

Mars Exploration Science Monthly Newsletter

A publication of the Mars Program Office and the Mars Exploration Program Analysis Group (MEPAG)

March 2020

Mars Science News

Reminder: MEPAG virtual meeting (VM8) will be held Friday, February 28, 1:30-3:30pm EST

The next virtual meeting (VM8) of the Mars Exploration Program Analysis Group (MEPAG), is scheduled on Friday, February 28th, 2020, at 10:30 am-12:30 pm PST (1:30 pm-3:30 pm EST).

- To join the meeting, go to: <https://jpl.webex.com/>, Meeting number (access code): 909 148 807.
- All meeting information can be found at: <https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/meetings.cfm>, and presentations and a meeting summary will be posted there within two weeks after the meeting.

Virtual Meeting #8 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. EST		
Time (EST)	Topic	Speaker
1:30	1. MEPAG Activities since VM7	R.A. Yingst
1:45	2. MEP Update	M. Meyer
1:55	3. MASWG Status	B. Jakosky
2:00	4. Goals Document Update following Community Inputs	D. Banfield
2:30	Discussion	All
2:50	5. JWST Cycle 1 Call for Proposals	S. Milam
3:00	6. Planetary Data System (PDS) Update	R. Arvidson
3:15	7. New Planetary Science Journal (PSJ)	R. Beyer
3:20	Discussion/Meeting Close	All
3:30	End	

2nd Information Circular for April 2020 MEPAG meeting (#38) is available

The next face-to-face Mars Exploration Program Analysis Group (MEPAG) meeting (#38) is scheduled for Wednesday-Friday, April 15-17, 2020. This meeting will be held at the [Residence Inn Arlington Capital View](#) (Arlington, VA). The main foci of this MEPAG meeting are preparation for the next Planetary Science Decadal Survey, the next steps in Mars Sample Return, and other Mars exploration plans within NASA and other space agencies. The full agenda is included in the 2nd Information Circular, which has been posted at <https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/meetings.cfm?expand=m38>.

In particular, we note that the agenda includes time for community interests and questions to be presented and discussed. Specifically:

- the presentation of community-generated white paper topics (via lightning talks and posters), and
- a community forum period for discussion of community concerns.

Instructions on how to participate in either of these presentation forums are included in the 2nd Information Circular. Additionally, information about travel awards for up to three early career participants from the NASA Mars Program Office is provided (note that eligibility criteria has been updated to be more inclusive – see the application itself at <https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/student.cfm?expand=student> for updated information).

Important deadlines

- March 6: Early Career travel grant application deadline
- March 16: Hotel room block deadline
- March 19: White paper concept submission deadline
- April 1: Registration deadline & Community Forum topic suggestion deadline

Student Travel Grants Available for 6th International Planetary Dunes Workshop

Travel funding has been made available for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students and early career professionals to attend the [6th International Planetary Dunes Workshop](#) to be held May 12-15, 2020, in Alamosa, CO, USA.

- The NASA Mars Program Office (MPO) offers travel funding awards for up to 3 U.S. undergraduate and graduate students. NASA Headquarters will make the selections.
- The U.S Geological Survey (USGS), with funding support from NASA Solar System Workings program, offers travel funding awards for up to 7 U.S. undergraduate and graduate students, as well as select early career professionals. The Dunes2020 science organizing committee will make the selections.

To be considered for either of these awards, submit an application form and a first-author abstract by the **5pm CDT March 5** deadline (see link above). Note that the same form can be used as application to one or both programs; each awardee will receive only one award, which will reimburse travel costs up to \$1200, according to JPL/USGS/government-specified allowances, following conclusion of the workshop. The application form and additional information can be found at: <https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/student.cfm?expand=student>.

Astrobiology Graduate Conference (AbGradCon) to be held in Asia

On September 14-18, 2020, the NASA Astrobiology Graduate Conference (AbGradCon) will be hosted at ELSI (Earth-Life Science Institute) in Tokyo, Japan. AbGradCon is an annual conference specifically for graduate students and early-career postdocs, organized and executed by graduate students and early-career postdocs, who study the diverse topics encompassing the field of astrobiology. The application deadline is March 15, 2020 and we also expect to secure some travel funds for young researchers around the world. The website and application can be found at: <http://abgradcon.org>.

