

What is the MarsDrive Taskforce? There are many space advocate groups today doing many different tasks and much good science and engineering is also being worked on by such groups. We all have a common goal and that has been to get humans into space and onto planets like the Moon and Mars permanently, with or without government assistance. 20 years ago, or even 10 years ago, most of these groups were still forming their membership bases and their various plans. Now we live in a time where a private company has finally launched a man into space winning the X Prize in the process. Many new private space tourism companies are now in start up mode and the next 5 years will see many of them start to put their plans into action. We are living in exciting times. Many of the more mature space advocacy groups are doing many worthwhile projects like the Mars Society and the Planetary Society. But what use is all of this if we still have no definite idea or plan to actually put our own people on Mars? Sure, plans exist but they are all dependent on one major factor- FUNDS.

No mission to Mars can be launched with the meager resources of even all the world's space advocate groups combined. It's a hard fact we would all like answers to. One of the major problems hindering a solution is that we are so fragmented. People have their own interests and loyalties to one group or another and trying to pull people out of such groups runs against what we all have in common. Combined I know we would start to get somewhere but that just will never happen in the real world. There must be more creative solutions. The need to do real research in preparation for manned missions to Mars is something many space advocate groups are actively engaged in right now and it is a vital component of any future mission to be sure. Having looked over the various projects and the people who work on them I have nothing but respect for these pioneers. Their progress is slow and many times can be stopped by a simple issue called lack of funding. If a sponsor pulls out or does not like a particular project for some reason this can mean years of waiting and this usually means a loss of members as people become frustrated that nothing is happening.

If the funding problem was solved, all space advocate groups would benefit. Their research projects would progress according to the timelines they envision and they would finally have the resources they need to actually get us to Mars. Each of these groups have fundraising volunteers who work hard at gaining the required funds for their particular group, but none of them are dealing with the bigger picture. That bigger picture is nothing less than **a real life mission to and base on Mars in a set timeframe**. To do this we all know that several Billion dollars will be needed, and that is way out of our league at present so we try to pressure our governments to do it instead. The problem with that is it locks out the general public from being directly involved and relegates space advocates as nothing more than research and lobby groups. Most average people are not attracted to a group that just wants to pressure the government and engage in scientific research. That is why growing any membership base is such a slow hard process.

Can we change all this? I believe we can. To enable a real life private mission to Mars based on private funds and making use of all the great research space advocate groups are doing we need significant funds. We have three sources to gain those funds from- Government, Private Corporations and the General Public. Lobby groups work on the government angle but even if they succeed that does not give private groups access to Mars. Private corporations do have the funds we need but the bottom line is they want to know what's in it for them and how can they make a profit. That is the reason why even small research projects are so hard to get going when relying on such companies. Finally there is the general public. The true untapped resource. The general public are you and me. Rich and poor alike. For years now the fundraising model has been to get corporate sponsors for various projects and I am all for that to continue. But that model will not be able to make the leap from a few million dollars to several Billions any time soon, especially without demonstrating a financial incentive for such sponsors to shell out the needed billions. Corporations and governments are very restrictive and slow moving when it comes to spending billions of dollars for any reason.

What will bridge the gap from our struggling small time efforts right now to seeing a real mission to Mars from and for private citizens is funding acquired from people who want to see us get to Mars on a scale we have never seen before. There are enough people interested in space exploration (but not yet in space advocate groups) in our world today to fund a mission to Mars if we approach it in the right way. Let me illustrate. As a non scientific, non engineering person (which most in the general public are), I joined a particular group and paid my membership fee because I wanted my money to be used to make a difference. Knowing that it is being used to fund various research projects and for administrative purposes is fine, but it is not inspiring. But if there were a respected group or union of groups asking for my donation to enable an actual mission to Mars and not just the research, and they gave me a timeframe where I would have a chance of seeing it happen in my lifetime, then for sure I would donate as much as I could. If they came to me and said- We intend to launch the world's first private mission to and base on Mars for the year 2017 I would be thrilled. This concept inspires people. It sets a definite goal, gives the details and gets the average people directly involved through their donations and their general support.

