

Mars Exploration Science Monthly Newsletter

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

November 2020

Mars Science News

MEP Changes

Jim Watzin has transitioned from serving as MEP Director and is now a Senior Advisor for Agency Architectures and Mission Alignment at NASA Headquarters. Eric Ianson, Deputy Director for the Planetary Sciences Division, has taken on additional duty as Director for the Mars Exploration Program (MEP). George Tahu, the Program Executive for Mars 2020 (*Perseverance*) has taken on as additional duty the Deputy Program Director/Lead Program Executive roles for MEP. Michael Meyer remains the Lead Scientist for MEP, as before, but is also now the Lead Scientist for the new Mars Sample Return program, headed by Jeff Gramling. All of this was explained by Eric Ianson at the MEPAG Virtual Meeting #10 on October 20; his [presentation](#) contained a MEP organization chart showing roles and responsibilities, including who reports to whom.

MEPAG VM#10

Aileen Yingst, MEPAG Chair, opened the meeting with a summary of recent MEPAG activities, including elevation of Sarah Stewart Johnson from the Goals Committee to the Steering Committee. Welcome Sarah! In addition to the latest changes in Mars exploration leadership (see above), presentations at the VM#10 meeting covered the latest information about the Planetary Sciences and Astrobiology Decadal Survey, including the members of the Mars Panel. Members are Victoria (Vicky) Hamilton (Chair) and Bethany Ehlmann (Deputy Chair), William Brinckerhoff, Tracy Gregg, Jasper Halekas, John (Jack) Holt, Joel Hurowitz, Bruce Jakosky, Michael Manga, Hap McSween, Claire Newman, Alejandro (Miguel) San Martin, Kirsten Siebach, Amy Williams, and Robin Wordsworth. Welcome to all and thanks for participating in this process so critical to Mars exploration! The first Mars panel meeting with open sessions will be this coming Monday, Nov. 2. Later meetings are scheduled for November 17, 23, 30, and December 1. Look to the [Mars Panel Website](#) for details.

Scott Hubbard gave an overview of the three latest National Academy reports on Planetary Protection, and Lisa Pratt described work in progress on PP, including responses to the Academy reports. Curt Niebur invited the community to comment on items that might be addressed by the draft AO for the New Frontiers 5 competition, and Justin Filiberto described a new conference series on "Brines across the Solar System".

All VM#10 presentations, along with the meeting recording and chat transcript, are available at: <https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/meetings.cfm?expand=vm10>.

Decadal Survey Mars Panel & Space Studies Board Meetings NEXT WEEK

We have added two new virtual meetings to the calendar for the first week in November.

The first meeting of the **Planetary Science and Astrobiology Decadal Survey 2023-2032 Mars Panel** will take place Monday, November 2nd, 2020. The open portion of the meeting will take place from 9:30 AM – 1:00 PM PST. The agenda and livestream info can be viewed [here](#). More information is available at the [Mars Panel website](#).

The **2020 Fall Space Studies Board Meeting** will take place Wednesday, November 4th & Thursday, November 5th, 2020. The meeting agenda and livestream information can be found on the Space Studies Board [website](#).

HiRISE Digital Terrain Models by-request and at no-cost for funded Mars Data Analysis Program awards

To support the needs of the Mars science community, the USGS Astrogeology Science Center is providing HiRISE DTMs by request and at no charge for funded ROSES 2020 Mars Data Analysis Program proposals. Investigators are responsible for identification and selection of appropriate HiRISE stereopairs, and must coordinate with USGS personnel before proposal submission to obtain a Confirmation of Technical Specification Letter. DTMs will only be generated for funded proposals. Technical requirements can be found at the USGS Astrogeology Planetary Photogrammetry site: https://www.usgs.gov/centers/astrogeology-science-center/science/usgs-astrogeology-planetary-photogrammetry-lab?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects

Additional details are available in section 4.3.7 of the NASA ROSES 2020.

Invitation to Suggest Targets for Microscopic Examination of Mars

The USGS Astrogeology Science Center is funded to construct new Digital Elevation Models from Microscopic Imager data collected by the MER rovers Spirit and Opportunity. We are soliciting requests from the general science community for new MI DEMs that were not processed during the MER mission. Please send your highest priority candidates, specifying target names and the sol number(s) on which the MI stereo images were acquired, along with a brief justification for each request to pgeissler@usgs.gov or kherkenhoff@usgs.gov.

NASA Habitable Worlds Change in Scope

The goal of the Habitable Worlds program is to use knowledge of the history of the Earth and the life upon it as a guide for determining the processes and conditions that create and maintain habitable environments and to search for ancient and contemporary habitable environments and explore the possibility of extant life beyond the Earth.

The scope of this program element has been updated to include transient environments. Please refer to the bullet list of target bodies in Section 1. The main point of contact has also changed, see below. The proposal due dates remain unchanged: Step-1 proposals are due 11/17/2020 and Step-2 proposals are due 01/15/2021.

