



**Humboldt County Visitors Bureau
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 21, 2024 • Via Zoom

Present: Ken Hamik, Lowell Daniels, Justin Legge, Carlton Nielsen, Ara Pachmayer, Lisa Sundberg, Sam Wedll, Julie Benbow, *ED*, Jason Baxter, *Consultant*, Dianna Rios, *County Liaison*

Absent: Molly Blakemore, Supervisor Michelle Bushnell

- I. The meeting was called to order at 11:38 am.
 - a. Roll call was taken. Directors checked in
 - b. There were no guests
- II. Public Comment: There were no public comments.
- III. Approval of Minutes of September 19th meeting
 - Justin made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted.
 - Carlton seconded the motion.
 - The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.

IV. Board Committee Reports

Executive Committee

- Ken The contract negotiations with the county, led by Carlton and Ara, addressed the Bureau's issues and concerns. The relationship between the County and the Bureau will end when the contract terminates on December 31, 2024.
- Carlton described the process of negotiations as gratifying, and more of a conversation which signaled a positive change in the relationship.
- Ara: Meeting was fruitful and not contentious, and now waiting to receive the final language.
- Julie: The contract is retroactive, covering the period from July 1st, 2024 to December 31st 2024. All language regarding the dissolution of the organization and turnover of assets to the county has been modified or removed. Expecting to sign the contract and receive the outstanding funds before the end of the year. As of this time, there are no plans for the Bureau to cease marketing. In January, the Bureau will be a free agent and it's time to reimagine HCVB, develop a new dynamic marketing model: The Bureau 3.0.
- Ken: The keynote speaker of the Eureka Chamber Leadership was the noted Economics Professor from Sonoma State, Dr. Robert Eyer. In his address, he repeatedly cited tourism as a major economic driver for Humboldt and the rural communities.
- County Economic Development held a CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) Also attended a workshop, facilitated put on by an Indiana consulting group. Participants agreed that tourism is a critical component of the economy.

V. Financial Review

Julie: The current financial position and cash on hand show enough funds to cover all expenses into 2025. Due to receive \$145K from the county, and all monthly payable and commitments will be reviewed.

Lisa described the RRISE grant opportunity for the region.

VI. Marketing

- Julie: Map and Guide has been reviewed by the County and is ready to go to press. Applied to the HLA for a dollar-for-dollar match to cover the printing and distribution of 250,000 copies of the 32-page Map & Guide (\$78K).
- Jason: The website a social media platforms continue to be strong, and 5,000 new subscribers were added to the eNewsletter – they signed up as part of the North of Ordinary/USA Today Sweepstakes. This brings the total out of county/state subscriptions to 40K. (Analytics included at the end of the minutes.)

VII. The Future

- Ken: In the new year, the Bureau will have no county oversight or restrictions so need engage in serious discussions and develop public/private funding partnerships. Bureau website is valuable asst can be value leverage for marketing to for-profit businesses/corporations that reflect our values.
- Julie: Companies–like Subaru–film their ads in Humboldt and work with the Film Commission. Share contacts and ideas. Perfect time to develop tribal relationships and discover how we can work with them to help promote and market their history, culture, and projects. Reach out to the Yurok and other Tribes. Need to be a partnership that has value for them, and our role is supporting their stories.
- Jason: One ideas about the future and how best to use our resources and assets is to explore other forms of partnerships that previously haven't been viable. Now is the time to redefine what we do, through partnerships rather than constantly making funding applications. Put out an RFP that may result in some interesting and creative partnerships and projects that leverage our strengths.
- Ken asked Ara if there would be any opportunities to engage with Cal Poly Alumni, and received a positive response. Some great opportunities at Cal Poly that will be pursued in the new year.

VIII. County Update: Dianna did not have any updates to share.

IX. Other Business

- A Holiday Celebration was discussed and invite stakeholders and partners. Board will host. Maybe on or around Valentine's Day.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:18 pm.

Next Meeting: January 23, 2025

Justin and Julie proposed watching some amazing videos about Humboldt over the holidays.

