

Mars Exploration Science Monthly Newsletter

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

Issue: April 2011

Next MEPAG meeting June 16-17, 2011, Lisbon, Portugal

Mars Science News

MEPAG Meeting and Exploring Mars Habitability Conference in Lisbon

The Hotel and Field trip information for the Lisbon meetings are now available on the meeting website: <http://www.congrex.nl/11a14/>. MEPAG is meeting in the same hotel as the Conference and you can use the conference hotel booking form.

If you are planning to attend the MEPAG #24 meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, in June 2011, please send your RSVP to Joyce Pulliam (joyce.n.pulliam@jpl.nasa.gov), so that we can plan for you.

Charles Budney
Coordinator

Visions and Voyages: Planetary Science in the Coming Decade

This is the seventh newsletter to the community regarding the planetary science decadal survey. The report has now been released. You can download it (all 412 pages!) on the web at: http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13117

The mission studies that were performed in support of the decadal survey can also be downloaded at: http://sites.nationalacademies.org/SSB/SSB_059331

The report describes an exciting program of planetary exploration for the decade 2013-2022, all of it derived from community inputs. Here are some of the highlights:

Near-term Due Dates (next three months)

Due	Project
4/15	Goldschmidt 2011 abstracts deadline
4/18	European Astrobiology Network Association (EANA) abstracts deadline
4/30	2nd PTMSS/SRR abstracts deadline
5/9	Pre-JpGU Meeting registration deadline
5/31	EPSC-DPS 2011 abstracts deadline
6/26	2011 Gordon Research Conf. on Origins of Solar Systems abstracts deadline

- * Increased R&A funding
- * A robust program of technology development for planetary exploration
- * Continuation of the Discovery program of PI-led missions
- * Two more New Frontiers missions, to be drawn from a list of seven exciting candidates
- * Prioritized flagship missions that would begin the process of returning samples from Mars, explore a likely ocean on Europa, and carry out the first in-depth study of an Ice Giant planet.

The report also includes detailed recommendations for many other activities supported by NASA and NSF. I encourage you to download it, read it, and share it with your colleagues. (What's available now is the prepublication version of the report; the final printed version will be released in a few months.)

The report's release comes at a time of great challenges to NASA's planetary exploration program. The President's budget for FY 2012 provides strong support for planetary exploration, but the budget projections for the years beyond that decline precipitously. The decadal report provides clear decision rules that can be used if necessary to adjust the program in the face of declining budgets. But if the recent budget projections were actually to come to pass, it could mean the end of flagship-class planetary missions at NASA for years to come.

Fortunately, the real budget story has yet to be written. NASA's budget is negotiated on a year-by-year basis, and the final budget each year must be passed by the Congress. All of us as individuals have the opportunity to communicate with Congress regarding the NASA budget.

And here is a crucial point: In the face of declining budget projections, we as a community need to stand together and argue persuasively for NASA's program of planetary science and exploration. The decadal report can be a tool for helping us do that. It arose from our community, and it has the full weight of the National Research Council behind it. If we stay united, we can use it to argue effectively for a well-funded program that will give us the kinds of missions we all want to see in the years ahead. If our community fragments, though, we will be much less effective in arguing for planetary exploration over other budget priorities.

Part of the process of letting the community learn more about the decadal survey is a series of town hall meetings that will be held around the country. These are being organized by the DPS. Here's the schedule as it now stands:

Mountain View, CA	March 15
College Park, MD	March 25
Boston, MA	March 26
Boulder, CO	March 29
Tucson, AZ	March 30
New York, NY	March 31
Orlando, FL	March 31 or April 1
St. Louis, MO	April 6
Pasadena, CA	April 12
Chicago, IL	April 13

Members of the decadal steering group will be at each of these town halls to present the details of the report and answer any questions you might have. More details regarding the town halls can be found on the web at: <http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/2013decadal>

The decadal survey has been a huge effort for our community, involving two years of work and the efforts of many hundreds of scientists, engineers, and managers. I'd especially like to thank you, the community, for all the effort you put into making this a truly community-wide effort. I'd also like to extend my warmest thanks to our many colleagues who served on the steering group and the panels, Jim Green and everyone else at NASA Headquarters, the CATE team at Aerospace Corporation, the

mission study teams at APL, Goddard, JPL, and the other NASA centers, David Smith and everyone at the NRC, and the 18 peer reviewers of the report. It was a splendid effort by all.

