

STARDUST: THE ADVENTURE HAS BEGUN

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The NASA Discovery STARDUST Mission was launched in February, 1999 to fly through the coma of P/Wild 2 in January, 2004 and return captured cometary and interplanetary dust particles to earth in January, 2006 for detailed analyses by the international science community. The STARDUST spacecraft is carrying a dust collector employing JPL Aerogel for collecting interstellar dust during interplanetary cruise and cometary dust during Wild 2 flyby. Additional instrumentation include the MPI fur Extraterrestrische Physik Cometary and Interplanetary Dust Analyzer, the University of Chicago Dust Flux Monitor and the JPL Imaging Camera. Doppler tracking of the spacecraft and high rate attitude orientation and body-fixed rate data from engineering subsystems will also provide science information. The presentation will describe the mission, scientific objectives and current state of the spacecraft in detail.