



MARS INSTITUTE

NEWS RELEASE

Mars Institute team to complete Arctic sea-ice drive along fabled Northwest Passage to reach “Mars on Earth”

Mountain View, CA, 5 May 2010. An international team led by Mars Institute scientist Dr. Pascal Lee will depart the Arctic community of Resolute Bay today aboard the *Moon-1 Humvee Rover* on a sea-ice crossing expedition. The team is headed for the Haughton-Mars Project Research Station (HMPRS) on Devon Island, High Arctic, a remote outpost dedicated to space exploration on the world’s largest uninhabited island.

The *Moon-1* is an experimental vehicle simulating future pressurized rovers that will one day allow humans to explore long distances on the Moon and Mars. Last year, the scientists completed a record-setting 494 km drive on sea-ice in the *Moon-1* along the fabled Northwest Passage between Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay, Nunavut. Adverse weather and ice conditions, however, prevented Devon Island from being reached. The *Moon-1* eventually hitched a ride on a US Air National Guard transport plane to Resolute Bay, where it is now in position to begin the final leg of its journey.

The team faces a challenging traverse across 200 kilometers of frigid, snow-covered barrens, including 35 kilometers across the rough ice-filled Wellington Channel. “If all goes well, we should be on Devon Island within a few days. But we are not taking it for granted. Nature has to cooperate”, cautioned Lee. Last year, the rover’s rear section fell through a lead (crack) in the ice, but was salvaged by the team using the *Moon-1*’s powerful front winch and unique traction capabilities.

The *Northwest Passage Drive Expedition* is an integral part of the Haughton-Mars Project (HMP) on Devon Island where field research in space science and exploration is supported by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Canadian Space Agency, the SETI Institute, and other research partners of the Mars Institute.

The present traverse will allow collection of valuable scientific and technical data that will help plan future long-range rover traverses on the Moon and Mars. Snow and sea-ice thickness measurements will also be made to monitor Climate Change and the long-term evolution of the Arctic environment.

Accompanying Lee are *Northwest Passage Drive Expedition* veterans Joe Amarualik, John W. Schutt, and Jesse Weaver, and the Jules Verne Adventures documentary team comprising filmmaker Jean-Christophe Jeauffre and director of photography Mark Carroll.

For more information, please visit www.marsinstitute.info or www.marsonearth.org or contact:

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During Northwest Passage Drive Expedition–2010, daily updates on the status of the expedition may be obtained from the above websites and/or by contacting:

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