Introductory workshop on planetary image analysis with ArcGIS at LPSC

The Spacecraft Planetary Imaging Facility (SPIF) of Cornell University is offering this free workshop at the upcoming 51st LPSC on Sunday, March 15, sponsored by the Regional Planetary Image Facility (RPIF) network. This will be an introductory level course accessible to participants with no prior ArcGIS experience. The workshop will run from 9:00am to 4:00pm and will cover topics including ArcGIS basics, spatial analysis, and map document production, mostly through hands-on exercises using data from Mars Odyssey and Mars Global Surveyor. Participants will be given a one-year ArcGIS license as part of the workshop.

Space is limited and registration is required: <https://tinyurl.com/v8n6ng3>. The deadline for registration is March 6, 2020. Please contact Zoe Learner Ponterio (zap9@cornell.edu), SPIF Manager, for more information.

NASA Announcements

- **NASA SMD Dual-anonymous peer review virtual town hall: March 3**
A dual-anonymous peer review virtual town hall will be held on **March 3, 2020, 12:30pm EST**. NASA leadership and division representatives from NASA's Science Mission Directorate will discuss a pilot study to implement dual-anonymous peer review for four programs in ROSES-2020: A.30 Earth Science U.S. Participating Investigator, B.4 Heliophysics Guest Investigators-Open, D.2 Astrophysics Data Analysis (ADAP), and E.4 Habitable Worlds. Under this system, not only are proposers unaware of the identity of reviewers, but the reviewers do not have explicit knowledge of the proposing teams and institutions during the scientific evaluation of the proposal. Connection information for the town hall, instructions for submitting/upvoting questions in advance, and more information about the dual-anonymous process can be found at: <https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/dual-anonymous-peer-review>.

As shared in the last newsletter:

- **Open position at NASA HQ: Mars Sample Return Program Director, Science Mission Directorate**
NASA is pleased to announce that the application deadline for the Science Mission Directorate's Mars Sample Return Program Director will be extended until **4 March 2020**. The vitality of NASA science programs is dependent upon the best people working for and with the Science Mission Directorate and all who are interested in strategic leadership of this important program are encouraged to apply to this opportunity. To find a detailed description of

this Senior Executive position and additional information on qualifications and application procedures, please visit USAJobs: <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/556552400>.

- **Planetary Science Advisory Committee (PAC) Nominations**

The Planetary Science Advisory Committee (PAC) supports the advisory needs of the Planetary Science Division (PSD), the Science Mission Directorate (SMD) and other mission directorates as required, and the NASA Administrator. The advisory scope of the PAC includes all aspects of NASA's planetary science program, including scientific research; considerations of the development of near-term enabling technologies, systems, and computing and information management capabilities; and developments with the potential to provide long-term improvements in future mission operational systems. Responsibility for biological planetary protection is outside the purview of the PAC.

NASA's PSD is extending the invitation for nominations for service on the PAC. Interested members of the community are invited to review the charter and to submit nominations (including self-nominations) for consideration to fill vacancies on the Committee. For application instructions: <http://planetarynews.org/nasa/20200109-PACnominations.pdf>; the deadline to submit nomination materials is **March 31, 2020**. For more information about PAC: <https://science.nasa.gov/nac/science-advisory-committees/pac>.

Planetary Science Decadal Survey preparation

As shared in the last newsletter:

- The Planetary Science and Astrobiology Decadal Survey 2023-2032 Task Statement is available on the NASEM Decadal Survey Website: https://sites.nationalacademies.org/SSB/SSB_198165.
- General information and resources for the MEPAG community are posted to the MEPAG website: https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/DecadalSurvey/Info_PlanetaryDS2020_MEPAG.pdf.
- A few forums are available to facilitate advertisement of white paper topics, so as to foster community collaboration within preparation for the next Planetary Science Decadal Survey. All members of the Mars community are encouraged to view or add information to any/all of these sites.
 - **LPI** has a [centralized site](#) for advertisement of white paper ideas within all areas of planetary science. Posting a white paper topic idea to the LPI site enables one to reach the broader planetary community, and we recommend that Mars community members post white paper topics to that site and review that site regularly.
 - The **AAS Division of Planetary Sciences (DPS)** has set up a [Decadal Survey Information Hub](#) to help the DPS membership participate in, and navigate through, the Decadal Survey process. This site contains links to AG-specific sites, as well as a spreadsheet for advertising white paper topics related to the "State of the Community."
 - **MEPAG** has kept their [google spreadsheet](#) open to facilitate collaboration and communication regarding community-generated white papers. Although superseded by the LPI site, this MEPAG-hosted site remains as an additional resource for collaboration and evolving ideas – with tabs to help people find additional authors for a white paper topic, volunteer to assist with a white paper topic, or share a relevant resource with the community. Additionally, the first tab includes links to other spreadsheets of this sort within the planetary community.
- The kick-off event for the **early career program** of the Planetary Science and Astrobiology Decadal Survey will be **before LPSC on Sunday, March 15**, 10am-12pm at The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center. The first hour will focus on addressing questions such as: What is a decadal survey? What is the role of a decadal survey? Why are they so important to NASA and Congress? How do I get involved? The second hour will be an open forum and an opportunity to ask questions. Note that LPSC registration is not required to participate in this event. Free registration for this event available at: <http://sgiz.mobi/s3/Early-Career-Event>.
- A **town hall** on the Planetary Science and Astrobiology Decadal Survey will be held **at LPSC on Monday, March 16**, 12:00-1:15pm, in Waterway 1-3 at the Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center. This town hall is open to all LPSC attendees (LPSC registration is required to attend).
- At LPSC, **MEPAG** will host an informal discussion about Decadal Survey Preparation on Wednesday **on Wednesday, March 18**, 12:00-1:15pm, in Grogan's Mill at the Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center. This informal MEPAG discussion is open to all Mars community members attending LPSC.

MER Data Catalog Survey

The goal of the Mars Exploration Rovers (MER) Data Catalog Project is to make it easy and simple for researchers who were not members of the MER team (as well as the general public) to discover and use Spirit and Opportunity data. To that end, the Project members are conducting a survey to find out what features potential users would like to see in the catalog.

We would appreciate it if you would take the survey, which should take approximately 5-10 minutes, by going to: <http://www.merdatacatalog.com/survey>. This survey will be open through April 2020.

This link can be shared with anyone who might want to use MER data, including but not limited to Mars-focused and non-Mars-focused planetary scientists, Earth scientists, high school teachers, undergraduates, engineers, and people who work at museums. Conducting a survey constitutes experimenting on humans, so we have sought and received approval for the survey from Cornell University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office. The survey does not collect any identifying information, and all data will be presented in aggregate (including an interim results presentation at LPSC).

Near-term Due Dates (next three months)

Due	Conference
March 4	Science Mission Directorate's Mars Sample Return Program Director - Job Application deadline
March 5	6th International Planetary Dunes Workshop – MPO Student Travel Grant Deadline
March 6	17th International Planetary Probe Workshop – Abstract Deadline
March 6	MEPAG – Early Career Travel Grant Application Deadline
March 16	MEPAG – Hotel Room Block Deadline
March 19	MEPAG – White Paper Concept Submission Deadline
March 24	Preventing Harassment in Science: Building a Community of Practice Toward Meaningful Change - Registration Deadline
March 27	7th Mars Atmosphere Modelling and Observations Conference – Abstract Deadline
March 27	Planetary Science Informatics and Data Analytics 2020 Conference – Registration Deadline
March 31	NASA Planetary Advisory Committee – Nomination Deadline
April 1	MEPAG – Registration Deadline
April 1	MEPAG – Community Forum Topic Suggestion Deadline
April 3	8th European Lunar Symposium (ELS) – Early Registration Deadline
April 9	Lunar Surface Science Workshop – Registration Deadline
April 13	6th International Planetary Dunes Workshop – Early Registration Deadline
April 16	2020 Annual Meeting of Planetary Geologic Mappers
April 16	Mercury 2020, Current and future science of the innermost planet – Abstract Deadline
April 21	Asia Oceania Geosciences Conference 2020 – Early Registration Deadline
April 23	8th European Lunar Symposium (ELS) – Registration Deadline
April 28	6th International Planetary Dunes Workshop – Registration Deadline
May 5	17th International Planetary Probe Workshop – Early Registration Deadline
May 13	Europlanet Science Congress – Abstract Deadline
May 15	Planetary Science Informatics and Data Analytics 2020 Conference – Registration Deadline
May 16	43rd COSPAR Scientific Assembly – Early Registration Deadline
May 21	11th Planetary Crater Consortium Meeting – Abstract Deadline

Upcoming Conferences

- Note that for civil servants and those under contract with NASA, foreign and NASA-sponsored conferences generally need to be forecasted via NCTS. Forecasting to NCTS is usually due 60 days in advance for domestic meetings. If you are unsure whether an event is a conference or not, or when the forecasting deadline may be, please consult with your NASA Center conference forecasting/travel unit.

