

Committee on Planetary Protection Spring Meeting

March 24-27, 2026

Hybrid Meeting

National Academies Building, 2101 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington DC

ALL TIMES IN US EASTERN STANDARD TIME

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026

OPEN SESSION

Livestream Link:

8:15 AM Working Breakfast for Members, Speakers, and Invited Guests

8:45 AM **Metagenomic Insights into Biodiversity and Metabolic Capabilities of Microbes on the International Space Station: Application of Metagenomic Data to Planetary Protection Challenges for Crewed Missions to Mars**
(30-minute presentation and 30-minute discussion)

Dr. Kasthuri Venkateswaran
NASA Jet Propulsion Lab
(Retired)

9:45 AM *Adjourn to Plenary; Break (15 minutes)*

PLENARY SESSION

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/cdn/materials/a12e7021-9bb6-41ca-94ee-75f52772d85d>

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026

OPEN SESSION

Livestream Link: TBD

- 8:45 AM** **Office of Planetary Protection Update** **Dr. Nick Benardini**
(30-minute presentation and 30-minute discussion) **Dr. Erin Lalime**
Office of Planetary Protection (OPP), NASA
- 9:45 AM* *Break (15 minutes)*
- 10:00 AM** **Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate (ESDMD)** **Dr. Jake Bleacher**
Moon to Mars Architecture: Activities and **Chief Exploration Scientist, NASA**
Touch Points for Planetary Protection
(45-minute presentation and 30-minute discussion)
- 11:15 AM* *Break (15 minutes)*
- 11:30 PM** **Planetary Protection Research and Planetary Science** **Dr. David Smith**
Division R&A Update **Dr. Kathleen Vander Kaaden**
(45-minute presentation and 30-minute discussion) **Planetary Science Division (PSD), NASA**
- 12:45 PM* *Working Lunch for Members, Speakers, and Invited Guests*
- 1:45 PM** **Panel—Looking Ahead to Lunar Implementation: Science and Modeling Efforts to**
Refine the Category II Reporting Requirements
(5 15-minute presentation and 45-minute discussion)
Panelists:
Ms. Sonya Dillard (Marshall Space Flight Center)
Dr. Anthony Genova (Ames Research Center)
Dr. William Hoey and Dr. John Alred (Jet Propulsion Lab)
Dr. Dianne Poster (pending agency approval, NIST and U.S. Department of Commerce)
Dr. Parvathy Prem (Applied Physics Laboratory)
- 3:45 PM* *Break (15 minutes)*
- 4:00 PM** **The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency’s Ice Control** **Dr. Robyn Barbato**
for Cold Environments: Lessons for Microbiology **U.S. Army Corp of Engineers**
(20-minute presentation and 20-minute discussion)
- 4:40 PM* *Adjourn to Closed Session; Break (15 minutes)*

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THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026

OPEN SESSION

Livestream link: TBD

- 8:45 AM** **COSPAR Panel on Planetary Protection Update** **Dr. Athena Coustenis**
(20-minute presentation and 20-minute discussion) **COSPAR Panel on Planetary Protection**
- 9:25 AM** **COSPAR Work on Limits of Life and Performance/Probability-Based Assessment** **Dr. Peter Doran, Louisiana State University**
(20-minute presentation and 20-minute discussion) **Dr. Karen Olson-Francis, Open University**
- 10:05 AM* *Break (15 minutes)*
- 10:20 AM** **European Science Foundation (ESF) Work on Probability of Growth** **Dr. Silvio Sinibaldi**
(20-minute presentations and 20-minute discussion period) **Dr. Jonas L’Haridon**
ESF
- 11:00 AM** **A Forward Planetary Protection Working Model of Probability of Contamination** **Mr. Mike DiNicola**
(30-minute presentation and 30-minute discussion) **NASA Jet Propulsion Lab**
- 12:00 PM* *Working Lunch for Members, Speakers, and Invited Guests*
- 1:00 PM** **Panel—Evolving the NASA Standard Assay to Assess Biological Cleanliness for Probabilistic Risk Assessment (Part 1): Metagenomics**
(2 20-minute presentations and 35-minute discussion period)
Dr. Chelsi Cassily, Marshall Space Flight Center
Dr. Stephanie Servetas, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
- 2:15 PM* *Break (15 minutes)*
- 2:30 PM** **Panel—Evolving the NASA Standard Assay to Assess Biological Cleanliness for Probabilistic Risk Assessment (Part 2): Space Stations**
(2 15-minute presentations and 30-minute discussion period)
Dr. Aaron Regberg and Dr. Sarah Wallace, Johnson Space Center
- 3:30 PM* *Break (15 minutes)*
- 3:45 PM** **Lessons on Contamination Control: Risk Assessment Approaches Used in Industry and Possible Planetary Protection Applications to Crewed Missions to Mars** **Dr. Gerald McDonnell and Ms. Emily Craven**
(60-minute presentation and 30-minute discussion) **CoPP Members**
- 5:15 PM* *Adjourn to Closed Session; Break (15 minutes)*