The MarsDrive Taskforce is about going to Mars by removing the one major obstacle in our way- lack of funding. We intend to attack this problem from every angle and at every level. We do not require that people leave whatever group they are now in either. Being part of the MarsDrive Taskforce means doing your part to make our common dream come true. We want you to work within the group you are already in and we fully support all space advocate groups in their various activities. If you are not already in a group you are free to join us directly. What we do need is people. That is our most precious resource. We do have a set plan. It will require PR experts, fundraising experts and people with a skill to draw in new members. Our main plan is to raise the funds needed for an actual mission to Mars in the next 10 to 15 years at most. But before we do that many issues will need to be dealt with and it will mean hard work. No person or group can claim to want raise Billions of dollars for a mission to Mars and not have a plan that addresses all the issues that could potentially stop it from succeeding. That is what we are about. The initial phase will involve MarsDrive people increasing funding for all the space advocate groups we will be involved with. If we can't succeed in that area then we will never succeed in raising billions for a mission to Mars. **But at the same time we will hold to a definite plan and timeframe. That is the key to raising funds and growing the space advocate membership base.**

Initially, MarsDrive will be made up of representatives from whatever space advocate groups want to be involved. As we brainstorm and put into action various ideas, we envision that our efforts will bring in new members to our representatives groups, and an obvious increase in funds for those groups. We will start off small and grow from there step by step. There is no easy answer or quick fix as to how we can raise the funds for a Mars mission and that is why MarsDrive exists- To find and enact solutions that will get us to Mars with our own funding base. For now I have my own plan which is subject to change if needed but it is a definite plan that will see us on Mars in no more than 10 to 15 years. If you would like to join the task force it's free and all you have to do is register your name and what, if any organization you are in at the Red Colony forum site. MarsDrive has it's own forum and information section here and all you have to do is let me know who you are and what you would like to do. You may or may not like my plan but that is OK by me. My plan is only a first and most basic guideline. As more people contribute their expertise this plan will only get better and it will be as a result of people like you getting involved. So if you want to see a mission to Mars that will involve your efforts in a timeframe not too far away, and you want to be a part of something worthwhile instead of just endless talk and debate, join me. Here then is the first rough plan I have come up with to make all this a reality-

Funding Mars

The time has come for humans to go to Mars. Our destiny on the Red Planet is really up to us. We can rely on governments forever or we can recognize the need for a privately sourced mission. We the people have the power to make this happen, we have always had the power. The problem is we have let years of conditioned thinking stop us from realising our great potential in space and on Mars. This can change and we can be the generation to change it. It will be the hardest thing we have ever embarked upon. Nothing worthwhile

is ever easy but the rewards of setting up a home on a new world like Mars will be infinite. We can do it, we just have to start believing that we can and face the tasks ahead with vision and courage. We can be the pioneers of a new world but only if we make the decision to go ourselves. Our destiny on Mars is in our own hands and that is why I believe that there has never been a better time to start on that road to Mars. Here then is my contribution to this great future, and I believe that the all space advocates can play a part in this most exciting of plans enabling a manned mission to Mars in the next 10 to 15 years from private resources.

There have been many intelligent and strong arguments made for why we should go to Mars and why we should settle on Mars covering just about every reason you can imagine. These arguments for going to Mars have been exposed to a wide audience in recent years, especially through groups like The Mars Society, Red Colony and others. Just recently the shuttle returned to flight and I watched closely as space advocates finally got their chance to reach out to a wider audience on the subject of going to Mars and why we must. It was encouraging to see even the shuttle astronauts making a strong case for the future of human space exploration before a worldwide audience. The issues and problems the shuttle has been having prompted many in the media to ask- "How can you justify human space exploration when the cost is so high in monetary terms and in human lives ?"(A reference to the Columbia disaster). The media asking these questions were simply reflecting in words what the general public has believed in for many years now.

