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## Moon landing kicked up debris, after all

by Staff Writers  
Silicon Valley, Calif. (UPI) Oct 18, 2009

The [spacecraft](#) that plowed into the moon last week kicked up a cloud of dust after all, as [NASA](#) had hoped, officials said.

Early indications had suggested the Centaur rocket failed to stir up the dust. But the Ames Research Center in Northern California released images Friday showing the rocket indeed had the desired effect, the Los Angeles Times reported.



disclaimer: image is for illustration purposes only

A plume of debris reached about a mile above the lunar surface during the mission, designed to examine the dust to find out whether ice might be in polar craters hidden from sunlight for billions of years.

To do that, the accompanying \$79 million Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite flew through the debris cloud so its spectrometers and cameras could sample the lunar dust.

Initially, observers could not see a dust cloud. NASA scientists said at the time they hoped the only problem was that cameras aboard the satellite were not adjusted to detect the plume.

New images from another camera revealed the plume and NASA is analyzing them to determine if ice can be detected.

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How do you fly on a world with no atmosphere? Wings won't work and neither do propellers. And don't even try that parachute! NASA engineer Brian Mulac has the answer. "All it takes is practice, practice, practice," he says. "And of course, thrusters." The space agency is perfecting the art using a prototype lunar lander at the Marshall Space Flight Center: "What we've got here is a 'flying ... read more



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