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*Humanity's Evolving Story:  
Sharing Scientific Research Outcomes  
In A Changing World*



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Thank you very much for the kind introduction and for the opportunity to speak to you and be involved, if only virtually in this workshop. I bring to you the very best wishes of the United Nations to all.

Please allow me to begin my story by saying that I don't think there has ever been a more important time to hold a workshop like this. Never before has how science tells its stories been more important. The story humanity has been telling itself about itself over the past two hundred years has proven to be dangerous to our future. Science has the power to change the path of that narrative and alter the next chapter of humanity's story so that it is not our final chapter.

Even though many are rushing back to be part of it as the pandemic temporarily winds down, the story we want to keep telling ourselves will not sustain us. What we clearly and most urgently need right now is a fresh dream of who we are – one which tells us how to act; new stories about taking care of one another and what we have that drive us to take appropriate action. As part of this narrative, we also need to create a new sense of time that extends forward to include future generations. Right now, finding that story may be our most urgent collective action.

But we need to hurry. We are witnessing a great bonfire of our heritage. Things are being lost that have not yet been found. We need to find them before they, and we, are gone.

Fortunately, we see that humanity is already trying to change its story. So, let's take a few moments to think about some of the larger ways in which we are trying to change our story and how that narrative is trying to change itself.

Let's start with an example we all see: reconciliation with our own Indigenous Peoples. Over the course of most of my life, the injustices that we visited upon these peoples were completely ignored. It was as if these peoples barely existed.

Look at how much this story has changed, even in the past five years. Take, for example, how the story of colonization has changed – and with it the stories associated with the urgent need for reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples with whom we share this country.

Global Water Futures is one of the first major global research networks to really pick up on this. In this regard, may I make an observation, so very relevant to the work Global Water Futures has done, on the intention and potential force of the land acknowledgments which are now becoming common around the world. While this new practice is of great importance in and of itself as a sign of respect, it can be, and do, even more. Land acknowledgement should be seen as more than the politics of recognizing historic territoriality.

Such acknowledgment can be more than just about the past, it can be about the present and the future. It can and should acknowledge the relationship between land and people. It can and should be about our common intention on the landscapes we share. It should be about how each of us, now, will add on a layer of experience, knowledge and narrative to the map of place.

By respectfully acknowledging that Indigenous stories and perspectives belong uniquely to them, we acknowledge also that all of us have a role to play in understanding, protecting and sharing the places that mean most to them and ultimately to all.

Global Water Futures has clearly shown that by moving forward together at the speed of trust we work toward the difficult goal of decolonizing ourselves and rediscovering common treaty with the Earth. What a story!

Perhaps because I vigorously support reconciliation, I have noticed and am glad that much is being made lately of Indigenous stories and narratives as enduring cultural traditions we can all learn from.

While I am thrilled that we are at last giving Indigenous stories the attention they deserve, we should not underestimate the extent to which other stories and story-tellers shape and influence our society and how even their stories are changing.

If they are not stories, what then, for example, are movies? That said, that we often tell ourselves the wrong kinds of stories cannot be denied.

It won't be alien monsters sent by extra-galactic empires seeking our precious resources, or global cabals like Spectre with special weapons that threaten us, it is our own paralyzing sense and habit of entitlement that will not just bring down us but the entire world. Still, though they may not be the stories we need to tell ourselves right now, it cannot be denied that their popularity continues to demonstrate our society's need for, and love of narrative.

I think of this after listening to an interview with Margaret Atwood ostensibly on the topic of the importance of stories and story-telling as she celebrates the publication of a new book of poems entitled *Dearly* and a collection of essays entitled *Burning Questions*. Atwood began the interview by explaining that stories came into existence originally, not unlike songlines, to teach people what to do and not do and where to go to ensure survival. Stories also delineated the invisible, and allowed projections into the future to be made based on memories of the past and what we knew of the presence. Hence, stories of Rain Gods and other prognostic inventions and superstitions.

But it must not be forgotten either, Atwood advises, that it has always been in the nature of humans to also use stories to deceive. It did not take long for stories about enemies to emerge. These stories included warnings not just about the dangers of encounters with other species but also about the untrustworthiness of others of our own species. Stories have also been employed to evil ends.

For what purpose, for example, would you keep telling stories about why you had to annually sacrifice children in order to be a good person and serve your gods? And what about stories that appeal to and justify greed and hunger for power? There have been many of these. And there are some real whoppers being told now. If you don't think so, may I invite you watch the movie *Don't Look Up* again.

