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NASA Selects Scientists and Investigations for Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter and Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite Moon Missions

1 PRESS RELEASE

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WASHINGTON - NASA has selected 24 scientists to initiate new investigations and assist with planned measurements to be conducted by the agency's [Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter \(LRO\)](#). Scheduled for launch later this year,

LRO represents NASA's first step toward returning humans to the moon.

The orbiter will conduct a one-year primary mission exploring the moon, taking measurements to identify future robotic and human landing sites. In addition, it will study lunar resources and how the moon's environment will affect humans. The mission also will involve a spacecraft called the Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite (LCROSS), which will impact the lunar [south pole](#) to search for evidence of polar water frost.

"LRO is a phenomenal mission for NASA. It has dual use, both for exploration and for science," said Alan Stern, associate administrator, NASA's Science Mission Directorate, Washington. "With the selection of these new investigators the LRO science team is bulked up and ready for flight, and interest in lunar science is building again at a rapid pace."

A German and a Canadian researcher are among the newly selected scientists that will work with orbiter instrument teams to define the science goals for the extended science phase of the mission, during its second year. In addition to achieving its exploration objectives, the spacecraft is expected to return high quality scientific data, such as day-night temperature maps, a global geodetic grid, high resolution color imaging and detailed global topography that will greatly expand our understanding of the moon.

NASA received a total of 55 proposals in response to a [NASA](#) Research Announcement released in 2007. A peer review panel and NASA Planetary Science Division Research and Analysis Program scientists evaluated the proposals. Selection criteria included intrinsic merit, relevance, responsiveness to planetary science goals and objectives, as well as cost.

Scientists will be fully or partially funded depending on their research work and scope of activities. NASA will provide funding to U.S. scientists for up to three years depending on satisfactory progress, continued relevance to NASA objectives and availability of funds. Funding levels are being evaluated.

The orbiter and the sensing satellite will launch together aboard an Atlas V rocket in late 2008. The orbiter's trip to the moon will take approximately four days. Once in its final orbit, a circular polar orbit approximately 31 miles above the moon, spacecraft instruments will map the moon's surface at high

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approximately 31 miles above the moon, spacecraft instruments will map the moon's surface at high resolution, study its [radiation](#) field and map its gravity field.

The LCROSS will take several months to reach the moon. That mission will search for water astronauts could use at a future lunar outpost. The sensing spacecraft will impact the moon near its south pole early in 2009. NASA's Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, Calif., manages the mission.

In a study published in 2007, the National Academy of Sciences concluded that the [science](#) conducted on the moon is of high value. NASA's Science Mission Directorate will help coordinate and expand a number of in-depth research efforts in lunar science and other fields that can benefit from human and robotic missions to the moon. The lunar orbiter's science mission phase is one of the science directorate's many activities that support moon exploration activities.

The LRO [spacecraft](#) is being built and tested at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md., and includes six instruments and a technology demonstration.

For a complete list of the selected scientists and their investigations, visit:

http://www.nasa.gov/pdf/216482main_LRO_Participating_Scientists.pdf

For more information about the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, visit:

<http://lro.gsfc.nasa.gov>

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