Brett MacFarland: Humboldt – Official Music Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1CdiRIHdvl>

Peter Santenello – Life in the Middle of Nowhere – California's Most Secluded Tribe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIPdvivhNY>

The California Nobody Knows–Humboldt <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74OCcKg26EQ&t=3660s>



HCVB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ED Report

September 18 – November 18, 2024

Board Business

1: Financial position:

- As of October 31, the Bureau had \$185,000 in the bank.
- On signing the County contract, HCVB will receive \$145,589.50 in TOT funding.
- 2023/24 990's signed and submitted. 11/14/24.

General Business

- Renegotiated Simpleview contract: Now on a month to month.
- Made final edits to the 2025 Map & Guide (incorporating gateway and partners corrections). Ready to go to print.

Meetings:

- Ernst & Young: Ryan Foster – update on the Visit California Tourism Audit. 9/24. Zoom.
- Visit California Rural Counties Committee meeting. 10/1, in person, Sacramento
- North Coast Tourism Council
 - Board Meeting, 10/17 Zoom.
 - Special meeting to review nonprofit tax status / filings. 11/14. Zoom.
- 2024 Economic Forecast, Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce. 10/9, Sequoia Conference Center.

County Contract meetings.

- Patrick Cleary: Owner/President, Lost Coast Communications. Discussed best communication channels to tell community about impacts of county contract.
- John Richmond: Publisher, Times Standard. Discussed OP ED about county contract.
- Nancy Olsen: ED Greater Eureka Chamber. Discussed county contract negotiations.
- Leslie Castellano: ED Ink People/Tuxford Gallery. Rental agreement impacts
- County Tourism Ad Hoc Committee: Contract negotiations. 10/28. In person.

Other:

- Vahan Petrossian: Eureka Cultural Arts District. Discussion regarding 422 space.
- RWE Canopy Offshore Wind Farm: Initial discussion regarding interactive informational display at 422 for public.
- Nordic Aquafarms: Initial discussion regarding interactive informational display at 422 for public.
- Placer AI: Visitor data services.
- Cision: Press release and marketing contracts.

Hosted Media Trips

- Visit California:
 - Influencer Harish visited to create content to be featured in Visit California's upcoming Road Trip Guide, [@childishharish](#), 443k following on Instagram. Stayed at Carter House Inns. They had a guided trip in Redwood National. Reported having an amazing experience.
 - German Content Creator Ronald Söthje, photographer, videographer, drone operator and digital content creator with >650,000 Instagram followers.
- Influencers Denise & Ryne, from He Said or She Said, in cooperation with RV rental company Roadsurfer.com. Were staying one night, wanted a unique experience so connected them with the Zoo and they had a private guided tour.
Blog: www.hesaidorshesaid.com
Social Media: [Instagram](#) | [Pinterest](#) | [Facebook](#) | [TikTok](#)

I receive a few (3-5) requests each week, by email and phone, from prospective visitors wanting information. Here is one:

From Barbara Sydnor:

Julie. I do not know if you will actually read this but I want to share that I will be arriving in Humboldt county one month from today.

After years of messages from you I am finally able to get there. What is the latest news for eureka and Humboldt county? Please feel free to send me any info that will enhance this dream vacation of mine

Thank you, Thank You, Thank You.

I am home from my Travels to Humboldt County filled with magical memories and photos that do not do the experience justice. Our trip was so special because of my communication with you.

More than two years ago I requested and received the Map & Guide. It was this that was my constant companion and guide to the organization of daily trip events. My daughters made this trip a reality for me by agreeing to accompany me. They helped me by making the arrangements for travel leaving me to plan events for each day that we had. As The retired Mom, I had plenty of planning time so I studied Humboldt. The resources you sent me were so very helpful.

Allowing a full day for travel to and from Eureka, we were left with 5 days to live the dream. Each day was dedicated to a certain area of Humboldt. I cannot tell you which area was the very best. I am so enthralled with it all.