As in the past, stories clearly play a huge role in our contemporary geopolitical circumstances. To hold a nation state together you need a story in which people can deeply believe.

Time and again we have seen that the moment people don't believe in a common story is when things begin to fall apart. The United States is presently a case in point. The stories that have for more than two centuries held the United States together are those that tell of a land of virtuous light; but even that story needed an enemy – a Penguin or Joker to America's Batman, if you will.

From 1945 until 1989, the Soviet Union was that enemy; an enemy that surviving Cold Warriors would like to resurrect in Putin and Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine. It won't work, of course. Why? The U.S. itself has become an object lesson on the age-old curse of nations falling prey to the very authoritarianism that it told the world it would always protect it from. The U.S. presently appears poised to self-destruct. A divided country is wrestling over who constitutes and should constitute the real America.

The bitter fight is over the very soul of the country. This new story is one to which we must pay close attention. It tells us that no founding story of any country sacrosanct, including ours. This could, in itself, impact the reliability of research funding in the future

In a recent webinar, no less a figure than Tom Axworthy outlined the threats to the established story that we as a nation tell ourselves, in terms of withering national security. These threats include three new ones and three that have persisted because we have been unable or unwilling over time to deal with them.

The first of these threats have to do with our long-standing relationship with our American neighbours who since, 1924 have maintained that the United States would respond to any threat to Canadian national security as if it was a threat to the national security of the United States. This was affirmed again during the Presidency of Franklin Roosevelt just before the Second World War. Under the umbrella of American protection, Canadians have become comfortable and complacent with respect to national security. But now that comfort is eroding. The sense that Canadians have that our house is fireproof under the umbrella of American protection is wrong. Our house is not fireproof. A Disunited States has transformed itself from being a security gift to a national security threat to Canada.

The second new threat to the Canadian national security story and our comfortable self perception is the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We forget that we effectively are a border state with Russia in the Arctic, in which the Russians have massively increased military presence. Canada is a founding member of NATO. In the event of an all-out war with Russia, we would potentially see Russian Intercontinental Ballistic Missile and bombers over Canadians territory. The third new threat to Canadian national security is the growth of extreme populism in our own country. Years of rage farming by the extreme right is yielding results.

In a recent poll it was found that 50% of our population in this country is angry; and 14% harbour extreme rage about the state of our politics in this country. Even more telling is that a full half of all Canadians get their news from social media only, which should tell us something about our own communication.

These threats are being amplified even as we fail to address on-going threats like pandemics, climate change and issues related to cyber security, and out-of-control money laundering in this country which is apparently so rampant that there are 176 known criminal organizations and gangs across the country that are now fully integrated illegally into our national economy and cost taxpayers \$130 billion a year in lost taxes. How do we top a story as immediately sensational as that?



Divisiveness is somehow contagious, the same thing that is happening in the United States is now happening in Canada. The only difference, for now, is that the stories Canadians continue at least for now to tell themselves are different than those Americans have begun telling one another. How much longer this will be the case remains to be seen. Our democracy is under threat. Oh Canada! We stand on guard for thee!

Meanwhile, climate change continues to accelerate everywhere. And the story just gets worse and worse. War and warming already threatening the entire world. Margaret Atwood foresees that things are going to get nastier as there is less to go around and share. One of the things that seem certain to Atwood is that climate change will make food more scarce.

Authoritarianism will rise, making greater conflict inevitable. The wars brought about by climate heating will kill more people than the extreme events that warming will generate. This [expand] presents a problem for narrative; and a serious challenge to story-telling. At present the narrative is basically that there is no future for a mid-sized, land-based, oxygen-breathing species in a world where there is less and less oxygen which is exactly what the world we will face if we kill the oceans and keep altering and heating the Earth's atmosphere.

This, I wish to submit, is not a story. It isn't a story if all the narrative tells us is that we can't agree on what is wrong or what to do about it. And even if it was a story, it is not one we need to hear or tell.

Moreover, stories need characters. Statistics, table and graphs don't work in narrative. They are not the essence or the substance of story.

Not understanding tables and graphs adds to the feeling people feel have of being helpless and overwhelmed. Addiction to constant communication and increasing exposure to the cultural nerve gas of social and other mass media, we have come to live increasingly in the invisible cities of our minds. Without a guiding story, they say, how are we supposed to act? Because they don't know what to do, they don't even want to look. *Don't Look Up!* Instead, they simply turn away.

