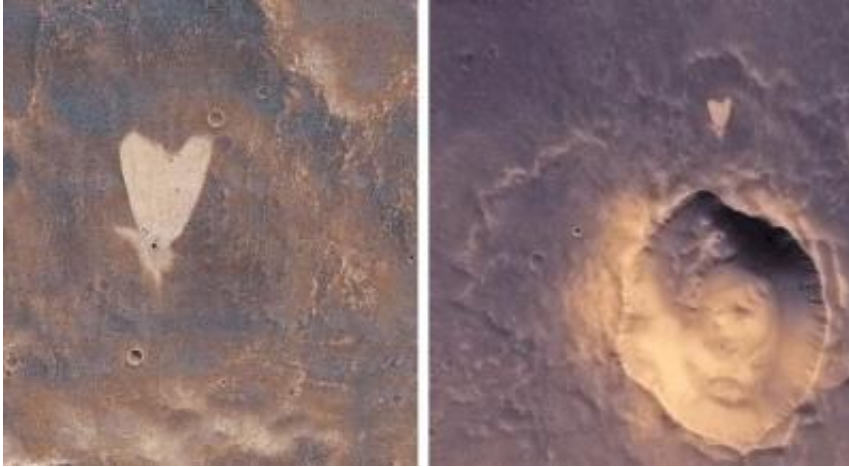# Happy Valentine's Day from Mars

February 15 2011, By Guy Webster

A heart-shaped feature in the Arabia Terra region of Mars is show on the left, with additional context on the right, in excerpts of an image taken by the Context Camera on NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/MSSS

(PhysOrg.com) -- An image taken by the Context Camera on NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter shows a heart-shaped feature that the camera's team at Malin Space Science Systems, San Diego, wants to share with other Mars fans on St. Valentine's Day.

The feature is about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) long, in the Arabia Terra region of Mars' northern hemisphere. It appears in an image taken on May 23, 2010. A small impact crater near the tip of the heart is responsible for the formation of the bright, heart-shaped feature. When the impact occurred, darker material on the surface was blown away, and

brighter material beneath it was revealed. Some of this brighter material appears to have flowed further downslope to form the heart shape, as the small impact occurred on the blanket of material ejected from a much larger impact crater.

The Context Camera was provided by and is operated by Malin Space Science Systems, San Diego, Calif. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, a division of the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif., manages the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter for the NASA Science Mission Directorate, Washington. Lockheed Martin Space Systems, Denver, built the spacecraft and operates it in partnership with JPL.

  More information: For more information about the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter mission, see mars.jpl.nasa.gov/mro/

Provided by JPL/NASA

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