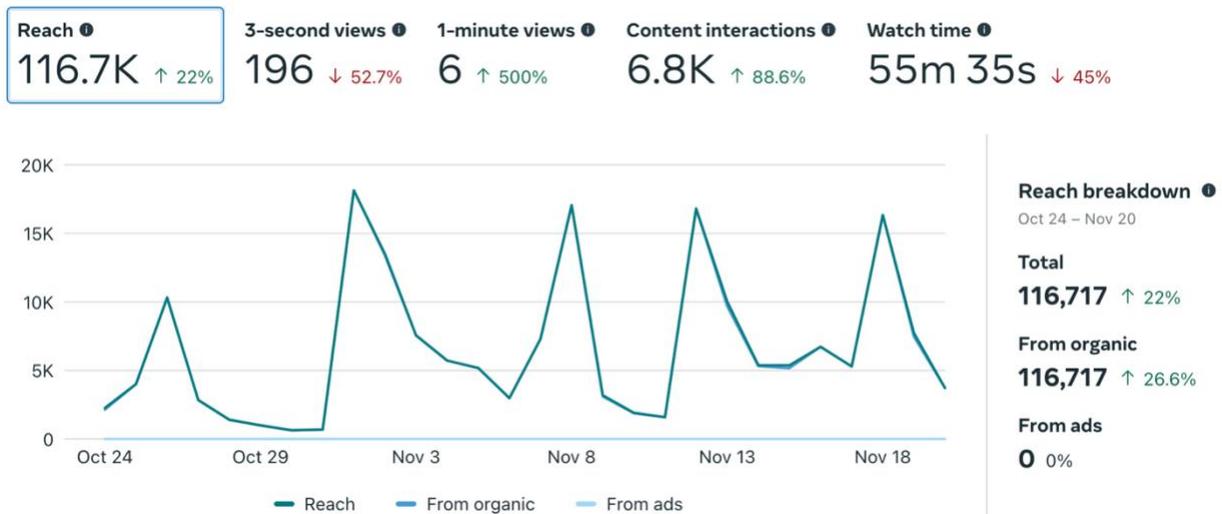
The Trees were everything. Each one a unique world for thousands of organisms. The amazing fragrance of the forest was the scent of life. I wish I could bottle it and take it home. The people we encountered were happy, welcoming, and proud of their community.

For me, the only way the trip could be better is to add more time, more beautiful days. You are fortunate to live in such a beautiful place, and to have the opportunity to share its treasures with those who find that their path leads there.

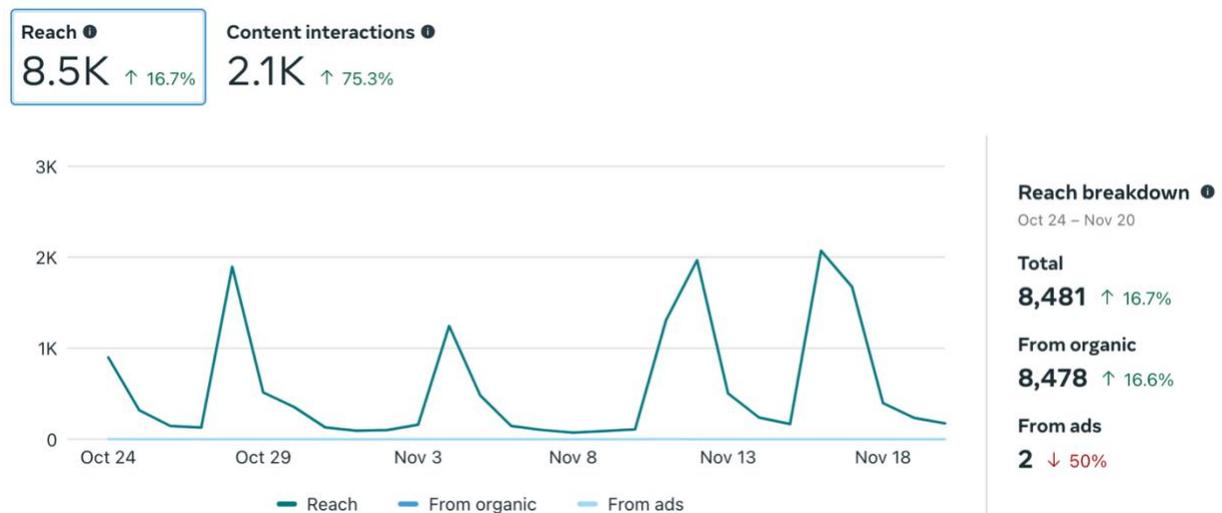
HCVB Digital Summary / Oct 21 – Nov 20, 2024

We reached over 116K people on Facebook (up 22%) and 8.5K people on Instagram (up 16.7%) over the past 28 days. Reach for this period ad type of viewer (organic vs ad) is shown below:

Facebook



Instagram



Overview

Reach ⓘ	Impressions ⓘ	Interactions ⓘ
4,059	4,059	837
Higher than typical	Higher than typical	Higher than typical

Interactions ⓘ

Likes ⓘ	Comments ⓘ	Shares ⓘ	Saves ⓘ
777	11	28	21
Higher than typical	Higher than typical	Higher than typical	Higher than typical

Our most popular Instagram post this period was a Avenue of the Giants feature, reaching over 4K people.

