

WHAT'S NEXT FOR LUNAR EXPLORATION AND LUNAR RESOURCES? Robert S. Wegeng, Battelle Memorial Institute, and President of the Space Resources Roundtable

The Obama Administration has cancelled plans for a manned lunar outpost and redirected NASA to begin work on a series of human missions that bypass the Moon. However, the new plan also includes robotic precursor missions including at least one mission to the Moon and investments in new technologies including In Situ Resource Utilization (ISRU) technologies. In addition, recent results from lunar orbiters and the LCROSS impactors confirm the presence of volatiles in the polar regions of the Moon and there are still other activities – such as the work being done by teams that are competing to win the Google Lunar X-Prize and missions that are planned by other international agencies – underway that involve the Moon.

The objective of this presentation will be to stimulate discussion on the following focus question: What are the appropriate goals for lunar exploration during the next ten years?

This presentation takes the strawman position that NASA's new strategic approach represents a suitable budgetary and technical platform within which investigations can evaluate the potential for lunar resources to be used to: 1) Reduce the cost of human space exploration beyond LEO and 2) Provide solutions to problems on the Earth.

Value propositions associated with, and the objectives of various stakeholder groups interested in lunar exploration will be highlighted in this presentation. Also included will be discussion of results of a recent participatory exploration and education workshop, organized by Battelle Memorial Institute in conjunction with NASA, which focused on how lunar exploration activities could support national education goals.