

New Mars rover, with LANL components, to search for life

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by Roger Wiens

Mars has always been a source of mystery, exciting the imaginations of sci-fi writers, filmmakers and the public. Recent scientific discoveries have simultaneously satisfied and stoked the flames of our curiosity about our nearest planetary neighbor.

A decade of research enabled by NASA's aptly named Curiosity rover has revealed that lakes, rivers, streams and likely oceans appearing over eons are part of the geologic history of Mars. While its epoch of active bodies of water ended over 3 billion years ago, we know that Mars used to be habitable. So far, no clear evidence of life has been found there, not even a virus. But if Mars was once habitable, wouldn't it have harbored life?

NASA is now poised to take the next step to answer this question with the upcoming launch of the Perseverance rover.

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