

From: Ross Hays [mailto:Ross.Hays@csbf.nasa.gov]
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2009 10:35 AM
To: steig@ess.washington.edu
Subject: New data show much of Antarctica is warming

Eric,

Let me first say that this is my own opinion and does not represent the agency I work for. I feel your study is absolutely wrong. There are very few stations in Antarctica to begin with and only a hand full with 50 years of data. Satellite data is just approaching thirty years of available information. In my experience as a day to day forecaster that has to travel and do field work in Antarctica the summer seasons have been getting colder. In the late 1980s helicopters were used to take our personnel to Williams Field from McMurdo Station due to the annual receding of the Ross Ice Shelf, but in the past few years the thaw has been limited and vehicles can continue to make the transition and drive on the ice.

One climate note to pass along is December 2006 was the coldest December ever for McMurdo Station. In a synoptic perspective the cooler sea surface temperatures have kept the maritime storms farther offshore in the summer season and the colder more dense air has rolled from the South Pole to the ice shelf.

There was a paper presented at the AMS Conference in New Orleans last year noting over 70% of the continent was cooling due to the ozone hole. We launch balloons into the stratosphere and the anticyclone that develops over the South Pole has been displaced and slow to establish itself over the past five seasons. The pattern in the troposphere has reflected this trend with more maritime (warmer) air around the Antarctic Peninsula which is also where most of the automated weather stations are located for West Antarctica which will give you the average warmer readings and skew the data for all of West Antarctica.

With statistics you can make numbers go to almost any conclusion you want. It saddens me to see members of the scientific community do this for media coverage.

Ross Hayes