Steve Squyres
Planetary Decadal Survey Chair

Mars Science Laboratory Landing Site Workshop

The fifth and final landing site workshop for the 2011 Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) mission will be held May 16-18, 2011, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Monrovia, California. All members of the scientific community are encouraged to participate in this important activity.

We are soliciting presentations related to the four final candidate sites (Eberswalde crater (23.8953°S, 326.7426°E), Gale crater (4.4868°S, 137.4239°E) Holden crater (26.4007°S, 325.1615°E), and Mawrth Vallis (23.9883°N, 341.0399°E). The final workshop is expected to focus on new science results related to evaluation of the sites, and talks relevant to outstanding issues and questions detailed at the fourth workshop are a priority. (see <http://marsoweb.nas.nasa.gov/landingsites/> and <http://webgis.wr.usgs.gov/msl/>). Overview and summary talks related to the sites are not being sought. Work will lead to fleshing out of a set of testable hypotheses for the rover for each site and presentations on specific investigations that accomplish mission objectives are also encouraged. The workshop will include sessions with talks on site characterization and emerging from advance studies by the Project science and engineering teams as well as those submitted to the workshop from the science community.

To be considered for an oral presentation (no posters), interested participants should submit a title and short statement of the topic (no more than 2-3 sentences) to both John Grant (grantj@si.edu) and Matt Golombek (mgolombek@jpl.nasa.gov) by April 11, 2011. There will be ample time for open discussion of each of the four sites remaining under consideration. Workshop outputs will include summary charts listing the relative merits and shortcomings of each site relative to MSL mission objectives.

In addition, the MSL Project continues to solicit specific targets for exploration by the rover within and outside of each of the final four candidate landing ellipses. Members of the science community are invited to propose science targets and will be asked to provide a short statement on why each target is important and what tools and instruments on MSL would be used in the target interrogation. These targets are being used to help to define the mission resources required to complete the science investigations at each site and are helping to inform integrated traversability and science evaluation studies conducted by the MSL Project, MSL Landing Site Working Group, and the science community. More information on submitting exploration targets can be found at: <http://msl.gps.caltech.edu>.

Input from the science community is critical to identifying the optimal landing site for the MSL. We look forward to your continued involvement!

John Grant and Matt Golombek
Co-Chairs, Mars Landing Site Steering Committee

Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

Type	Date & Location	Event Information
<i>Second Quarter, 2011</i>		
	April 3-8, 2011 Vienna, AUSTRIA	European Geosciences Union General Assembly http://meetings.copernicus.org/egu2011
	April 8, 2011	Start of Mars Northern Winter
	April 11-15, 2011 Houston, TX, USA	Humans in Space Symposium http://www.dsls.usra.edu/meetings/IAA/
	May 4-6, 2011 Pisa, ITALY	Solar System Science Before and After Gaia http://www.oca.eu/workshop/Pise/
	May 16-18, 2011 Pasadena, CA area, USA	Final MSL Landing Site Workshop Details on each of the candidate landing sites and all MSL landing site activities to date can be found at: http://marsoweb.nas.nasa.gov/landingsites/ and http://webqis.wr.usgs.gov/msl/ .
	May 18-20, 2011 Madrid, SPAIN	Conference on Micro-Raman Spectroscopy and Luminescence Studies in the Earth and Planetary Sciences (CORALS II) http://www.lpi.usra.edu/meetings/corals2011/
	May 22-27, 2011 Chiba-city, JAPAN	Japan Geoscience Union International Symposium 2011 Pre-JpGU Meeting registration deadline May 9, 2011 http://www.jpгу.org/meeting_e/index.htm
	June 6-10, 2011 Portsmouth, VA, USA	8th International Planetary Probe Workshop (IPPW-8) Contact David Atkinson, Atkinson@uidaho.edu June 4-5, Short Course: Atmospheric Flight Systems Technologies
	June 5-8, 2011 Bozeman, MT, USA	AbGradCon 2011 – Astrobiology Graduate Student Conference http://abgradcon2011.org/
	June 8, 2011 Pasadena, CA, USA	Mars Odyssey 2001 PSG Location: Jet Propulsion Laboratory
	June 13-15, 2011 Houston, TX, USA	A Wet vs. Dry Moon: Exploring Volatile Reservoirs and Implications for the Evolution of the Moon and Future Exploration http://www.lpi.usra.edu/meetings/volatiles2011/
	June 13-15, 2011 Lisbon, PORTUGAL	International Conference on Mars on “The Exploration of Mars Habitability” Pre-Conference Mars Science Team Meetings: June 12-13 (1.5) days. Open for Mars science team meetings. Post-Meeting Field Trip: Rio Tinto, Spain: June 18-20/21 (3-4 days). Visit to unique geology and acidic environment. http://www.congrex.nl/11a14/
	June 16-17, 2011 Lisbon, PORTUGAL	First International MEPAG Meeting
	June 19-22, 2011 Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA	2nd Annual Joint Planetary and Terrestrial Mining Sciences Symposium and Space Resources Roundtable (PTMSS/SRR) Registration is now Open! Abstracts deadline April 30, 2011 http://www.ptmss.com

