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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>1. MEPAG Activities since VM7</td>
<td>R.A. Yingst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45</td>
<td>2. MEP Update</td>
<td>M. Meyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:55</td>
<td>3. MASWG Status</td>
<td>B. Jakosky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>4. Goals Document Update following Community Inputs</td>
<td>D. Banfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:50</td>
<td>5. JWST Cycle 1 Call for Proposals</td>
<td>S. Milam</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>6. Planetary Data System (PDS) Update</td>
<td>R. Arvidson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:20</td>
<td>Discussion/Meeting Close</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>End</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 focus 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/hac/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)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Quarter 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2-6, 2020</td>
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<td>March 2-8, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 7-14, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UPDATE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 14, 2020</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>URL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 15-17, 2020</td>
<td>MEPAG Meeting #38 NCTS# 41124-20</td>
<td>Arlington, VA, USA</td>
<td><a href="https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/meetings.cfm">https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/meetings.cfm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 21-22, 2020</td>
<td>Improving Space Operations Workshop (ISOW 2020)</td>
<td>Suitland, MD, USA</td>
<td><a href="https://isow.space.swri.edu/">https://isow.space.swri.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28-30, 2020</td>
<td>2020 In Situ Science &amp; Instrumentation Workshop for Europa and Ocean Worlds</td>
<td>Pasadena, CA, USA</td>
<td><a href="https://www.europa-insitu.caltech.edu">https://www.europa-insitu.caltech.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28-30, 2020</td>
<td>Lunar Surface Science Workshop</td>
<td>Denver, CO, USA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lunarsurface2020">http://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lunarsurface2020</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3-8, 2020</td>
<td>Workshop Mars V</td>
<td>Les Houches, France</td>
<td><a href="https://www.cosmos.esa.int/web/planet-mars-5/home">https://www.cosmos.esa.int/web/planet-mars-5/home</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 6-8, 2020</td>
<td>Women in Space 2020</td>
<td>Saint-Hubert, Quebec</td>
<td><a href="http://www.womeninspacecon.com/">http://www.womeninspacecon.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12-14, 2020</td>
<td>Human to Mars Summit</td>
<td>Washington, DC, USA</td>
<td><a href="https://www.exploremars.org/">https://www.exploremars.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12-14, 2020</td>
<td>8th European Lunar Symposium (ELS)</td>
<td>Padua, Italy</td>
<td><a href="https://els2020.arc.nasa.gov/">https://els2020.arc.nasa.gov/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Third-Fourth Quarter, 2020
### Launch windows

- **July 26-August 11, 2020**: Launch window for the UAE EMM orbiter (Hope)
- **July 17-August 5, 2020**: Launch window for the ESA-Russia ExoMars rover (Rosalind Franklin)
- **August 5-7, 2020**: Launch window for the NASA Mars 2020 rover

### Conferences and Meetings

- **NEW! August 9-14, 2020**: 83rd Annual Meteoritical Society Meeting (METSOC 2020)
- **NEW! August 15-22, 2020**: 43rd COSPAR Scientific Assembly NCTS 35724-20
  - [https://www.cospar-assembly.org/](https://www.cospar-assembly.org/)
- **NEW! September 14-18, 2020**: NASA Astrobiology Graduate Conference (AbGradCon)
  - [http://abgradcon.org](http://abgradcon.org)
- **NEW! October 25-28, 2020**: GSA Annual Meeting
  - [https://community.geosociety.org/gsa2020/home](https://community.geosociety.org/gsa2020/home)
- **NEW! November 18-20, 2020**: 5th International Workshop on Instrumentation for Planetary Missions 2020
  - [https://www2.rikkyo.ac.jp/web/ipm2020/](https://www2.rikkyo.ac.jp/web/ipm2020/)
- **August 26-30, 2020**: Europlanet Science Congress
- **October 5-8, 2020**: Martian Enigmas 2020
  - [https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/martianenigmas2020/](https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/martianenigmas2020/)
- **September 27- October 2, 2020**: 11th Planetary Crater Consortium Meeting
  - [https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/crater2020/](https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/crater2020/)

### Seasons on Mars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>MY35</th>
<th>MY36</th>
<th>MY37</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start of Northern Spring / $L_s$ 0</td>
<td>03/23/2019</td>
<td>02/07/2021</td>
<td>12/26/2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of Northern Summer / $L_s$ 90</td>
<td>10/08/2019</td>
<td>08/25/2021</td>
<td>07/13/2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of Northern Autumn / $L_s$ 180</td>
<td>04/08/2020</td>
<td>02/24/2022</td>
<td>01/24/2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of Northern Winter / $L_s$ 270</td>
<td>09/02/2020</td>
<td>07/21/2022</td>
<td>06/07/2024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Special holidays to consider when scheduling conferences/workshops/meetings

- **Good Friday**: 4/10/20
- **Rosh Hashanah**: 9/19/20
- **Yom Kippur**: 9/28/20
- **Thanksgiving Day, Canada**: 10/12/20
- **Thanksgiving Day, U.S.**: 11/26/20
- **Christmas Day**: 12/25/20

(Note that Jewish holidays start at sundown the previous evening)

- **Thanksgiving Day, Canada**: 10/11/2021
- **Thanksgiving Day, U.S.**: 11/25/2021
- **Christmas Day**: 12/25/2021

### Editors

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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](mailto:Barbara.a.Saltzberg@jpl.nasa.gov)

This newsletter (and all previous months’) is also posted on the MEPAG website: [http://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov](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.