

Dear Colleague:

The third landing site workshop for the 2009 Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) will be held in Monrovia, CA, on September 15-17, 2008 (Monday through Wednesday) at the Doubletree Hotel ([http://doubletree1.hilton.com/en\\_US/dt/hotel/LAXMVDT-Doubletree-Hotel-Monrovia-Pasadena-Area-California/index.do](http://doubletree1.hilton.com/en_US/dt/hotel/LAXMVDT-Doubletree-Hotel-Monrovia-Pasadena-Area-California/index.do)). A block of rooms at a discounted rate is being held at the Doubletree until August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 and a limited number of travel grants are available to support students (see below). The workshop precedes the MEPAG meeting (starting on Thursday, 9/18) also to be held in the Pasadena area.

We are soliciting presentations for the third workshop and invite you to submit a suggested presentation title for consideration on any of the 7 sites being considered for MSL before August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008. We urge advocates for individual sites to identify additional presentations/presenters on topics relevant to the sites that may fall outside of their areas of expertise. Pending review of presentations submitted by the broader community, additional talks on topics related to some sites may be added by the workshop program committee. Our goal is to provide as comprehensive a discussion as possible of each site.

The bulk of the third workshop will be devoted to discussion of the 7 remaining sites with respect to scientific questions and criteria relevant to the MSL mission. **These discussion points and criteria are posted on the MSL Landing Site websites:** (<http://marsoweb.nas.nasa.gov/landingsites/> and <http://webgis.wr.usgs.gov/msl>) and **should form the outline for science presentations made at the third workshop.** The workshop will also include presentations on the physical attributes and surface characteristics of the sites as well as presentations on scientific themes related to the MSL science objectives. There will be ample time for discussion of the sites. The goal of the third workshop will be to produce a summary of the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of each of the remaining sites relative to the questions included in the discussion points/criteria document.

In order to ensure consideration of new data and discoveries at Mars made since the second MSL landing site workshop, the Mars Landing Site Steering Committee was recently charged with soliciting and reviewing proposals for new candidate landing sites for MSL. As a result of that activity, a new site (Gale Crater, 4.5S, 137.4E) has been added to the existing list of sites under consideration (based on consideration of newly available data). In addition, one of the existing sites (North Meridiani) has been replaced by one farther to the south (referred to as South Meridiani, 3.1S, 354.6E). The new South Meridiani site is deemed to be as safe, but be scientifically more compelling than the existing North Meridiani site. Materials related to these two new sites are posted at the websites supporting MSL landing site selection activities: <http://marsoweb.nas.nasa.gov/landingsites/> and <http://webgis.wr.usgs.gov/msl>.

A number of additional websites provide access to more information on the MSL mission, relevant engineering requirements, landing site selection process, and available data for the proposed sites. Websites where this information is posted include:

Descriptions of the MSL mission and a summary of NASA's Mars exploration strategy are available at:

<http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/msl/overview>  
<http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/mep/mslides/index.html>  
<http://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/reports/index.html>.

Information on the MSL landing site selection process and sites discussed at the first two workshops along with supporting image data can be found at the websites supporting MSL landing site selection activities:

<http://marsoweb.nas.nasa.gov/landingsites/>  
<http://webgis.wr.usgs.gov/msl>

Additional images and derived data products can be viewed at:

<http://hirise.lpl.arizona.edu/> (HiRISE)  
[http://crism.jhuapl.edu/msl\\_landing\\_sites/](http://crism.jhuapl.edu/msl_landing_sites/) (CRISM)  
[http://www.msss.com/msss\\_images/subject/mro\\_ctx.html](http://www.msss.com/msss_images/subject/mro_ctx.html) (CTX)  
[http://marsoweb.nas.nasa.gov/HiRISE/hirise\\_images/](http://marsoweb.nas.nasa.gov/HiRISE/hirise_images/) (HiRISE)  
<http://themis.asu.edu> (THEMIS daytime, nighttime IR, VIS, and thermal inertia mosaics)  
<http://themis.asu.edu/landingsites/> (Decorrelation stretched THEMIS daytime mosaics)  
[http://www.msss.com/mars\\_images/moc/guest/](http://www.msss.com/mars_images/moc/guest/) (MOC)  
<http://hrscview.fu-berlin.de/sites.html> (HRSC)

Thanks to the folks at MSSS (MOC), THEMIS (ASU and Hawaii), HiRISE (U of A), and HRSC (The Free University of Berlin) who have made these data available to the community in support of landing site activities

All members of the scientific community are encouraged to participate in this important activity. Input from the science community is critical to identification of optimal landing sites for the MSL. We look forward to your continued involvement in these activities!

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

#### **ACCOMMODATIONS - AUGUST 1 DEADLINE**

The workshop will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Monrovia, California, in the Pasadena area (924 W. Huntington Drive, 1-626-357-1900). A group rate of \$118/night is available for Sunday, September 14 through the end of the MEPAG meeting following the workshop. Please reference "(MSL) Mars Science Laboratory Landing Site" and make your reservations before August 1. Other hotels are located in the vicinity if the special rate is sold out.

#### **STUDENT TRAVEL GRANTS - JULY 30 DEADLINE**

The NASA Mars Program Office has announced that travel funding will be made available for a limited number of students who are U.S. citizens or legal residents with Mars-related interests. An application must be submitted by July 30, 2008 to be considered for this funding. NASA Headquarters will make the selections and announce the awards no later than August 20, 2008. An application form can be downloaded at: [http://mepag/Student\\_Opportunities/index.html](http://mepag/Student_Opportunities/index.html)