

# Mars Exploration Science Monthly Newsletter

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

March 2021

## Mars Science News

It's been an exciting month for the Mars community with three missions from three separate countries (UAE, China, and the US) arriving at the Red Planet. The United Arab Emirates' first interplanetary mission, the [Hope](#) probe, achieved Mars orbit Feb. 9. The Hope probe will be in a very high altitude, almost areostationary orbit, and its science mission is expected to last two years. China's first interplanetary mission [Tianwen-1](#) entered a separate Martian orbit on Feb. 10. The Chinese probe includes both an orbiter and a lander with a rover onboard, which is expected to land on the surface [in May](#). Tianwen-1 is scheduled to operate for at least one Mars year (about 687 Earth days), and the rover's targeted lifetime is 90 Mars days, or sols. And on Feb. 18, NASA's nuclear-powered [Perseverance](#) rover, with its [Ingenuity](#) helicopter tech demo, was lowered successfully to the Mars surface in Jezero Crater. Perseverance's primary mission is scheduled for at least one Martian year (or 687 Earth days). Amongst its many duties, Perseverance will drill and encapsulate samples for possible return to Earth by a joint NASA-ESA campaign of missions later this decade.

## MEPAG News

MEPAG Chair R. Aileen Yingst made a presentation to the NASA Planetary Science Advisory Committee on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, summarizing recent MEPAG activities including findings from MEPAG Virtual Meeting #11. The presentation slides can be viewed [here](#).

## 2021B NASA Keck Call for Proposals

The NASA Exoplanet Science Institute is soliciting proposals to use NASA's portion of time on the Keck Telescopes for the 2021B observing semester (August 1, 2021 - January 31, 2022). All proposals are due by March 18, 2021 at 4 pm Pacific.

NASA intends the use of the Keck telescopes to be highly strategic in support of on-going space missions and/or high priority, long-term science goals. Proposals are sought to support the science goals and missions in all of the following discipline areas:

OUR OWN SOLAR SYSTEM

EXOPLANET EXPLORATION

PHYSICS OF THE COSMOS

COSMIC ORIGINS

DIRECT MISSION SUPPORT PROPOSALS IN ANY OF THESE AREAS ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED

The opportunity to propose as a Principal Investigator for NASA time on the Keck Telescopes is open to all U.S.-based astronomers (a U.S.-based astronomer has their principal affiliation at a U.S. institution). Investigators from institutions outside of the U.S. may participate as Co-Investigators on proposals for NASA Keck time.

Please read the [Call for Proposals](#) for complete information, instrument availability, and application guidelines. We also have a short video on [How to Apply for NASA Keck Time](#) to get you started.

Key Dates:

March 4: deadline to request General Mission Support letter from NASA HQ

March 18: all proposals and supporting letters due to NExSci by 4 pm Pacific

Call for Proposals: <https://nexsci.caltech.edu/missions/KeckSolicitation/>

Questions: [KeckCFP@ipac.caltech.edu](mailto:KeckCFP@ipac.caltech.edu)

**Near-term Due Dates (next three months)**

Due	Conference
March 31	<b>EGU General Assembly 2021</b> – Early Registration Deadline
April 14	<b>5<sup>th</sup> Planetary Data Workshop</b> – 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 deadline may be, please consult with your NASA Center conference forecasting/travel unit.
- We have noted conference changes we are aware of – but the impact of COVID-19 continues to evolve. If we show a conference as still happening in the next few months, it is advisable to check the website and confirm with conference organizers.
- VM = virtual meeting.

2021 First-Second Quarter		
	March 6-13, 2021 Virtual Meeting	<b>IEEE Aerospace Conference</b> <a href="https://www.aeroconf.org/">https://www.aeroconf.org/</a>
	March 15-19 2021 Virtual Meeting	<b>52nd Lunar and Planetary Science Conference</b> <a href="https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lpsc2021/">https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lpsc2021/</a>
	April 19-30, 2021 Virtual Meeting	<b>EGU General Assembly 2021 (vEGU21)</b> <a href="https://www.egu2021.eu/">https://www.egu2021.eu/</a>
	May 17-20, 2021 Glasgow, Scotland	<b>IEEE Int'l Instrumentation &amp; Measurement Technology Conf. (I2MTC 2021)</b> <a href="https://i2mtc2020.ieee-ims.org/">https://i2mtc2020.ieee-ims.org/</a>
	June 28-July 2, 2021 Flagstaff, AZ	<b>5th Planetary Data Workshop</b> <a href="https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/planetdata2021/">https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/planetdata2021/</a>

Seasons on Mars

	MY36	MY37	MY38
Start of Northern Spring / L <sub>s</sub> 0	02/07/2021	12/26/2022	11/12/24
Start of Northern Summer / L <sub>s</sub> 90	08/25/2021	07/13/2023	05/29/25
Start of Northern Autumn / L <sub>s</sub> 180	02/24/2022	01/12/2024	11/29/25
Start of Northern Winter / L <sub>s</sub> 270	07/21/2022	06/07/2024	04/25/26

U.S. Federal holidays to consider when scheduling conferences/workshops/meetings



Editors

Rich Zurek	<a href="mailto:Richard.W.Zurek@jpl.nasa.gov">Richard.W.Zurek@jpl.nasa.gov</a>	818-354-3725
David Beaty	<a href="mailto:David.Beaty@jpl.nasa.gov">David.Beaty@jpl.nasa.gov</a>	818-354-7968
Brandi Carrier	<a href="mailto:Brandi.L.Carrier@jpl.nasa.gov">Brandi.L.Carrier@jpl.nasa.gov</a>	818-354-9956
Barbara Saltzberg	<a href="mailto:Barbara.A.Saltzberg@jpl.nasa.gov">Barbara.A.Saltzberg@jpl.nasa.gov</a>	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](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>

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](mailto: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), send an email to [mepag-signup@jpl.nasa.gov](mailto:mepag-signup@jpl.nasa.gov) from the email account you'd like added, with your full name and institution.