Call for Candidate Future Mars Landing Sites:

The Mars Program Offices at NASA Headquarters and The Jet Propulsion Laboratory invite submission of new candidate landing sites for future missions. The goal is to gather information on future candidate landing sites and develop a list of high priority candidate landing sites for a range of possible future missions so that targeting by instruments on the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO) and Mars Odyssey (ODY) can begin while those orbital assets are still in operation. Proposed landing sites require submission of a short abstract (template available at http://marsoweb.nas.nasa.gov/landingsites/ and http://webgis.wr.usgs.gov/msl) and can be for a variety of future Mars missions (e.g., Sample Return, Network Science, or other potential missions), but must include specific but brief statements about the type of mission and mission science objectives, location of the candidate landing ellipse and how it addresses the mission science, desired target for initial imaging by MRO and ODY instruments, and basic information related to engineering (elevation and latitude that is supplemented by information regarding rock abundance, thermal inertia, and slopes where available). Preliminary science goals for Sample Return and MAX-C can be found at http://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/reports/index.html. Candidate sites for MSL are excluded from consideration as there is a separate call for sites for that mission. An ellipse size of 15 km will be assumed for missions using MSL heritage landing systems, such as sample return or the MAX-C rover being considered for 2018. Missions using other landing systems must include an ellipse based on expectations from mission concept studies.

New candidate landing sites can be submitted through the end of 2009 and should be submitted via e-mail to both John Grant (grantj@si.edu) and Matt Golombek (mgolombek@jpl.nasa.gov). Individuals are limited to proposal of 3 sites/specific ellipses and are responsible for including a summary review of existing MRO and other data for their candidate sites. After review and prioritization by the landing site steering committee, a list of up to 100 candidate sites will be provided to the MRO, ODY, and Mars Express teams for imaging during the first year. Data will be made available to proposers as soon as images/data products are available. It is anticipated that a dedicated landing site workshop will be held late in 2010 or early in 2011 to enable discussion of new candidate sites and it is likely that those sites deemed of the highest merit will be selected for additional imaging. This call for candidate new landing sites is an unfunded effort.

It is anticipated that a call for proposals (RFP) to support analysis of new candidate landing sites will be issued by Critical Data Products (CDP) Program at JPL in January 2010. It is expected that CDP will fund approximately 5-10 proposals at 25K for one year in early 2010 with additional funding anticipated for additional sites in future years.