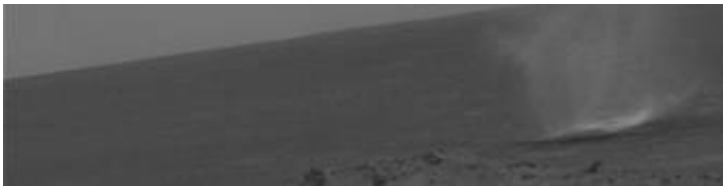


Movie Clip Shows Whirlwinds Carrying Dust on Mars

April 22 2005



NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Spirit is taking movies of dust devils -- whirlwinds carrying dust -- scooting across a plain on Mars.

Clips consisting of a few frames of two different dust devils are available online at www.nasa.gov/vision/universe/s...system/mer_main.html . These were taken on April 15 and April 18, and capture more movement as seen from the surface than any previous imaging of martian dust devils.

"This is the best look we've ever gotten of the wind effects on the martian surface as they are happening," said Dr. Mark Lemmon, a rover team member and atmospheric scientist at Texas A&M University, College Station.

Spirit, operated from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., has been using its navigation camera to routinely check for dust

devils. It began seeing dust devils last month in individual frames from the camera. Lemmon said, "We're hoping to learn about how dust is kicked up into the atmosphere and how the wind is interacting with the surface. It's exciting that we now have a systematic way of capturing dust devils in movies rather than isolated still images."

Spirit and its twin, Opportunity, successfully completed three-month primary missions in April, 2004, and have been exploring at increasing distances from their landing sites since then.

Citation: Movie Clip Shows Whirlwinds Carrying Dust on Mars (2005, April 22) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-04-movie-whirlwinds-mars.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.