This Amendment will be posted on the NASA research opportunity homepage at: <http://solicitation.nasaprs.com/ROSES2020> and will appear on SARA's ROSES blog at: <https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/sara/grant-solicitations/roses-2020/>

Questions concerning Habitable Worlds may be directed to Lindsay Hays at lindsay.hays@nasa.gov.

Near-term Due Dates (next three months)

Due	Conference
November 2	VEXAG – Registration Deadline
November 3	3rd Interstellar Probe Exploration Workshop – Registration Deadline
December 31	43rd COSPAR Scientific Assembly – Early Registration Deadline
January 5	52nd Lunar and Planetary Science Conference - Abstract Deadline
January 13	EGU General Assembly 2021 – Abstract Deadline
January 13	Astrobiology Science conference (AbSciCon 2021) – Abstract Deadline
January 29	43rd COSPAR Scientific Assembly – 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.
- 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.

Fourth Quarter		
NEW	November 2, 2020 Virtual Meeting	Planetary Science Decadal Survey 2022-2032 Panel on Mars #1 https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/11-02-2020/planetary-science-and-astrobiology-decadal-survey-2023-2032-panel-on-mars-meeting-no-1
NEW	November 4-5, 2020 Virtual Meeting	Space Studies Board: Fall Meeting https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/11-04-2020/space-studies-board-2020-fall
Updated	November 5-6, 2020 Virtual Meeting	Planet Moon-Magnetosphere Interaction Workshop https://indico.esa.int/event/337/
	November 5-8, 2020 Virtual Meeting	National Society of Black Physicists https://www.nsbp.org/2020-conference/2020-conference-home
	November 16-17, 2020 Virtual Meeting	VEXAG Annual Meeting https://www.lpi.usra.edu/vexag/meetings/vexag-18/

Fourth Quarter <i>continued</i>		
NEW	November 17, 2020 Virtual Meeting	Planetary Science Decadal Survey 2022-2032 Panel on Mars #2
		https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/planetary-science-and-astrobiology-decadal-survey-2023-2032-panel-on-mars
	November 17-19, 2020 Virtual Meeting	3rd Interstellar Probe Exploration Workshop https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/interstellarprobe2020/
NEW	November 23, 2020 Virtual Meeting	Planetary Science Decadal Survey 2022-2032 Panel on Mars #3 https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/planetary-science-and-astrobiology-decadal-survey-2023-2032-panel-on-mars
NEW	November 30, 2020 Virtual Meeting	Planetary Science Decadal Survey 2022-2032 Panel on Mars #4 https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/planetary-science-and-astrobiology-decadal-survey-2023-2032-panel-on-mars
NEW	December 7-11, 2020 Virtual Meeting	AGU Fall Meeting https://www.agu.org/fall-meeting

2021 First-Second Quarter		
	January 11 -15, 2021 Virtual Meeting	237th Meeting of the American Astronomical Society https://aas.org/meetings/aas237
Update	January 28-February 4, 2021 Sydney, Australia	43rd COSPAR Scientific Assembly NCTS #42197.21 http://www.cospar2020.org/
	March 6-13, 2021 Virtual Meeting	IEEE Aerospace Conference https://www.aeroconf.org/
NEW	March 15-19 2021 Virtual Meeting	52nd Lunar and Planetary Science Conference https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lpsc2021/
	April 25-30, 2021 Vienna, Austria	EGU General Assembly 2021 https://www.egu2021.eu/
UPDATE (11.02.20)	Postponed to May 15-20, 2022 Atlanta, GA, USA	Astrobiology Science Conference (AbSciCon) https://www.agu.org/abscicon
	May 10-12, 2021 Long Beach, CA	Space Tech Expo https://www.spacetechexpo.com
	May 17-20, 2021 Glasgow, Scotland	IEEE Int'l Instrumentation & Measurement Technology Conf. (I2MTC 2021) https://i2mtc2020.ieee-ims.org/
	June 8-11, 2021 Orleans, France	Mercury 2020, Current and future science of the innermost planet https://mercury2020.ias.u-psud.fr/main_1st.php
	June 28-July 2, 2021 Flagstaff, AZ	5th Planetary Data Workshop https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/planetdata2021/

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

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

Federal Holiday	2020	2021
New Year's Day	Wed. Jan. 1	Fri. Jan. 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Mon. Jan. 20	Mon. Jan. 18
President's Day	Mon. Feb. 17	Mon. Feb. 15
Memorial Day	Mon. May 25	Mon. May 31
Independence Day (Observed)	Fri. July 3*	Mon. July 5*
Labor Day	Mon. Sept. 7	Mon. Sept. 6
Columbus Day	Mon. Oct. 12	Mon. Oct. 11
Veterans' Day	Wed. Nov. 11	Thu. Nov. 11
Thanksgiving Day	Thu. Nov. 26	Thu. Nov. 25
Christmas Day	Fri. Dec. 25	Sat. Dec. 25

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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.