

# Mars Exploration Science Monthly Newsletter

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

September 2021

## Mars Science News

### MEPAG Virtual #13

#### Save the Dates:

- **The Low-Cost Science Mission Concepts for Mars Exploration Workshop**

The Low-Cost Science Mission Concepts for Mars Exploration workshop is scheduled for January 11–13, 2022, in the Southern California area (final location to be announced soon). Emerging small spacecraft capabilities and innovative new mission concepts offer opportunities for compelling science discoveries at Mars at unprecedented low costs.

NASA's Mars Exploration Program invites the community to this three-day workshop to explore this potential new class of Mars missions from multiple perspectives. In this forum, Mars scientists, engineers, technologists, and industry representatives will share ideas and approaches for low-cost exploration of the Red Planet. Here, "low-cost" equates to mission costs that fall well below the current Discovery Program cost cap. The recent Mars Architecture Strategy Working Group suggested that small spacecraft missions in the \$100–\$300M cost range (including delivery) may offer a sweet spot in terms of achievable science per unit cost. Missions in this class could represent an important new program element in a future balanced portfolio of Mars missions. For more information go to: <https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lowcostmars2022/>

- **Save the Date -- MEPAG Virtual Meeting #13**

The next MEPAG Virtual Meeting (#13) will be Monday, September 27, at 1 - 5 p.m. EDT (10 a.m. - 2 p.m. PDT). Tentative topics to be covered are: 1) MEPAG updates, 2) MEP Status, including update on Ice Mapper study, 3) MSPG2 reports regarding analysis of returned MSR samples, and 4) *Perseverance* status. More details, including webex link, will be forthcoming in a later email.

- **Save the Date -- NASA/Ames Legacy Mars Global Climate Model (GCM) Tutorial**

The Mars Climate Modeling Center at NASA Ames Research Center will host a virtual modeling tutorial November 2-4, 2021. The tutorial aims to teach new users how to use and analyze output from the NASA/Ames Legacy Mars Global Climate Model (GCM). The tutorial will include lectures and hands-on sessions with the goal of teaching participants about the basic physics in the model, its subroutines and flow diagrams, how to make changes to the code, how to compile and run the model, and how to analyze model output. Students, teachers, and researchers with a range of numerical modeling experience are encouraged to participate, but some coding proficiency with FORTRAN and Python is needed. More information to come shortly. POC: Melinda Kahre ([melinda.a.kahre@nasa.gov](mailto:melinda.a.kahre@nasa.gov))

**Announcement of Support for Planetary Science Analysis/Assessment Groups (PAGS)**

The Planetary Science Division (PSD) is pleased to announce that the Lunar and Planetary Institute (LPI) has been selected to provide support for the Planetary Analysis/Assessment Groups (PAGs) for the next three years. [This includes MEPAG.] The PAGs serve as important community-driven forums for the Planetary Science community and for NASA, gathering inputs and perspectives in key topical areas. While PSD has supported the PAGs for many years, the consolidation of support under a single organization will:

- Provide for equitable treatment of the PAGs
- Serve as a mechanism for rapidly incorporating best practices across the PAGs

In particular, PSD looks forward to working with LPI and the PAGs to find ways of improving Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) within the PAGs and the entire planetary science community.

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

Due	Conference
September 7	<b>Geological Society of America (GSA)</b> – Registration Deadline
September 24	<b>PLATO Mission Conference 2021: Exploring Exoplanets in the Habitable</b> – Registration Deadline
September 27	<b>MEPAG Virtual Meeting #13 (1 - 5 p.m. EDT)</b>
September 30	<b>Astromaterials Data Management in the Era of Sample-Return Missions Community Workshop</b> Abstract Deadline
September 30	<b>Mars – A New Geological Frontier</b> – Abstract Deadline
September 30	<b>Rocky Worlds II</b> – Registration Deadline
October 1	<b>Astromaterials Data Management in the Era of Sample-Return Missions Community Workshop - Early</b> Registration Deadline
October 28	<b>Low-Cost Science Mission Concepts for Mars Exploration</b> – Abstract Deadline
October 31	<b>Astromaterials Data Management in the Era of Sample-Return Missions Community Workshop -</b> Registration Deadline
November 3	<b>AGU 2021 Fall Meeting</b> – Registration 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.
- **The situation for COVID-19 continues to evolve, so here are conferences with both in-person and virtual formats. It is advisable to check with the websites of the conference and confirm with the organization of any changes.**

## 2021

	September 13-24, 2021 VIRTUAL	<b>Europlanet Science Congress 2021</b> <a href="https://www.epsc2021.eu/">https://www.epsc2021.eu/</a>
	September 14-17, 2021 VIRTUAL	<b>NASA Astrobiology Graduate Conferen/Ce (AbGradCon)</b> <a href="https://www.abgradcon.org/">https://www.abgradcon.org/</a>
<b>NEW</b>	September 27, 2021 VIRTUAL	<b>MEPAG</b> Will be sent at a later time
	October 3-8, 2021 VIRTUAL	<b>53rd Meeting of the AAS Division for Planetary Sciences (DPS)</b> <a href="https://dps.aas.org/meetings/future">https://dps.aas.org/meetings/future</a>
	October 6-8, 2021 Long Beach, CA, USA	<b>Space Tech Expo USA</b> <a href="https://www.spacetecheexpo.com">https://www.spacetecheexpo.com</a>
	October 10-13 Portland, OR, USA	<b>Geological Society of America (GSA)</b> <a href="https://community.geosociety.org/gsa2021/registration">https://community.geosociety.org/gsa2021/registration</a>
	October 11-15, 2021 VIRTUAL	<b>PLATO Mission Conference 2021</b> <a href="http://platomissionconference2021.iaa.es/">http://platomissionconference2021.iaa.es/</a>
<b>NEW</b>	October 25-28, 2021 Virtual	<b>Modern Brines</b> <a href="https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/modernbrines2021/">https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/modernbrines2021/</a>
	November 2-4, 2021 VIRTUAL	<b>MARS - A New Geological Frontier</b> <a href="https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/11-gsl-mars">https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/11-gsl-mars</a>
	November 8-9, 2021 Hybrid / Tucson, Arizona, USA	<b>Astromaterials Data Management in the Era of Sample-Return Missions Community Workshop</b> <a href="https://corex.lpl.arizona.edu/astromaterials-workshop">https://corex.lpl.arizona.edu/astromaterials-workshop</a>
	December 13-17, 2021 Hybrid / New Orleans, LA, USA	<b>AGU 2021 Fall Meeting</b> <a href="https://www.agu.org/Fall-Meeting">https://www.agu.org/Fall-Meeting</a>

## 2022

<b>NEW</b>	January 10-12, 2022 Oxford, UK	<b>Rocky Worlds II</b> <a href="https://www.rockyworlds.org">https://www.rockyworlds.org</a>
<b>NEW</b>	January 11-13, 2022 (TBD)	<b>Low-Cost Science Mission Concept for Mars Exploration</b> <a href="https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lowcostmars2022/">https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lowcostmars2022/</a>
<b>NEW</b>	January 22-23, 2022 Galveston, TX, USA	<b>Origins of Life Convergence - Challenging Paradigms in Prebiotic Chemistry</b> <a href="https://www.grc.org/find-a-conference/">https://www.grc.org/find-a-conference/</a>
<b>NEW</b>	January 22-23, 2022 Galveston, TX, USA	<b>Small Bodies Assessment Group (SBAG) Meeting</b> <a href="https://www.lpi.usra.edu/sbag/meetings/">https://www.lpi.usra.edu/sbag/meetings/</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



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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>

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).

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