Mars orbiter images rover and tracks in Gale Crater

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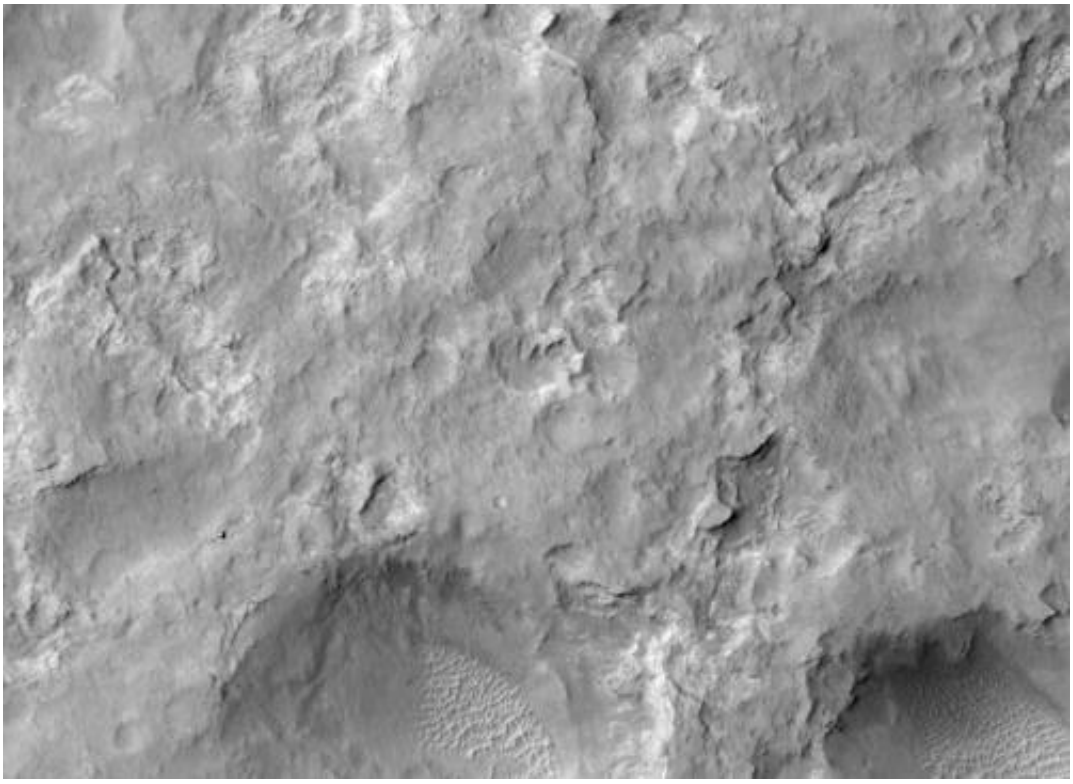


NASA's Curiosity Mars rover and tracks left by its driving appear in this portion of a Dec. 11, 2013, observation by the High Resolution Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE) camera on NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/Univ. of Arizona

(Phys.org) —NASA's Curiosity Mars rover and its recent tracks from driving in Gale Crater appear in an image taken by the High Resolution

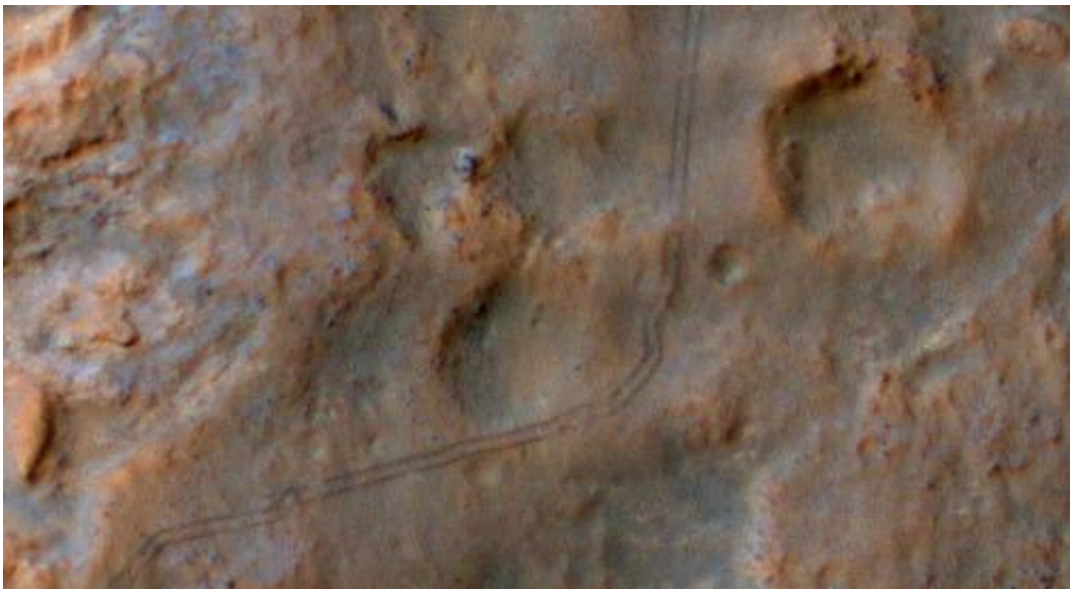
Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE) camera on NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter on Dec. 11, 2013.

Excerpts from the large HiRISE observation are above, showing the rover, and below, showing tracks across a landscape in enhanced color.

The tracks show where the rover has zigzagged around obstacles on its route toward the lower slopes of Mount Sharp, its next major destination.

HiRISE first imaged the Mars Science Laboratory spacecraft while it was descending on a parachute to place Curiosity on Mars 17 months ago. Since then, it has provided updated views of the rover's traverse, as seen from orbit.

HiRISE is operated by the University of Arizona, Tucson. The instrument was built by Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp., Boulder, Colo. The Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter project and Mars Science Laboratory project are managed for NASA's Science Mission Directorate, Washington, by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, a division of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.



Two parallel tracks left by the wheels of NASA's Curiosity Mars rover cross rugged ground in this portion of a Dec. 11, 2013, observation by the High Resolution Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE) camera on NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. The rover itself does not appear in this part of the HiRISE observation. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/Univ. of Arizona

Provided by NASA