As I see it, Margaret Atwood is right. We need better stories.

But here we cannot but return to the to the lessons we might learn from Indigenous stories and story-telling. As my First Nation colleague Tim Patterson recently reminded me, as we as a society awaken to the need to commit ourselves to creating and telling ourselves new and better survival stories, perhaps we should first remember some of the ones we have already been told.

Humanity needs a new story. A story for our time. And that is why we need science to step up to the plate with better stories. And it is happening, but in my view, it isn't happening fast enough, and that is why this workshop matters so much.

I am not a scientist. My role has been to bear witness and help tell your story. In this regard, Lawrence Martz's opening remarks deserve further attention. This is the fifth U Of S-based research network in which I have been involved. Over that nearly 20-year period, I have seen a great evolution in the understanding of the importance of communication. In the earliest networks, communication of the research outcomes was not a priority. I noticed that perhaps 10% or 15% of the budget was reserved to communication to user groups – if such existed – and to the public, usually at the end of the life of the network.

What I noticed was that as the network came to the end of its life, whatever was left of the communications budget after research over-runs were withdrawn from it was spent in the last few weeks on whatever forms of communication easily available on such short notice. This communication most often took the form of brief summaries of findings published as brochures or reports which appear on websites that in time no one visits.

The general sense seemed to be, “well, here are our findings, we have done our job and we are done. We are not advocates, nor is it our job to be. Its up to those who take an interest in those findings – whether in government or civil society – to figure out what they mean and what to do with them.” What mattered was how many graduate students were trained and how many academic papers were published. And that was it. In my estimation there were three major problems with this approach.

The first was the established propensity of the climate science community to err in their storytelling on the side of the least drama. Look where that has gotten us. That leads us to the second problem with our approach.

Though we understated them, many of the outcomes were simply astonishing and it was of vital importance to all of society that the outcomes of this research be translated as soon as humanly possible into language leaders and the public could understand before it was too late to change the human story before it came to a sad end.

The third was the assumption that over time, despite all the aggressive self-interest of others and the fact that access doesn't necessarily mean influence in politics, that sooner or later climate truth would eventually find its way to power. Well, it has, but it appears truth has arrived too late to counter the stories others are telling more loudly and persistently to power.

As someone who works on translating scientific research outcomes into language the public can understand and building the bridge between scientific research outcome and public policy, I have tried to demonstrate just how powerful emerging and evolving scientific knowledge can be if it can be placed in a timely manner in the hands of decision-makers. Global Water Futures fully realized this and deserves to be much lauded for incorporating communication and knowledge mobilization into the design of the network from the moment of inception.

From the moment of its birth communication and knowledge mobilization had an accelerated profile which grew as research findings matured as the program came to a close.

We see now that this happened just in time. As we have seen the communications environment has changed dramatically over the course of the life of this network. And not always in positive ways.

My irritation resides in being told constantly that everything I, and my generation, have done with respect to communicating water and water-related climate science failed because our approaches were wrong. Let me read to you a quote from *Generation Dread, Finding Purpose in an Age of Climate Crisis*, a best seller recently published by Britt Wray.

*Communication about the climate can be informal, between two or more people on the street or at home, and it can be professional and public, as we see with environmental campaigns. The problem is that we have been doing both types all wrong for decades.*

With all the respect and diplomacy, I can muster all I can say, I can't thank Britt for telling us we have been doing the wrong thing in terms of science communications for decades. Where were all of you and the rest of your generation that are making such judgments when we were all alone out there fighting this fight. You weren't even born yet.

How can you know in retrospect what we were up against, the insults, the hate mail, the death threats. Do you really think we didn't pay the price for presenting truth to power? Are we all just supposed to forget that story and forget all of us who raised the earliest alarms along with it?

I maintain that while they may not have had the effect we desired, the approaches we had were all we had and, despite the retrospective criticism of some social scientists, were not wrong. Science did what science is supposed to do. It has relentlessly sought the truth and did its best to represent that truth as accurately as humanly possible.

It is not the fault of science that it failed to state the truth and tell its stories in ways that weren't a threat to vested interests or in a manner that did not elicit public alarm. What we did learn, however, was that much of society has a very low threshold in terms of accepting reality. The truth, however, appears to have won out. We were right. There is cause for alarm. But that is not to say that science couldn't have done more or can't do things differently now.