First Quarter 2020		
	March 2-6, 2020 Santiago, Chile	Ground and Space Observatories: a joint venture to planetary science workshop NCTS 39529-20 https://conference.almaobservatory.org/planets2020/
	March 2-8, 2020 Dehli, India	36th International Geological Congress (IGC) https://www.36igc.org/home
	March 7-14, 2020 Big Sky, MT, USA	IEEE Aerospace Conference https://www.aeroconf.org/
UPDATE One Day Only	March 14, 2020 The Woodlands, TX, USA	Microsymposium 61: The next frontier in planetary exploration http://www.planetary.brown.edu/html_pages/micro61_reg.htm <i>Paraphrased announcement: The third dimension of planetary bodies remains largely unexplored, and on many bodies the subsurface presents opportunities to expand our knowledge of habitability. The workshop will be focused on 1) keynote presentations for identifying fundamental questions in these broad areas of investigation, followed by 2)</i>

		<i>reports and discussion on current and future plans for accessing and characterizing the subsurface. Invitations are extended to, and participation is expected from, representatives from Russia, China, ESA, India, Japan, the United States, Korea, and other space-faring nations and commercial enterprises. If you are interested in presenting contact the co-organizers: Jack Mustard, Brown University (john_mustard@brown.edu) and Vlada Stamenkovic, JPL (vlada.stamenkovic@jpl.nasa.gov). To Indicate interest and be added to the Micro 61 email list contact: Melissa DeAugustinis (melissa_deaugustinis@brown.edu).</i>
	March 16-20, 2020 The Woodlands, TX, USA	51st Lunar and Planetary Science Conference https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lpsc2020/
	Phoenix, AZ, USA March 31-April 2, 2020	Preventing Harassment in Science: Building a community of Practice Toward Meaningful Change https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/anti-harassment2020/organizers/

Second Quarter, 2020		
	April 14-16, 2020 Boulder, CO, USA	Titan Through Time Workshop V https://astrobiology.nasa.gov/events/titan-through-time-workshop-v/
	April 15-17, 2020 Arlington, VA, USA	MEPAG Meeting #38 NCTS# 41124-20 https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/meetings.cfm
	April 20-23, 2020 Seattle, WA, USA	ASCE Earth & Space Conference Symposium 2: Exploration and Utilization of Extra-Terrestrial Bodies https://www.earthspaceconference.org/symposium-2
	April 20-24, 2020 Canary Islands, Spain	Biennial European Astrobiology Conference (BEACON) http://europeanastrobiology.eu/BEACON2020/index.html
	April 21-22, 2020 Suitland, MD, USA	Improving Space Operations Workshop (ISOW 2020) https://isow.space.swri.edu/
	April 28-30, 2020 Pasadena, CA, USA	2020 In Situ Science & Instrumentation Workshop for Europa and Ocean Worlds https://www.europa-insitu.caltech.edu
	April 28-30, 2020 Denver, CO, USA	Lunar Surface Science Workshop http://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lunarsurface2020
	May 3-8, 2020 Les Houches, France	Workshop Mars V https://www.cosmos.esa.int/web/planet-mars-5/home
	May 3-8, 2020 Vienna, Austrian	EGU General Assembly https://www.egu2020.eu/
	May 6-8, 2020 Saint-Hubert, Quebec	Women in Space 2020 http://www.womeninspacecon.com/
	May 12-15, 2020 Alamosa, CO, USA	6th International Planetary Dunes Workshop https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/dunes2020/
	May 12-14, 2020 Washington, DC, USA	Human to Mars Summit https://www.exploremars.org/
	May 12-14, 2020 Padua, Italy	8th European Lunar Symposium (ELS) https://els2020.arc.nasa.gov/
	June 2-4, 2020 Orleans, France	Mercury 2020, Current and future science of the innermost planet https://mercury2020.ias.u-psud.fr/main_1st.php
	June 8-11, 2020 Paris, France	7th Mars Atmosphere Modelling and Observations Conference http://www-mars.lmd.jussieu.fr/paris2020/
	June 16-18, 2020 Washington, DC, USA	2020 Annual Meeting of Planetary Geologic Mappers https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/pgm2020/
	June 22-24, 2020 Villanueva de la Cañada, Spain	Planetary Science Informatics and Data Analytics 2020 Conference https://www.cosmos.esa.int/web/psida-2020
	June 28- July 4, 2020 Sono Belle Vivaldi Park, Hongcheon, Korea	Asia Oceania Geosciences Conference 2020 http://www.asiaoceania.org/aogs2020/public.asp?page=home.html

