

Why Mars Sample Return Will Never Happen

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The ongoing quest to bring to Earth selected samples of the surface of Mars has repeatedly run into what appear to be insurmountable obstacles. The mission continues to be delayed at rates greater than one year per year. Though it is the highest priority objective for Mars exploration, it is the least likely mission to be mounted. So what's the problem here? We will discuss the many hurdles, both technical and programmatic, that a successful Mars Sample Return mission will have to overcome.