Across Canada and in the United States early career scientists are rebelling against academic constraints on public and community engagement with their work and their findings. I have heard early career researchers in the broadest range of disciplines say that there is far too much of a focus on publishing papers and advancing their academic careers.

More attention has to be put on the potential role of science and scientists in actively engaging in helping society get through the crisis in the human journey caused by ecological overshoot, biodiversity decline and potentially existential threat of climate change.

Many young scientists I have noticed are asking why they have to commit to the “publish or perish” paradigm until I am 50 and have finally established my career and reputation before I can escape the academic tunnel-vision that prevents me from doing more with what I know to help address our planetary emergency? The refrain is getting louder. “I can’t wait that long. And the world can’t wait that long either.

The fact is, however, that the world *has* changed, and the ways we used to tell our stories in the past no longer work, and, more than that the story itself has changed.

The human story is rapidly changing and the physical sciences have fallen behind in keeping up with that story. As a result, the social sciences and special interests are picking up on that story and telling it as they see it. Because many are willing to stretch or even ignore truth in order to achieve their aims, they are telling more compelling stories and because they know how to target them so they stand out even in the barrage of information to which each of us is subject.

Even though, in many cases the stories they are telling are the wrong stories, even false stories, their stories - because they are told loudly and are repeated again and again - are being listened to by a confused and divided public paralyzed by the complexity of these global threats, collective wishful thinking and appallingly weak political leadership into a sense of near total helplessness.

The cacophony out there is deafening. By using op-eds to spread misinformation and lies, many of the people with whom we are competing to be heard are violating the fundamental ethics of story-telling. As a consequence, we find ourselves now in a different stage of the climate narrative. As I have outlined, the sciences are not in agreement on where we go from here.

According to the social sciences, presenting ever more facts at this stage may be counterproductive in terms of reaching out to the people whose minds we want to make up or change.

There are also social scientists out there who maintain that all opinions are of equal value – that no one’s opinion should be allowed to have more weight than anyone else’s - and that all knowledge is subjective and therefore there is no such thing as objective truth. As the political right has shown, truth can be whatever you say it is. We don’t seem to see that, while academically appealing, it is ideas like these that are being twisted into fuel for climate denial and the dismissal of scientific evidence as a meaningful ground for decision-making.



A helpful suggestion that does come from the social sciences is a preliminary breakdown of categories of public reaction to the climate threat. Helpful research has also emerged recently from the neurosciences, who have shown why we tend to favour personal stories and shared experiences over reams of data or facts.

Neuroscientists have now shown that our brainwaves actually start to synchronize and resonate with those of the storyteller our emotions are following. And that is how change of mind occurs. I laughed out loud when I read these findings.

While I agreed with Monica Morrison that there are some things I need to unlearn. I don't have to start all over again. The principles of effective communication— the ones by which we have stood all along— at least to some extent still pertain. We know now that the best arguments in the world won't necessarily change a person's mind. What might do that, however, is a good story. We must be the keepers and tellers of unforgettable stories. Our world, however, is changing. We need to create new myths and memes that we share as part of a new era of storytelling. We need to evoke deep memories and craft them into new and compelling self-fulfilling predictions that inspire joy through meaningful action. We have been good at this in the past, but the question now is how – when the product of so much communication out there is doubt and our product is thought leadership - do we make ourselves more clearly heard in the complicated communications environment that exists now? That is what this workshop is all about.

Each of us will have our own personal way of framing and addressing these challenges. As many of you have perhaps found, the increasing gravity of the dangerous situation we have brought upon ourselves has forced me to rethink my approaches to how and what I communicate. I have been forced to realize that some of the approaches I've employed in the past may not work anymore. But there are a few things that worked and still work for me. Let me share some of them. While I do so, I invite you to think about your most memorable communications successes, for knowing this audience there have been be many.

I have been most successful when I have become a enduring magnet for those wanting access to what and who I know, and what they know. While it may take years of cultivating long-term relations with specific journalists and news reporters the reward is worth when finally they come to you regularly when they want to know what is happening. As some of you will attest, the establishment of such relationships is not a passive process. To be on speed dial with CBC or a newspaper or national wire service, you have to keep them in your loop, not just during the life of your current research network. You need to keep them regularly informed throughout your career ,and do so in a manner that makes them as curious about the truth as you are. The challenge is to become indispensable to those you know need the knowledge you are accruing. To do that I have found you need to bring that knowledge to users on their terms not yours.