Third-Fourth Quarter, 2020

	July, 2020	Launch window for the UAE EMM orbiter (Hope)
	July 26-August 11, 2020	Launch window for the ESA-Russia ExoMars rover (Rosalind Franklin)
	July 17-August 5, 2020	Launch window for the NASA Mars 2020 rover
	August 5-7, 2020 Honolulu, HI, USA	11th Planetary Crater Consortium Meeting https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/crater2020/
NEW!	August 9-14, 2020 Glasgow, Scotland	83rd Annual Meteoritical Society Meeting (METSOC 2020) https://www.metsoc2020.com/
	August 15-22, 2020 Sydney, Australia	43rd COSPAR Scientific Assembly NCTS 35724-20 https://www.cospar-assembly.org/
NEW!	September 14-18, 2020 Tokyo, Japan	NASA Astrobiology Graduate Conference (AbGradCon) http://abgradcon.org
	September 27- October 2, 2020 Granada, Spain	Europlanet Science Congress https://www.epsc2020.eu/
	October 5-8, 2020 Houston, TX, USA	Martian Enigmas 2020 https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/martianenigmas2020/
NEW!	October 25-28, 2020 Montreal, Québec, Canada	GSA Annual Meeting https://community.geosociety.org/gsa2020/home
NEW!	November 18-20, 2020 Tokyo, Japan	5th International Workshop on Instrumentation for Planetary Missions 2020 https://www2.rikkyo.ac.jp/web/ipm2020/

Seasons on Mars

	MY35	MY36	MY37
Start of Northern Spring / L_s 0	03/23/2019	02/07/2021	12/26/2022
Start of Northern Summer / L_s 90	10/08/2019	08/25/2021	07/13/2023
Start of Northern Autumn / L_s 180	04/08/2020	02/24/2022	01/24/2024
Start of Northern Winter / L_s 270	09/02/2020	07/21/2022	06/07/2024

Special holidays to consider when scheduling conferences/workshops/meetings

Good Friday	4/10/20	4/2/2021	04/15/2022	4/7/2023
Rosh Hashanah	9/19/20	9/7/2021	09/26/2022	9/16/2023
Yom Kippur	9/28/20	9/16/2021	10/05/2022	9/25/2023
(Note that Jewish holidays start at sundown the previous evening)				
Thanksgiving Day, Canada	10/12/20	10/11/2021	10/10/2022	10/9/2023
Thanksgiving Day, U.S.	11/26/20	11/25/2021	11/24/2022	11/24/2023
Christmas Day	12/25/20	12/25/2021	12/25/2022	12/25/2023

Editors

Rich Zurek
David Beaty
Serina Diniega
Barbara Saltzberg

richard.w.zurek@jpl.nasa.gov
David.Beaty@jpl.nasa.gov
Serina.Diniega@jpl.nasa.gov
Barbara.A.Saltzberg@jpl.nasa.gov

818-354-3725
818-354-7968
818-354-1487
818-354-0226

Please send Mars Community Announcements and calendar items for inclusion in next month's newsletter to:

Barbara Saltzberg at Barbara.a.Saltzberg@jpl.nasa.gov

This newsletter (and all previous months') is also posted on the MEPAG website: <http://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov>

If you wish to withdraw from the electronic mailing list that this newsletter is sent out to, please send an email from your email account to mepag-removesignup@jpl.nasa.gov.

To be added to this list and receive this monthly newsletter and other Mars Science announcements, or to update your MEPAG directory information (which contains the email list used for sending out this newsletter), please fill out the online form at <https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/emailnewsletters.cfm> (also linked at the bottom of the MEPAG website <http://mepag.nasa.gov/>) or send an email to mepag-signup@jpl.nasa.gov from the email account you'd like added, with your full name and institution.