

Curiosity 5th Anniversary 02:07

Five years ago, Curiosity landed safely on Mars. Curiosity's assignment: Explore a layered mountain inside Gale Crater to learn if ancient Mars was capable of supporting life.

Curiosity has driven over 10 miles, returned over 200,000 images, drilled 15 rock samples, ...and even took a few selfies.

What has Curiosity found?

Rounded pebbles that hint of an ancient river, and a delta, where a river emptied into an ancient lake. Lakes spanned the crater floor, leaving mud that built the lower part of the mountain, inch by inch. The lakes came and went, and eventually dried up. But groundwater persisted, leaving minerals behind.

Though constantly changing, Gale Crater was habitable for millions of years. Three billion years later, a thinner atmosphere keeps Mars dry and cold. Winds shape sand into ripples and dunes, and dust devils swirl across the landscape.

Curiosity also has monitored radiation from the sun and space to help plan for the day when astronauts enjoy this same Martian view.