We have to anticipate what they need, at times do their due diligence for them, and we have to do so with a clarity and brevity that cannot be ignored. What you share with them has to be so compelling that it becomes part of their story and not just part of yours. That said, control over the narrative in the story has to reside in large measure with the recipient. They have to be able to tell your story in their own words. So, arriving at that story has to be a shared journey.

What I have also learned was the power of imagery in changing peoples' minds. I cannot tell you how many times people come up to me at conference and say, I still remember that image you showed us ten years ago of an atmospheric river. I had never heard of such a thing, but I sure as hell have now.

Or they come up and say that they remember an animation I showed of projected glacier loss in the mountain West produced by a network researcher to whom I have given full credit for their work , and in 30 seconds, their minds were changed regarding the threat posed to our future by climate change. More on images and how they can now be used to in our changing contemporary context later in the workshop.

What I have learned is that good story-tellers are meaning-makers and, as this is a time when we need better stories to give the world new meaning this is their moment. In this regard it is vital to know what the research outcomes you want to share might mean to others.

We cannot just share facts; to compete in the current global communications free-for-all, we have to impart compelling meaning. As Nancy Goucher has said, we have to identify and the kernel of our story. We have to know what elements of our story we want the users with whom we wish to engage to remember and then retell at the dinner table, in their respective board rooms and perhaps, later in the week, even at cocktail parties. To do that, we need to decide what images we want to indelibly imprint on their minds.

Speaking of doing just that, let me give you an example of how researchers in the Global Water Futures have blown my mind with a story in which an unforgettable image was brilliantly and dramatically embedded. Modellers take note. After carefully analyzing the disastrous flood there in 2010, I have maintained a particular interest in water policy issues in Pakistan. When an even worse flood occurred there this year in which 33 million people were displaced a third of the country under water, our national inaction on the climate threat pushed me into a dark depression.

In the midst of this I, as a regular member of his dedicated user group, met with Professor Martyn Clark who showed me the product of the years of work he and his colleagues have committed to building a climate model that couples hydrology and terrestrial and ecosystem dynamics.

This breakthrough in modelling animation encompasses not just the North American continent, but the entire planet.

“Do you mean you can now model the climate of a planet?” I asked, not sure I had heard him correctly.

“Yes, Bob,” he said slowly, “we can now model the climate of an entire planet in real-time. A small one certainly,” he said, “but yes, a planet. The third one from the sun.”

“That’s the one we live on,” I said. “Yes,” he said, “the one we live on.”

Sensing perhaps in this a Nobel moment, I heard the incorrigible Renaissance humanist in me whispering to my heart but loudly enough that my head could hear. “Maybe Bob,” it said, “just maybe there is still hope.” And there is.

Now that is powerful story-telling.

Finally, however, we cannot ignore the fact that we live in a time when the story we may want to tell is one you know those it is most important to tell it to don’t want to hear it. In these situations, I have found that it is often possible to imbed your story in one they want to hear. My most memorable success in this occurred during the dark days of the Harper years.

To keep the Water for Life Decade going in Canada, I needed support from then Environment Minister John Baird. The only way I could get access to him was through my local Member of Parliament, a cowboy redneck named Myron Thompson, who was proud to be pilloried regularly by the CBC for his populist outbursts in the media.

The Mayor of our town, was a good friend of Myron's, arranged a meeting at a local restaurant. Before the meeting, the Mayor warned me that Myron would not even countenance any discussion about climate change, and by this time that was a concern I was well known for communicating.

I barely made it through the restaurant door before Thompson stood up and roared at me that neither he nor any of his constituents believed in "that there climate bullshit I was promoting." He was so angry he had turned red in the face, and it appeared that the top button of his cowboy shirt was under such intense pressure that it would soon pop off and, at 300 kilometres an hour, embed itself in the surrounding drywall.

While he continued to shout at me, I calmly approached his table and sat down without saying a word. Mollified, he soon sat down also. For what seemed a very long time, we simply stared at one another and then I said, "if don't want to talk about climate change, how are you on water?"

He began to stutter, got all red again, and then shouted. "Water. Why didn't tell me that you wanted to talk about water. My father was a water master in Colorado. What do you know about water?"

Five days later in was in Minister Baird's office in Ottawa and he was there with me. Baird, of course, was of no use, but the whole experience taught be a great deal about finding common ground with those who oppose you.

Though my colleagues couldn't believe it, Myron Thompson and I actually became good friends, good enough that when he retired, I was invited to the party.

