

# String theory: NASA Mars rover discovers mystery object

July 22 2022

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Is it tumbleweed? A piece of fishing line? Spaghetti?

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But the most plausible explanation is more prosaic: it's likely remnants of a component used to lower the [robotic explorer](#) to the Martian surface in February 2021.

"We have been discussing where it's from, but there's been speculation that it's a piece of cord from the parachute or from the landing system that lowers the rover to the ground," a spokesman for NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory told AFP.

"Note that we don't have confirmation that it's one or the other," he added.

The bundle of debris was first spotted July 12 by the rover's front left hazard avoidance camera—but when Perseverance returned to the same spot four days later, it was gone.

It was probably carried away by wind, like a piece of a thermal blanket that might have come from the rocket-powered landing system, which was spotted last month.

The accumulating trash left behind by Perseverance is considered a small price to pay for the rover's noble scientific goals of searching for biosignatures of ancient microbial life forms.

And these items may one day become valuable artifacts for future Mars colonists.

"In a hundred years or so Martians will be eagerly collecting up all this stuff and either putting it on display in museums or making it into 'historical jewelry,'" tweeted amateur astronomer Stuart Atkinson.

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Citation: String theory: NASA Mars rover discovers mystery object (2022, July 22) retrieved 16 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-07-theory-nasa-mars-rover-mystery.html>

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