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FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026

OPEN SESSION

Livestream link: TBD

9:45 AM

Closing Comments
(90-minute discussion)

Dr. Lisa Pratt and Mr. David Fidler
CoPP Co-Chairs

11:15 AM

Adjourn to Closed Session; Break (15 minutes)

IMPORTANT NOTES

Presenters:

- Please do not include unpublished data, ITAR-controlled or sensitive information in your presentation.
- A National Academies Board staff member will ask you to sign a form before the meeting allowing us permission to use your likeness and presentation for our livestream video, which will be posted on our Board website after the meeting. Please get in touch with us before the meeting if you have any concerns about this usage.

Members and Presenters:

- Remote access will be provided through Zoom. This will allow you to participate in the meeting even if you can't be physically present.
- Please note that Zoom allows audio and any materials exchanged or viewed during the session to be recorded and shared.
- By participating in this activity, you agree to let your voice, likeness, and any materials you provide be recorded for use and dissemination. This includes any language, format, or media now known or later devised.
- You release the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine from any and all claims, liability, or damages arising from any such use. If you disagree, please do not join the session.

Members of the General Public:

- Remote access will be provided through a live stream on Vimeo. This will also be publicly available and posted on the Board website. You do not need to register.

Thank you all for your cooperation, and we look forward to a successful meeting.

REMOTE CONNECTION DETAILS

Zoom Web Conference & Telecon Instructions

Join from a computer:

1. Click on the URL (below). A popup will appear that says "Open URL:Zoom Launcher;" Click the "Open" button and let Zoom load (may take a minute).
2. Once loaded, Zoom will automatically display another pop-up for the audio connection. Please click the "call me" tab and enter the phone number you would like to be called at (i.e. home, office, mobile). Click "Call me" and follow the prompts.

Join from a mobile device:

1. Download the Zoom app from your phone's app store (if you don't have it installed already).
2. Click on the URL (below), or open the Zoom app and enter the Meeting ID: (below), and press join. Enter your name if requested.
3. The Zoom app will automatically display a pop-up window for the audio connection. Select the "Call my Phone" option from the menu, enter your phone number, press call, and follow any prompts.

Join by phone only:

1. Connection quality is much better via Zoom's "Call me" feature from the webconference, so we strongly recommend that you connect this way.
2. If you are not able to do so, you can dial 1-877-853-5257 (Toll Free) and enter the Meeting ID: (below). International numbers are available at:

<https://nasem.zoom.us/j/98012345678>

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Statement of Task

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) will appoint the Committee on Planetary Protection (CoPP) to operate as a long-term ad hoc committee. The disciplinary scope of CoPP includes the study of those aspects of planetary environments, the life sciences, spacecraft engineering and technology, and science policy relevant to the control of biological cross-contamination arising from the robotic spacecraft missions and the human exploration and utilization of solar system bodies.

CoPP will have two primary tasks:

1. To monitor progress in implementing the planetary protection guidelines associated with priority missions and programs identified in the most recent planetary science decadal survey, and other relevant reports issued by NASEM; and
2. To serve as a source of information and advice on those measures undertaken by robotic spacecraft and human exploration missions to protect the biological and environmental integrity of extraterrestrial bodies for future scientific studies and the means to preserve the integrity of Earth's biosphere when spacecraft return potentially hazardous extraterrestrial materials to Earth.

When requested by NASA and as approved by NASEM in accordance with its procedures the committee may write reports detailing progress in areas relating to NASA's planetary protection guidelines or new scientific and technical developments. The reports will be based on evidence gathered by the committee. The reports may address key activities undertaken by NASA as well as the status of its actions that relate to the state of implementation of priority missions and programs.

Through its regular meetings, the CoPP will also serve the secondary functions of:

1. Providing an independent, authoritative forum for the scientific community, the federal government, international space agencies, relevant private-sector entities and organizations, and the interested public to identify and discuss emerging issues in the scientific, technical, and engineering aspects of planetary protection policies and guidelines;
2. Identifying and prioritizing necessary research and development activities required to advance the development of planetary protection guidelines designed to ensure that the exploration and utilization of extraterrestrial environments is conducted responsibly; and,
3. Providing a forum for interactions with the International Science Council's Committee on Space Research and other national and international organizations through the addition of international participants when appropriate and in coordination with the SSB.