

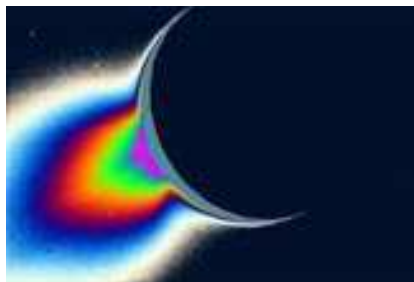


University of South Alabama
Presents Public Lecture Speaker



Dr. Dana Backman
SETI Institute - NASA Ames Research Center

Thursday, April 1, 2010
7:00-8:30 P.M., ILB 140



Astrobiology of the Solar System: Looking for Life in All the Right Places

As soon as the Copernican revolution made humanity aware that the Earth is one planet among many, speculation began about the possibility that other planets might be inhabited. The main focus of interest always has been Mars, with the most Earth-like surface conditions of any planet. Robot orbiters and rovers have recently found clear evidence that Mars was once wetter and warmer than at present. In addition, Viking Mars lander soil test results from the 1970s indicated possible biological activity, and some investigators believe Mars rock ALH84001 contains fossil microbes plus their metabolic products. Beyond Mars, there is evidence for liquid water under ice crusts on Jupiter's moons Europa and Ganymede and Saturn's moon Enceladus, as well as abundant organic compounds in the atmosphere and on the surface of Saturn's moon Titan. Could any of these worlds harbor Earth-like, water-and-carbon-based life? Astrobiology research and planetary exploration may reveal answers within just a few decades

Admission is free.

Refreshments are served at 6:45 p.m.

Host: Dr. P. Helminger