Another thing I learned and stand firmly by is that we cannot do what we want and need to do by ourselves. In this urgent moment, however, science on its own cannot give us all we need. We need other forms of consciousness to give us that story. And that is why we need art.

Fortunately for humanity, science has a sibling. Science's older sister is art. Since the dawn of time art has been a mirror of the mind's journey toward truth, a mirror that illuminates the way for others to follow. Now, more than ever, with the planet in peril, we need the power of art and its truth to inspire and guide us.

Presently, those who devise the social and economic policies we're all asked to support and abide by encounter little or no art in their deliberations. This is an unenlightened, not to say counterproductive, approach to addressing existential threats to the future of our presence on this planet.

Barry Lopez tells us that it was during the Enlightenment, that art, as a distinct form of truth-telling, began to lose its dominant place in the human imagination to what science and the scientific revolution was objectively proving about the nature of the world.

But now we appear to be on the cusp of another kind of orientation, a resituating of art once more in a position of considerable perceptual authority.

Scientists, as we see in the exhibitions that have been mounted and the creation of the Virtual Water Gallery under the aegis of Global Water Futures, are not the only ones that the public trusts with the truth. We put our faith in art because we know that, not unlike scientists, artists not only make ritual, but actual, lifestyle sacrifices to be worthy of their authenticity and the authenticity and sincerity of their voice.

Science overlaps in many ways with the professed aim of art, to make what is significant apparent; to make what we know intelligible. Nietzsche had a point when he offered that art is the means by which we can confront the truth of our time without being turned to stone. The goal of both art and science is to open people's hearts without breaking them.

It is essential now, as global ecological overshoot and climate change pose ever more ominous threats, that we trust the intuition of artists and listen to them. But the stories artists tell cannot all be about the tsunami of horror we face. Balance is critical here. Climate change is not so much a fight as it is a predicament, one that we all face.

The exhibitions that are part of the Global Water Futures program extend an invitation to all to reimagine the future, to identify a different road than the one that the prophets of technological innovation, or even climate change itself, are offering us.



A road to survival.

These exhibitions subtly set forth an existential proposition, not just for us, but for all of humanity. The future will come by chance, or by choice. Which of these two worlds would you choose? What a story!

Please allow me to conclude with some brief final observations.

The world is changing in troubling ways that undermine our well-being. What we have is not better than what we had. We not just leaving behind the past as we remember it and moving on with our lives.

We are losing the very world in which that past was once embedded. We need to get back to safe ground. Ground upon which we can rely. Fortunately, that ground still exists, and we are part of it. That ground exists in connection to where we live; in connection to place and with one another in this scientific community.

We face a huge challenge. We must invent another kind of civilization, one more cognizant of limits, less greedy, more compassionate, more inclusive and less exploitive. From this we see that what we have saved, in terms of natural functioning systems, may now save us. Let me repeat that. What we have saved may now save us. And that is part of our story.

In this context, what we urgently need now is a second, new and very different, Enlightenment. A second Enlightenment that builds on the foundation of the first. But no Enlightenment can proceed without a renaissance. We, all of us, can be that renaissance. We, all of us, can help bring about that new and wiser beginning, that next great story. A better world is possible. Let us create that world.

So, what are the takeaways?

We have a long way to go and there is much to do if we are to make it through this bottleneck in the human journey and we are running out time.

This is the great burden that now rests upon those involved in the telling of our most important stories: what falls to us is the task of imaginatively restoring agency and voice to natural process so that together we can restore our humanity and then restore the world.

The fate of humans, and all our relatives, depends on it.

As with all the most important endeavors in human history, this, therefore, is a task that is at once aesthetic and political – and because of the magnitude of the crisis that besets the planet, it is a task that is now freighted with the most pressing moral urgency.

That's my story and I am sticking to it.

Now it is time for you to share your stories and to think more about who you want to tell them to next and how you want to tell them. And you have some of the best communications experts in the country to help you work that out.

We have two days. Keep your eyes of the knowledge user ball.

Thank you.

There is an always significant difference between knowing and believing. We may know that the earth turns, but we believe, as we say, that the sun rises. We know by evidence, or by trust in people who have examined the evidence in a way we trust is trustworthy. We may sometimes be persuaded to believe by reason, but within the welter of our experience reason is limited and weak. We believe always by coming, in some sense, to see. We believe in what is apparent, in what we can imagine or “picture” in our minds, in what we feel to be true, in what our hearts tell us, in experience, in stories – above all, perhaps, in stories.

Wendell Berry

*Our Only World*