The reasons for such cynicism are rooted in the past 24 years of low earth orbit flights by the shuttle and a stepping back from the heights of the Moon landings now 33 years ago. Scientists have been thrilled at the research and development to come out of this time period but while NASA and other space agencies were following their own chosen path they lost the support of the general public. A whole generation has grown up without anything exciting to look forward to in space exploration and have shown this by their apathy and disinterest in the current space program. People have been conditioned to think of space missions in a certain way by these years of low earth orbit flights. NASA has been our only real example of what space exploration looks like and the public are not entirely happy with what they have seen. People are strongly convinced that space missions are usually in the billion dollar plus range and seem to fail quite a bit. They see billions of taxpayer dollars exploding like the Challenger disaster or burning up on re-entry like Columbia. They see billion dollar satellites blow up on the launch pad sometimes and they hear of mission failures like the Mars Polar Lander or Beagle 2 missions. Unfortunately the focus on failures is a trait of human nature that many in the space program have ignored. The successes through the years have been stunning and have gradually increased our understanding of the planets and universe around us but the public and media tend to focus more on the failures and as a result they don't see the potential in space exploration that space advocate groups see.

Many of us in the space advocate community are wondering how we can overcome such public disinterest and skepticism and as a result there has been a continuing outreach going on to educate the public on the true facts of space exploration. Some people have understood our case but in general a large portion of the population still remains unconvinced. We tell them of the great potential colonizing new worlds like Mars has in store for all mankind in highly detailed and logical arguments yet still they remain unconvinced. The problem that we are trying to overcome will not succeed through mere words. It's that simple. If the example of NASA has turned the public off human space exploration then the only logical solution is to present the public with an alternative space and Mars exploration program that will inspire them and involve them like never before. A program that cuts out the political red tape and aims to lower costs radically will get the attention and interest of the general public as never before. There will still be one major problem to overcome though. NASA may not be liked but people do believe them to be a credible source for space exploration. Private space and Mars exploration programs require members of the general public to support it willingly and that is where they run into credibility problems. They might be able to do it cheaper and cut through all the red tape but can they be taken seriously by the general public when they are trying to convince a skeptical crowd that their plans will work? With no real history to go on of successful missions(like NASA)? The only actual mission attempted by a private space advocate group with Cosmos 1 ended in failure just recently and so it does not encourage great faith in such ventures. That is the situation we face.

Space advocate groups have great imaginations and are not limited like NASA in how they think about what they would like to pursue in space exploration. This is an advantage but only if we can launch successful missions. The logic has been so far that space advocate groups will start off small with missions like Cosmos 1 from the Planetary Society and build credibility that way but a failure stops everything. That mission took many years and many sacrificial donations by space advocates only to end in failure. If it worked it would have heralded a new age of opportunity for space advocate groups but now we are back to square one. There is an answer to all this though. If that mission had been better funded and had relied on more trustworthy launch systems it would have had a much better chance of success but raising more funds is never easy. The concept was simple but like all of these "small payload" missions it lacks one critical factor- Inspiration. Yes it inspired space advocates to support it but to gain better funding it needed to inspire the general public and the simple fact is people want more. They are used to the professionalism and experience of NASA and they are of the opinion that we should be on the Moon and Mars already, especially 33 years after the last Apollo mission. They are bored with the technological marvel that is the space shuttle and it is in this context that we need to think of what barriers there are to raising support and funding for private space exploration. People want the next big thing, they are not interested in returning to low earth orbit missions or unmanned probes that only circle the earth or go where we have already been.

This is where private space advocate groups face a real problem. They only have the human and financial resources to conduct very basic low earth orbit missions(at best) and are trying to get the public to support them in this when the public are not interested. This situation will only make the process of getting to the goal of human space missions that much more complex for private groups. It will slow us down by decades if we continue to pursue that line. The task of getting humans into space is an immensely technical challenge and the public believe this. They see the shuttle problems and hear NASA telling them how hard it is to get humans into space and so they are further reinforced in their skepticism. If NASA, with decades of human space flight experience find it so hard then how can private and inexperienced groups be trusted or supported? These are the issues people think of. What they are not aware of is that NASA is only as good as the people working in it. The answer to how we can privately launch manned mission to Mars or the Moon lies in the space advocates hidden asset of human experience and qualified volunteers who already work for NASA and other aerospace groups. We have a wealth of very experienced volunteers and leaders like Dr Robert Zubrin and that is what we need to build on. Space advocate groups are made up of dedicated volunteers from all walks of life and it is this positive asset that I believe can get us to Mars. If united in a common cause of launching a mission to Mars and setting up a permanent base there I believe space advocate groups have the people to make it happen. Even if we needed more experts that is not a problem because the base of people we now have could easily attract such professionals and are already doing that now. I believe that our human resource, if used in a united and dedicated way can get private space advocate missions to the Moon and to Mars. We need to overcome the conditioned thinking that only NASA is able to do such missions successfully and we do that by gathering together the right people for the job.

