

Curiosity's Rover Report: Rover's 5K Run

Feb. 14, 2014

MUSIC

Hi my name is Matt Heverly.
I'm a rover driver and this is your Curiosity Rover Report.
The rover recently drove over a sand dune we called 'Dingo Gap.'
This is in order to get to an area on the other side known as 'Moonlight Valley.'
This area has much gentler terrain with fewer sharp rocks.
The rate of wear of the wheels has increased over the last few hundred meters.
We think that's because we're in a different type of terrain where the rocks are really especially sharp and well cemented into the ground.

We're here at JPL in the Mars yard and we're using the scarecrow rover and this rover weighs on Earth what Curiosity weighs on Mars.
We're driving the rover on its wheels over some manmade obstacles that resemble some of the sharpest rocks that we might see on Mars.
And the wheels are made out of aluminum (knock knock).

And we're using these wheels and this rover and these obstacles to understand really what's going on and how these rocks can cause damage to the wheels.
We're also looking at different strategies to try and minimize this and avoid some of these rocks.

Now that the rover is in the Moonlight Valley we're able to increase its drive distance each sol because of the terrain it's a little more favorable for the wheels. In fact the rover just crossed its 5K mark.
And a lot of people here at JPL went on a 5K run to celebrate with the rover.
This has been your Curiosity Rover Report, check back for more updates.