sustainability & Stewardship. "Tourism for Good" is a key tenet of the tourism bureau and we continually promote responsible travel that ensures access to our county's natural and cultural treasures.

Support Local Events – We have budgeted $25,000 to invest in events and festivals that draw tourists to Mariposa County. All tourism-related events are also promoted through Yosemite.com and YMCTB social channels.

Host travel trade and media FAMs. Familiarization tours (FAMs) with journalists, content creators, travel agents and product managers are an essential part of getting both earned media and more international bookings for Mariposa County properties. 2023/2024 was a very busy year and we expect 2024/2025 will continue this trend.

Continue to focus our social media strategy on best practices and investment. There's one thing that is consistent in social media marketing: nothing stays the same. With constant change to algorithms, processes, features, etc., maintaining market share is an ongoing challenge. Our team consistently monitors and adjusts to create effective paid and organic posts.

Continue to improve earned and owned email communications. With more than 70,000 subscribers, our email list is a robust and valuable marketing resource. We will continue to seek new email subscribers as well as improve our content and delivery methods.



The Welcome Center in Yosemite Valley

2025/2026 Leadership

Board of Directors

Brett Archer, Board Chair
Tenaya at Yosemite

Autumn Bragdon
AutoCamp Yosemite

Kim Brisack, Board Secretary
Coulter Cafe & Big Table Ranch

Jessie Fischer
Yosemite Resorts

Ron Halcrow, Board Treasurer
Yosemite Plaisance Bed & Breakfast

MaryAnn Huff
Community Member

Victoria Imrie
Community Member

Christian Mueller
The Redwoods at Yosemite

Candy O'Donel-Browne
Community Member

Scott Randall, Board Vice Chair
Wildhaven Yosemite

Nick Sponaugle
Yosemite Hospitality

Board Liaisons

Jenni Kiser
Mariposa County Board Supervisor, District IV

Danette Toso
Mariposa County Board Supervisor, District III

Advisory Council

Scott Gediman
Yosemite National Park

Board Chair
Mariposa Chamber of Commerce

Marketing Committee

Kim Brisack
Coulter Cafe & Big Table Ranch

Jessie Fischer
Yosemite Resorts

Scott Gediman
Yosemite National Park

Yuli Gotsev
The Redwoods in Yosemite

Victoria Imrie
Yosemite Ziplines and Adventure Ranch



North Dome from Sentinel Bridge

Chelsie Layman
Yosemite Hospitality

Briley Lisath
Tenaya at Yosemite

Ken Barber
WildhavenYosemite

Tourism Bureau Staff

Jonathan Farrington
CEO / Executive Director

Ellen Bergstone Wasil
Director of Marketing & Creative

Kim Lawson
Director of Communications & Content

Noel Morrison
Tourism Development Director

Craig Polson
Social Media & Content Curator

Aaron Demery
Operations Manager

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TOURISM BUREAU

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