Once that task is accomplished we can then seek out public financial support for a mission to Mars. Surprisingly we don't need the whole world to support us, all it would take is a few million supporters that already are interested in space exploration but have yet to be inspired sufficiently to support anything. I am not talking about getting the whole world to support such a mission, what I am talking about is reaching out to people who already dream of going to other worlds like Mars and there are already millions of such people in the world today. What will inspire more support? Putting a human base on Mars in the next 10 to 20 years or launching a few "small payload" missions that will probably fail through lack of funding again? I think the answer to that is obvious. If the credibility issue is dealt with in a serious way and the right people are put to this task then there is no reason that we could not inspire enough support to launch our own mission to Mars. I have a plan that will cover all of these requirements and will set us up in a permanent human base on Mars in the next 10 to 20 years and here it is-

Now before we get to that first stage of a committee of 8 to 12 there are some other smaller steps that need to be taken to get us to that point and I will detail my plan for that here also-

Our first step is getting the right people involved and then getting lot's of people involved. This will take PR and for us to spread the word. If we had 15 or 20 dedicated people doing their best to contact other PR space advocates from around the world after we made our announcement then this would be a start. Once we have the right people in PR and money raising skills in place I envision a body of between 150-200 dedicated and well connected PR types all working together to set up the committee of 8 to 12 high profile public people to be the mouthpiece of this project and to gather together the right experts in the various fields needed for a Mars mission. Once this step is done a formal announcement could be made by all the space advocate groups about our plan to set up a base on Mars. If we stick to a simple plan of just a base set up mission then I believe that with enough PR just in the general media and space advocate community we will raise the needed people to make this mission a success.

The Plan That Will Get Us To Mars

NASA may or may not land the first people on Mars in 20 or 30 years time, and some other government agencies may also succeed in doing this but I believe that Mars should be for everyone. Private groups and individuals should be a major part of our future settling of Mars and so there needs to be a viable way for these groups to have access to Mars on a continuing basis from their own resources. Private ventures can quite often be far more efficient and focused than any overpriced government venture and this fact alone makes going to Mars from private resources far more attractive, especially for people who would not normally get a chance to go to Mars.

Until now the costs of sending such missions has been so high that it has excluded any other serious attempts at a privately funded settlement on Mars so of course anyone who has suggested this idea has been laughed at. Many space advocate groups have tried thinking of all kinds of ways to make this manned settlement a reality but the greatest barrier has always been cost. So we have decided to go the easy way and leave it to NASA but NASA does not represent the private individual interested in moving to Mars. Just as NASA represents government and scientific interests in space exploration so there is a need for a single private group to represent the interests of private citizens and space advocate groups in the settling of Mars. To do this we need the right people and we need sufficient funds on a scale never before seen in space advocate circles. Another key element in this plan is the pressing need for all of us to humanize the whole issue of space and Mars exploration, to focus more on the philosophical reasons to go and to relate it to people in terms they can understand.

This then is my plan for getting us to Mars based on extensive consultations with leaders in several space advocate groups and private research.-

1. A committee of 8 to 12 persons who are well known, trusted and experienced individuals in both the space advocate community and in the eyes of the general public worldwide to be formed for the purpose of being the official mouthpiece and directors of the privately funded Mars settlement plan.
2. A clearly defined mission and colony plan that is innovative, cost efficient and inspirational to all people. This will be the plan that the committee and volunteers will be promoting in the effort to bring in more people.
3. A reputable trust company to hold the funds raised and to engender public trust in where their money is going. 10% of the funding would be used as administrative and ongoing project funding, the other 90% will be held in trust earning interest for the main mission components at a later stage.
4. A group of 10,000 individuals drawn from all of the various space advocate groups to form a volunteer organization with the aim of recruiting people for the funding of a Mars settlement. This will take the efforts of smaller groups and individuals within the space advocate community to start this part off and they will form the main group with their membership of \$80 per year.
5. Once the above 4 goals are achieved then the "3 Million For Mars" campaign will begin in earnest. The aim

will be to recruit at least 3 million people worldwide to join this new group with a \$80 per year subscription. These people will be taken mainly from targeting people who already have an interest in space issues like sci fi fans and the many silent space fans who are not already in a space advocate group.

