

Transcript:

Hi, my name is Daniel Limonadi. I'm the surface sampling and science phase lead, and this is your Mars Curiosity rover update.

Curiosity still is heading to Glenelg. We've just stopped at the Bathurst rock formation to check it out with the robotic arm mounted instruments: a hand lens imager and a spectrometer. Got some great science data there for the science team and now we're moving to a new rover location called Rocknest. And we've come to Rocknest because it has nice windblown sand drifts.

At the Rocknest location we really are entering a new phase in Mars exploration with Curiosity. We're starting the surface sampling part of the mission. The reason this is a one-ton rover with a 200-pound robotic arm, is because we have these tools to acquire bits of Mars, you know, either with a scoop or a drill; process those samples for our very sensitive analytical lab instruments.

So our scoop - this is not a giant backhoe on Mars - we basically have more like a oversized tablespoon attached to the end of the arm and we grab on the order of 20 grams of material. And we position the arm over the soil target and then we just actuate the scoop, do a little bit of vibration to kind of level out the sample and then raise the arm up, close the scoop and carry on with our sampling activity.

Over the next two to three weeks we'll be doing the scooping and sampling analysis activities and then from there we expect to spend a few more weeks driving over to the Glenelg area proper, doing scratch and sniff science along the way with the robotic arm.

And once we get to Glenelg, we'll look forward to some exciting first time drilling activities.

This has been your Mars Curiosity rover update. Check back for more reports.