	June 21-24, 2011 Laurel, MD, USA	9th IAA Low Cost Planetary Missions Conference Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory Abstracts submission is Open! http://lcpm9.jhuapl.edu/index.php for more information
	June 22-24, 2011 Greenbelt, MD, USA	The Annual Meeting of Planetary Mappers Contact Les Bleamaster (lbleamas@psi.edu)
	June 28 – July 7, 2011 Melbourne, AUSTRALIA	IUGG/IAMAS General Assembly J-M07 Atmospheres and ices on terrestrial planets http://www.iugq2011.com/program-iamas.asp
<i>Third Quarter, 2011</i>		
	July 3-8, 2011 Montpellier, FRANCE	ISSOL – The International Astrobiology Society an IAU C51 (Bioastronomy) Joint International Conference http://www.origins2011.univ-montp2.fr/
	July 11-14, 2011 Cologne, GERMANY	European Astrobiology Network Association (EANA) 2011 Planets and life: evolution and distribution Abstracts deadline April 18, 2011 http://www.eana2011.de/
	July 17, 2011 Moffett Field, CA, USA	LunGradCon 2011 First announcement of the 2 nd Annual Lunar Graduate Conference to be held at NASA Ames Research Center preceding the NASA Lunar Science Forum. http://lasp.colorado.edu/cldas/lqc2011
	July 17-22, 2011 South Hadley, MA, USA	2011 Gordon Research Conference on Origins of Solar Systems Applications deadline is June 26, 2011. Apply early because it is expected to be oversubscribed. http://www.grc.org
	August 8-12, 2011 Taipei, TAIWAN	AOGS 2011 – Asia Oceania Geosciences Society <i>PS08 Session</i> on Science and Exploration of Mars, where results of ongoing and future international missions to Mars will be discussed. <i>PS08 Session Information:</i> This session will address the latest results of the different ongoing missions in orbit around Mars as well as those on the surface of the red planet. It will cover all fields of research from the ionosphere and the atmosphere to the surface and interior of Mars. http://www.asiaoceania.org/aogs2011/public.asp?page=home.htm
	August 8-12, 2011 Greenwich, ENGLAND	74th Annual Meeting of the Meteoritical Society Contact: Gretchen Benedix (g.benedix@nhm.ac.uk) http://www.metsoc2011.org
	August 14-19, 2011 Prague, Czech Republic	Goldschmidt 2011 Abstracts deadline April 15, 2011 http://www.goldschmidt2011.org/
	August 28 – September 1, 2011 Denver, CO, USA	2011 American Chemical Society National Meeting (ACS) http://portal.acs.org/portal/acs/corg/content?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=P_ARTICLEMAIN&node_id=395&content_id=CNBP_026588&use_sec=true&sec_url_var=region1&uuid=59eee62c-ccc8-49f8-ac9d-1e804c374630
	September 13, 2011	Start of Mars Northern Spring
 	September 12-16, 2011 Fairbanks, AK, USA	Fifth International Conference on Mars Polar Science and Exploration http://www.lpi.usra.edu/meetings/polar2011/