6. The \$80 per year membership fee will be used for funding the first private mission and base on Mars designed for at least 100 people. This figure will be advertised as "Your 2 cents will launch us to Mars" slogan so as to put it in perspective. For their \$80 people will receive several items in return along with the knowledge that their money will help in the creation of a new chapter in human history- "For 2 cents a day you can make history!" These items are-

- a. A 5% discount card that can be used at participating businesses that are in partnership with the Mars settlement plan.
- b. A detailed certificate thanking them for their part in this program.
- c. An information Pack that contains detailed documentation, a short DVD presentation and some stickers and magnets to help them understand the plan and spread the word.
- d. Entry into the competition where 5 winners will be chosen to actually go to Mars on a later mission.
- e. They will be able to leave a private message that will be taken to Mars as part of a permanent memorial set up to honor the people who made it all possible.
- f. Forum access and all normal membership privileges that space advocate groups give to new members.
- g. Optional- A free book or DVD of their choice to the value of \$20 awarded to them in the 3rd year of their membership.
- h. A share in any discoveries/profits.

7. With a concerted PR campaign utilising radio, the web, T.V, papers, magazine spots, etc and the efforts of the committee and the 10,000 volunteers the figure of 3 million members could be reached in 3 or 4 years. This will mean a working budget of \$24 million per year max (we probably would not need all that anyway)and funds held in trust of 240 million per year.

8. After the first 5 years of this level of funding work will begin on sending off the first mission to Mars containing several people and the start of a permanent base set up.(See Daniel Hay's "Simply Mars" Plan) This mission could be launched 5 years from the date the funds are committed, **so in total we could be on Mars in 11 years from the start of this campaign.**

9. The continuing funds will be used to build the ship that will launch 50 to 100 people and supplies to build the first true Mars colony from private funds. The winning 5 will be a part of this mission. This could be done in another 5 to 10 years with smaller personnel and resupply missions to Mars in the meantime.

10. Some money will be raised from merchandising and selling of the broadcast rights which could be used in further programs down the line to expand the base on Mars and from large contributions which these funds would enable us to gain like never before.

11. The extra billions required can be easily obtained once we have sufficient marketing and administrative funds at our disposal, we can then hire the right people and continue the campaign in a much more professional way to reach many more millions(I believe 30 Million members is a good long range target).

The first real effort to be made is to get the committee up and running and this will be no easy task. I would

like the leaders of the major space advocate groups to be on the committee along with high profile names like James Cameron(a Mars Society member) of T2 fame and any others that we could come up with that we know will have a broad appeal to many people. The detailed plan for a mission and settlement will be helped along by my own MarsDrive "First Colony Prize" of \$1000 U.S awarded October 1st 2006 to the best plan for missions and settlements. Once we have these two elements we will be able to launch the 10,000 volunteers project through normal space advocate channels. This must be a worldwide effort if it is to be given the best chance for success. At that point we can start the 3 Million for Mars campaign. The groundwork has already been done by space advocate groups in the last 20 years, now we must decide if we want a real purpose and direction like actually going to Mars(apart from just researching concepts) to apply our future efforts. Done with the right people and in the right way this can work. I would also advise that we try to form an advisory group of people with expertise in PR and marketing to give this plan a truly professional look. This would be the largest public recruitment program ever undertaken by space advocates but with such a grand goal as the first private settlement on Mars I know it would work if done right.

Private space ventures are going to need a reliable and ongoing source of funding to make their plans a reality and at present they do not have this. In the process of this campaign we will at least succeed in increasing both numbers and funds by a significant amount, even if we don't reach the full number required. This in turn will give great credibility to private space and Mars ventures and will position these groups so that they will be able to seek out funding from more traditional sources without being laughed out of the room. Space advocate groups are a resource that can be used to get us to Mars in quick time or they can continue to struggle along with their debates and experiments which may satisfy the few who are interested but will never succeed in gaining a greater following or greater funding.