

Travelling the Last Mile: Communicating Cryospheric Knowledge

Robert Bindshadler

NASA Emeritus Scientist

There is no doubt within the cryospheric community that “our” world, dominated by ice and low temperatures, is reacting strongly to increased warming of our planet. I address the challenges these physical changes pose for our scientific community. In a sense, we were caught with our pants down, equally astonished as was the global audience, by the surprises of disintegrating ice shelves, accelerating outlet glaciers and shrinking land ice. We have responded by focusing on new areas of research and been treated to impressively precise data sets that inform us about ongoing change. The excitement and, I’d like to think, the importance of what is happening to land ice across the globe has attracted new colleagues to share in our investigations forming new collaborations and interdisciplinary teams. But are these changes enough? Are we simply recasting the science we do rather than transforming the landscape of what it means to be a “cryospher”? Being thrust to the front and center of the climate change stage not only provides new attention and frequent headlines, but new responsibilities, as well. What are these new responsibilities and how do we meet them?