	September 14-16, 2011 Flagstaff, AZ, USA	2nd Planetary Crater Consortium Meeting Location: U.S. Geological Survey Abstracts deadline August 26, 2011 http://www.planetarycraterconsortium.nau.edu/PCCMeeting.htm
	September 21-23, 2011 Barcelona, SPAIN	COST CM-0805 Nitrogen in Planetary Systems: The Early Evolution of the Atmospheres of Terrestrial Planets: The Role of N2 http://ulisse.busoc.be/cost/barcelona-meeting.php
<i>Fourth Quarter, 2011</i>		
	October 3-7, 2011 Nantes, FRANCE	EPSC-DPS 2011 A joint meeting of the European Planetary Science Congress (EPSC) and the American Astronomical Society Division for Planetary Sciences (DPS) http://meetings.copernicus.org/epsc-dps2011/ May 31: Abstracts due
	October 3-7, 2011 Capetown, SOUTH AFRICA	62nd International Astronautical Congress 2011 http://iac2011.com
	October 9-12, 2011 Minneapolis, MN, USA	Geological Society of America Annual Meeting http://www.geosociety.org/meetings/
	November 7-9, 2011 Kitakyushu City, JAPAN	2011 PERC Planetary Geology Field Symposium Deadline for registration and abstracts submission will be early August http://www.perc.it-chiba.ac.jp/meetings/pgfs-2011/
	November 25- December 18, 2011	MSL Launch Period
	December 12-16, 2011 San Francisco, CA, USA	AGU Fall Meeting www.agu.org/meetings
<i>2012</i>		
	March 2012	43rd Lunar and Planetary Science Conference
	March 30, 2012	Start of Mars Northern Summer
	July 14-22, 2012 Mysore, INDIA	COSPAR 2012 Scientific Assembly Abstracts deadline – mid-February 2012 http://cosparhq.cnes.fr/Meetings/sciass.htm
	August 2012 Cairns, Queensland AUSTRALIA	75th Annual Meeting of the Meteoritical Society Contact: Trevor Ireland http://www.meteoriticalsociety.org/simple_template.cfm?code=news_meetings
	August 2012 Brisbane, AUSTRALIA	The 34th International Geological Congress http://www.33igc.org/
	August 6-20, 2012	MSL Landing
	September 29, 2012	Start of Mars Northern Fall
	November 4-7, 2012 Charlotte, NC, USA	Geological Society of America Annual Meeting
<i>2013</i>		
	March 2013	44th Lunar and Planetary Science Conference
	July 2013 Pasadena, CA, USA	8th International Conference on Mars California Institute of Technology

	October 27-30, 2013	Geological Society of America Annual Meeting
	November 18, 2013	MAVEN Launch Period Opens
<i>2014</i>		
	March 2014	45th Lunar and Planetary Science Conference
	October 19-22, 2014 Vancouver, British Columbia, CANADA	Geological Society of American Annual Meeting
<i>2015</i>		
	March 2015	46th Lunar and Planetary Science Conference

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

Good Friday	4/22/2011	4/6/2012	3/29/2013	4/18/2014	4/3/2015
Rosh Hashanah	9/29/2011	9/17/2012	9/5/2013	9/25/2014	9/14/2015
Yom Kippur	10/8/2011	9/26/2012	9/14/2013	10/4/2014	9/23/2015
(Note that Jewish holidays start at sundown the previous evening).					
Thanksgiving Day, U.S.	11/24/2011	11/22/2012	11/28/2013	11/27/2014	11/26/2015
Thanksgiving Day, Canada	10/10/2011	10/8/2012	10/14/2013	10/13/2014	10/12/2015

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Please send your Mars Community Announcements and calendar items for inclusion in next month's email to Joyce Pulliam, Joyce.N.Pulliam@jpl.nasa.gov, 818-393-0444.

All announcements listed in this newsletter will be posted on the MEPAG website, available at <http://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov>.