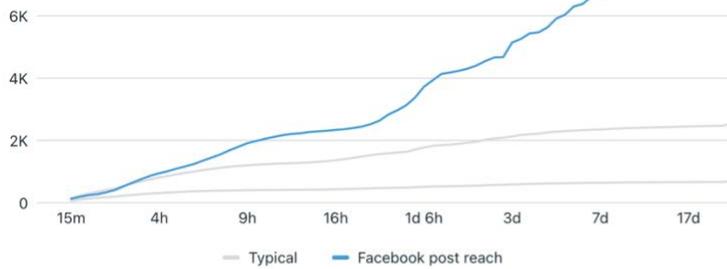
As you'll see below, the most popular post from our Facebook page was a Black Sands Beach "Moment of Zen" shot, nearly reaching 50K with no ad spend.



Overview

Reach ⓘ	Impressions ⓘ	Interactions ⓘ	Link clicks ⓘ
49,977	49,977	1,728	--
Higher than typical	Higher than typical	Higher than typical	

Reach



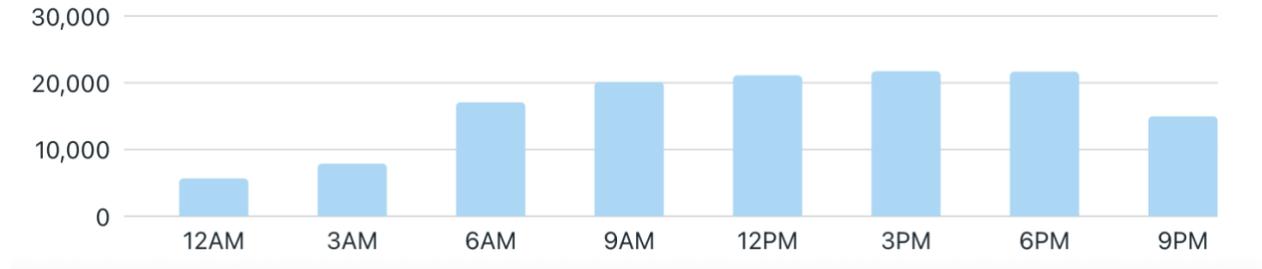
Interactions ⓘ

Reactions ⓘ	Comments ⓘ	Shares ⓘ	Saves ⓘ
1,553	31	140	4
Higher than typical	Higher than typical	Higher than typical	Higher than typical

Feed preview

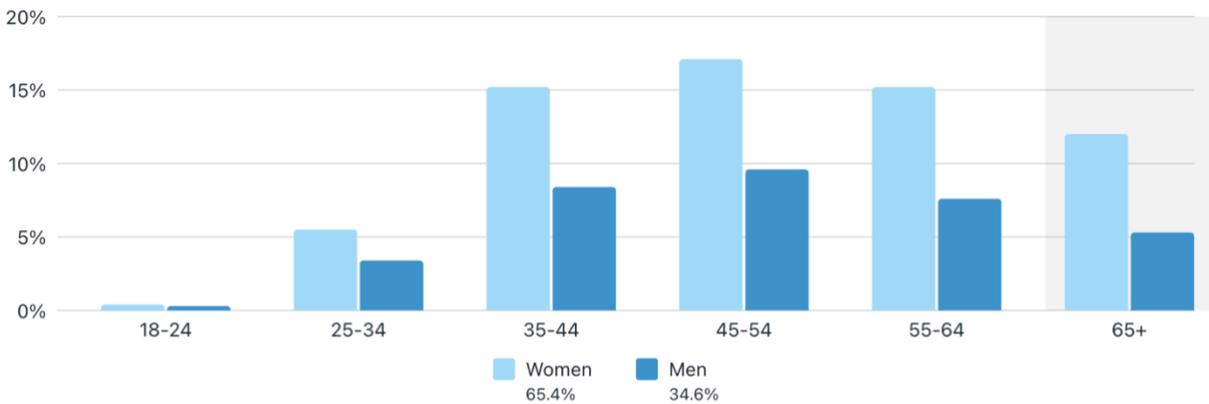


Based on the past 28 days, the majority of our 60,827 **Facebook** followers are active at 3:00 on Thursdays.

