

Phoenix Images Discarded Heat Shield

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Image: NASA/JPL-Caltech/University of Arizona/ Texas A&M Univeristy

(PhysOrg.com) -- A new color high-resolution image from the Phoenix Mars Lander shows its crumpled heat shield about 150 meters away from the spacecraft.

The Phoenix Mars Lander's Surface Stereo Imager took this image of the spacecraft's crumpled heat shield on Sept. 16, 2008, the 111th Martian day of the mission.

The 2-1/2 meter (about 8-1/2 feet) heat shield landed southeast of Phoenix, about halfway between the spacecraft and its backshell/parachute. The backshell/parachute touched ground 300 meters (1,000 ft) to the south of the lander.

The dark area to the right of the heat shield is the "bounce mark" it made on impact with the Red Planet. This image is the highest-resolution image that will likely be taken by the lander, and is part of the 1,500-image "Happily Ever After" panorama.

The Phoenix mission is led by the University of Arizona, Tucson, on behalf of NASA. Project management of the mission is led by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif. Spacecraft development is by Lockheed Martin Space Systems, Denver.

Provided by NASA

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