

In Cold Pursuit: the Devious Design of NSF Grantee W-218-M

*Sarah Andrews, geologist and writer
PO Box 1521, Sebastopol, CA 95473 CanyonWren@aol.com*

Communicating science to the public is tricky business. In an era of information overload and specialization of knowledge, we have by necessity become bridge builders, bringing our understanding to those who benefit from our discoveries and findings. Professional jargon, PowerPoint, and the constraints of technical writing can narrow our audience to a handful of colleagues, isolating our message. Instead of building public trust, this communication bias can create misunderstandings and separation. The success of our projects, the progress of knowledge, and, increasingly, the continuation of funding are at stake.

In *Cold Pursuit*, a science-based novel (number eleven in the "Em Hansen forensic geology" series) will frankly soft-sell science by conveying Antarctic pursuits in fictionalized form. Lay readers lack the specialized knowledge necessary to read scientific texts and journals, but most love to learn recreationally by reading a well-researched story. As an added bonus, the power of the narrative voice will make the reader a participant in our work, counteracting negative stereotypes of creepy, untrustworthy scientists that are so common in popular literature. Instead, our passion to understand Antarctica will be revealed within the correct story form: the hero's journey. By thus restating the quest for scientific understanding as an archetypal story form, I use the same engine that drives us to the coldest place on Earth in pursuit of knowledge to convey the reader to a place of understanding.