

Mars Exploration Science Monthly Newsletter

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

May 2021

Mars Science News

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The dream of flight has just been extended for the first time to flight on another planet! Congratulations to the *Perseverance* and *Ingenuity* teams for their combined efforts in making possible the successful flights of the *Ingenuity* helicopter on Mars. This "first" may enable exploration of previously-unreachable locations on the surface of Mars - definitely something to cheer!

In other mission news, *Curiosity* is now investigating the transition zone between the clay and sulfate units as seen on Mt. Sharp from orbit. MRO will be returning to its nominal 3:10 p.m. orbit where it will continue building on its climate data record and focus once again on surface change detection. TGO, MAVEN, MRO and ODY are relaying record volumes of science and engineering data from *Perseverance* and *Ingenuity*.

In news from the Mars Sample Return and Mars Exploration Program Offices at JPL:

Dr. Meenakshi Wadhwa, Director and Professor in the School of Earth and Space Exploration at Arizona State University, has been appointed as **Mars Sample Return Program Scientist**. In this capacity, she will be responsible for the scientific integrity and the overall scientific success of the program, reporting to Richard Cook, MSR Program Manager at JPL. Dr. Wadhwa is a well-known planetary scientist who studies the formation and evolution of the Solar System through the analysis of planetary materials such as meteorites and other extraterrestrial samples returned by spacecraft missions.

Joe Parrish has been appointed **Mars Exploration Program Manager** for the MEP Office at JPL, as successor to the recently retired Dr. Fuk Li. In this capacity, Joe reports programmatically to Eric Lanson, Mars Exploration Program Director at NASA HQ and institutionally to Bobby Braun, JPL Director for Planetary Science. As MEP manager, Mr. Parrish is responsible for the continued operation of a suite of Mars orbiters and surface missions, of Mars Sample Return elements (*Perseverance* caching and the planning for analysis of returned samples), and of strategic planning and execution of future Mars missions. Mr. Parrish is returning to JPL from a three-year assignment at DARPA where he served as Program Manager for the Robotic Servicing for Geosynchronous Satellites program. Previously, he has served in numerous roles in the Mars Program Office at JPL, at NASA Headquarters, and in industry.

Near-term Due Dates (next three months)

Due	Conference
May 26	Europlanet Science Congress 2021 – Abstract Deadline
June 3	84th Annual Meeting of the Meteoritical Society – Abstract Deadline
June 15	84th Annual Meeting of the Meteoritical Society – Early Registration Deadline
June 18	PLATO Mission Conference 2021 – Abstract Deadline
June 23	5th Planetary Data Workshop – Registration Deadline
July 1	Planetary Science: The Young Solar System – 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		
	May 17-20, 2021 Glasgow, Scotland	IEEE Int'l Instrumentation & Measurement Technology Conf. (I2MTC 2021) https://i2mtc2020.ieee-ims.org/
	June 28-July 2, 2021 Flagstaff, AZ, USA	5th Planetary Data Workshop https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/planetdata2021/
NEW!	August 14-21, 2021 Chicago, IL, USA	84th Annual Meeting of the Meteoritical Society https://www.metsoc2021-chicago.com
NEW!	September 6-12, 2021 Quy Nhon, Vietnam	Planetary Science: The Young Solar System https://www.icisequynhon.com/conferences/2020/planetary_science/
NEW!	September 13-24, 2021 VIRTUAL	Europlanet Science Congress 2021 https://www.epsc2021.eu/
NEW!	September 14-17, 2021 VIRTUAL	NASA Astrobiology Graduate Conference/Ce (AbGradCon) https://www.abgradcon.org/
NEW!	October 3-8, 2021 TBD	53rd Meeting of the AAS Division for Planetary Sciences (DPS) https://dps.aas.org/meetings/future
NEW!	October 6-8, 2021 Long Beach, CA, USA	Space Tech Expo USA https://www.spacetecheexpo.com
NEW!	October 11-15, 2021 VIRTUAL	PLATO Mission Conference 2021 http://platomissionconference2021.iaa.es/
NEW!	December 13-17, 2021 Hybrid / New Orleans, LA, USA	AGU 2021 Fall Meeting https://www.agu.org/Fall-Meeting

Seasons on Mars

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

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



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

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