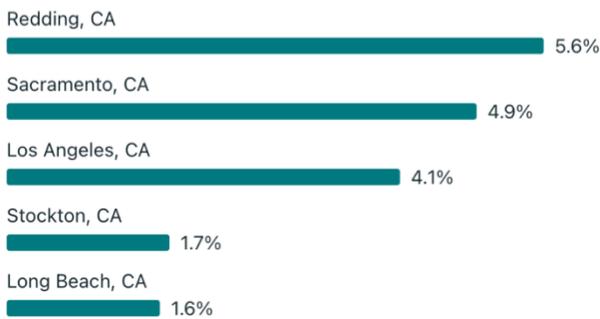


Current Facebook Demographics Below:

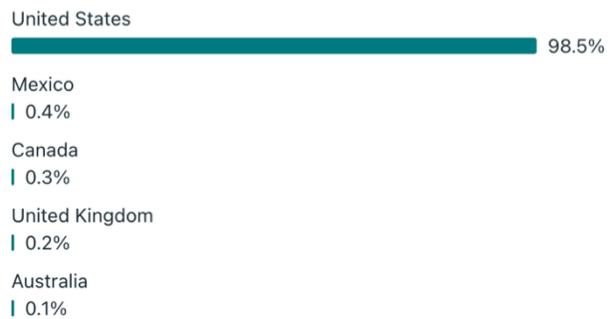
Age & gender



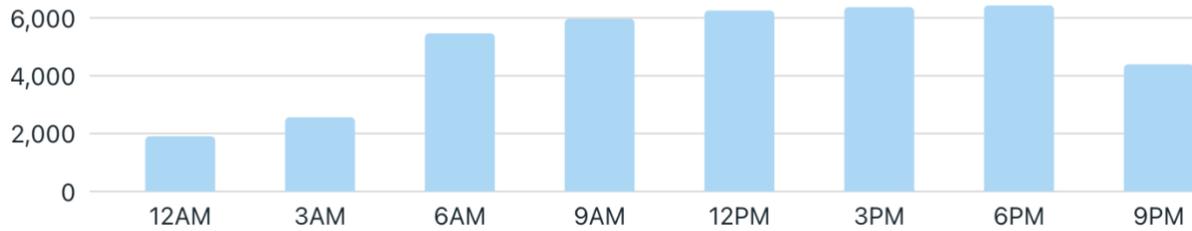
Top cities



Top countries

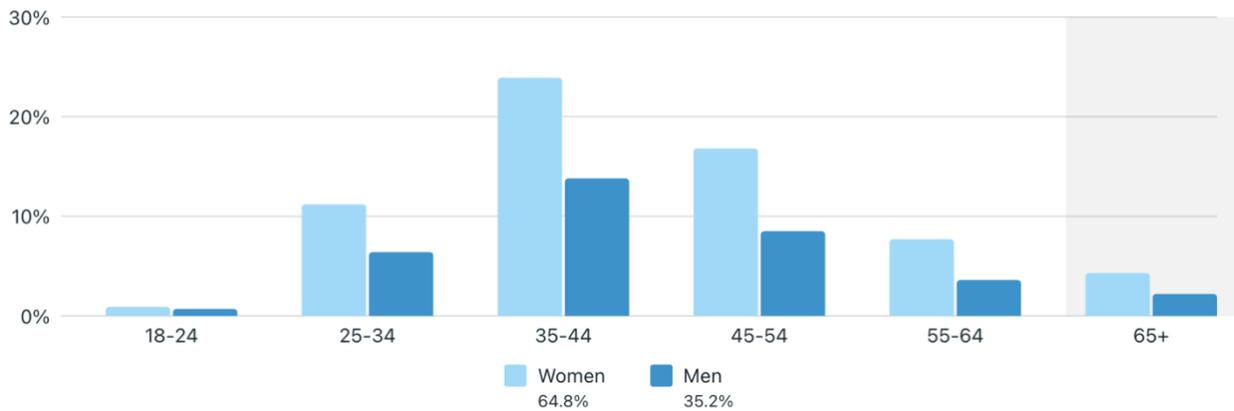


The majority of our 18,518 **Instagram** followers are active at 6PM on Thursdays

