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OPINION

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OUR READERS' VIEWS

Wildlife key to area tourism

To the Editor:

As a business owner and land-owner in Cochise County, I was interested to learn of the recommendations of North Star Destination Strategies to the City of Sierra Vista, as reported in the Herald in May. Several of those recommendations resonated deeply with me, especially the emphasis on how our beautiful landscape in southeastern Arizona represents a tremendous asset for our communities.

We moved here in 1996 because of the abundant wildlife and wildlife watching is the number one reason why people visit our Cochise Stronghold Retreat. People come here for an exceptional experience close to nature, where they can walk quietly along canyon trails and view multitudes of diverse and rare birds from their patio. Our business depends on our very special natural environment to attract guests from all over the country. The North Star report reflects what we know and experience in our business – that the natural assets of Cochise County hold immense value for future growth, as nature tourism attracts more visi-

tors and their travel dollars.

My recent summer vacation took me to New York, Boston and Washington D.C. I couldn't wait to get home to our beautiful, natural environment. While exciting in the short term, enduring the stress of those big cities highlighted why many of our guests come here to decompress in our spectacular Sky Islands.

Other recent studies demonstrate the value of nature-based economic development for rural western communities. An economic study from Southwick Associates showed that wildlife watching brought \$14 million in retail sales to Cochise County in one recent year alone. Another study from Colorado College found that "Voters in Arizona say the most significant factors in choosing their home state are the healthy, outdoor lifestyle and a clean environment. Voters there also point to the ability to live near and enjoy public lands as significant a factor as economic opportunities."

The spectacular public lands we enjoy can also attract new, "smart" businesses. As detailed in a 2012 report by Headwaters Economics, "Entrepreneurs and talented work-

ers are choosing to work where they can enjoy outdoor recreation and natural landscapes."

For these reasons it's imperative that residents and business owners in Cochise County recognize the value – personal, inspirational and economic – of our incredible natural resources and precious public lands. We should adopt relevant recommendations of the North Star Destination Strategies report, and preserve our vital natural heritage for southeastern Arizona, now and forever.

Nancy Yates
 Owner, Cochise Stronghold Retreat

The June 26 Sierra Vista Herald/Bisbee Review had an opinion piece authored by Jack Nugent of Bisbee. In it, he attempted to tarnish and deny the overwhelming evidence that we are experiencing human caused global warming. The problem is that he has let his opinion take over when citing facts.

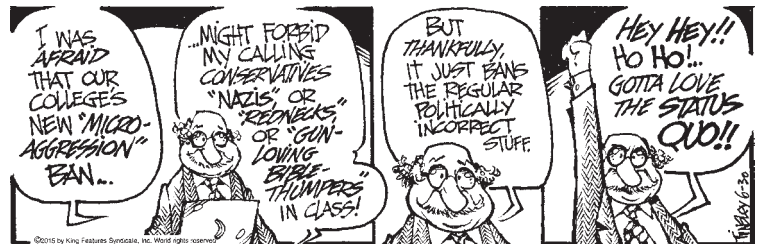
Mr. Nugent points to Lamar Smith's committee and people testifying in its hearings. Smith has told us the purpose of that committee is to destroy any effort aimed at curbing global warming. He hasn't read the latest report from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, but he says he

Climate change is real

To the Editor:

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MALLARD FILLMORE



"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." — The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

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