Image: Rover's panorama taken amid Murray Buttes on Mars

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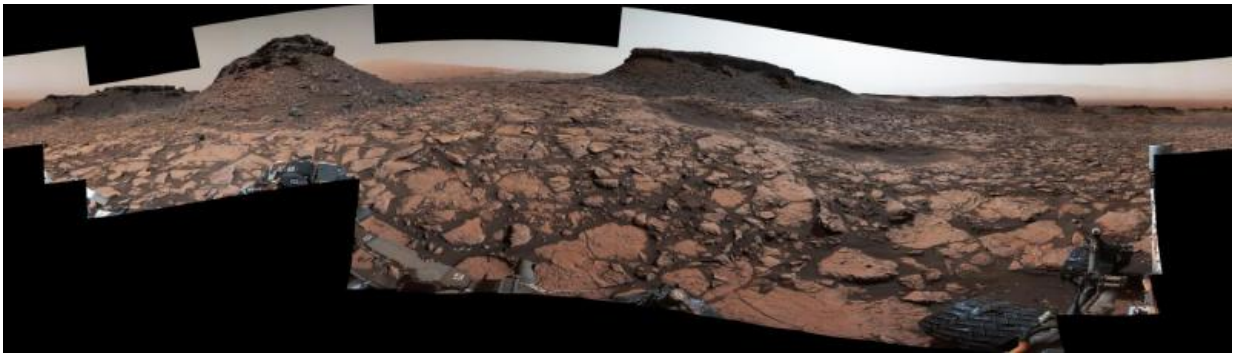

Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/MSSS

This 360-degree panorama was acquired by the Mast Camera (Mastcam) on NASA's Curiosity Mars rover while the rover was in an area called "Murray Buttes" on lower Mount Sharp, one of the most scenic landscapes yet visited by any Mars rover.

The view stitches together many individual images taken by Mastcam's left-eye camera on Sept. 4, 2016, during the 1,451st Martian day, or sol, of the mission. North is at both ends and south is in the center. The rover's location when it recorded this scene was the site it reached in its Sol 1448 drive. (See map at mars .nasa.gov/msl/multimedia/images/?ImageID=8015" target="_blank">mars.nasa.gov/msl/mul … images/?ImageID=8015.)

The dark, flat-topped mesa near the center of the scene rises to about 39 feet (about 12 meters) above the surrounding plain. From the rover's position, the top of this mesa is about 131 feet (about 40 meters) away, and the beginning of the debris apron at the base of the mesa is about 98 feet (about 30 meters) away.

In the left half of the image, the dark butte that appears largest sits eastward from the rover and about 33 feet (about 10 meters) high. From the rover's position, the top of this butte is about 85 feet (about 26 meters) away, and the beginning of the debris apron at its base is about 33 feet (about 10 meters) away. An upper portion of Mount Sharp appears on the horizon to the right of it.

The relatively flat foreground is part of a geological layer called the Murray formation, which includes lakebed mud deposits. The buttes and mesas rising above this surface are eroded remnants of ancient sandstone that originated when winds deposited sand after lower Mount Sharp had formed. They are capped by material that is relatively resistant to erosion, just as is the case with many similarly shaped buttes and mesas on Earth. The area's informal naming honors Bruce Murray (1931-2013), a Caltech planetary scientist and director of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, California.

The scene is presented with a color adjustment that approximates white balancing, to resemble how the rocks and sand would appear under daytime lighting conditions on Earth.

Provided by NASA