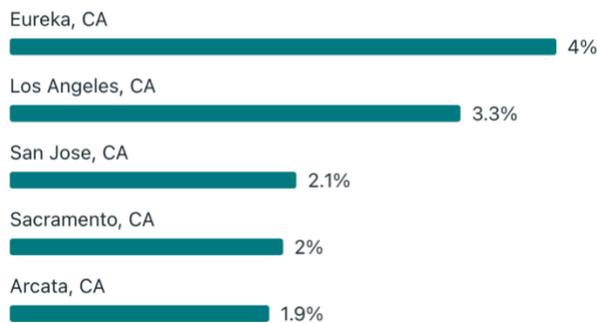


Current Instagram Demographics Below:

Age & gender



Top cities



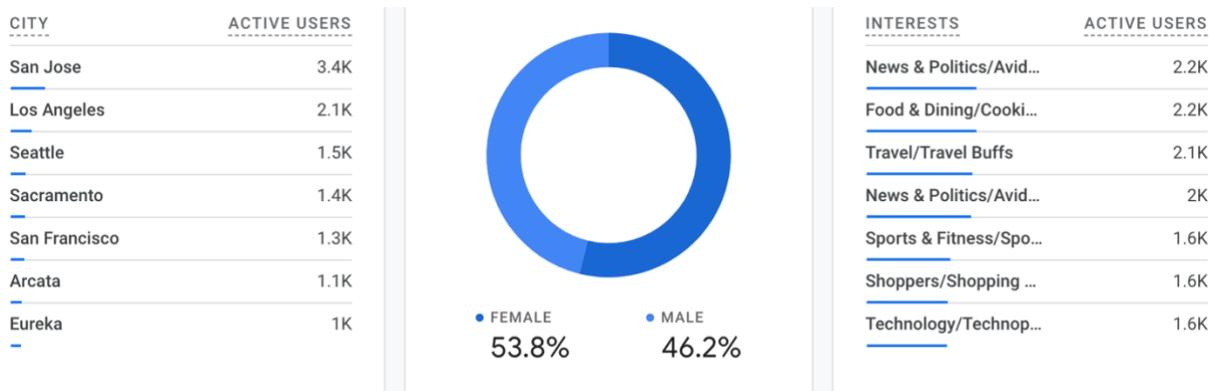
Top countries



An interesting note about our social media demographics is that Eureka and Arcata both emerge as “top cities” in our Instagram following. This may be because Instagram’s userbase tends to be younger, and many of our “local” followers are likely Cal Poly students who have double residency aren’t as likely to use Facebook.

VisitRedwoods.com 28 Day Stats (Oct 24 - Nov 20, 2024)

Our website “views” were at 91K (down 20%) with approximately 40K “users” over the past 28 days. You’ll notice that our “top cities” show the usual patterns with San Jose, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Sacramento among the top of the list, but traffic from these locations have reduced significantly. San Jose, for example, had over 11K active users in late August, now just over 3.4K visitors. This follows the typical cycle of tourist activity, peaking in July/Aug and dropping-off towards the end of the year.



Avenue of the Giants remains the most popular topic on the website, with “Events”, “Redwood National Park”, “Drive Through a Redwood” trailing closely behind.

Our 9th most popular page “Request Map & Guide” includes a form, designed to collect mailing info from interested travelers. We may also want to provide a PDF download from this section (and future email blasts) now that a new version of the map and guide is available. We would lose the opportunity to collect visitor info with an immediate download, but it’s safe to say we’re already receiving a low percentage of contact forms compared to the 1,924 monthly page views.

Total	84,544 100% of total
1 Avenue of the Giants	6,389
2 Events	5,334
3 Redwood National Park	4,288
4 Drive Through a Redwood	4,247
5 Travel Info for the Redwood Forests of California, Eureka and Humboldt County	3,584
6 Fern Canyon in Prairie Creek Redwoods SP	2,593
7 Lodging	2,428
8 Ten Must See Redwood Trees	2,404
9 Request Map & Guide	1,924
10 Lodging Search	1,452