

**THE US NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT, AND NASA/JPL  
COMPLIANCE FOR SPACE MISSIONS**

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The US National Environmental Policy Act requires a consideration of environmental factors for each federal activity with potentially significant environmental impacts. NASA must do an impact assessment for each space science mission, and each assessment is distributed to and considers comments from the public. Each assessment must discuss all local and global environmental impacts arising from the mission, including both expected (or normal) impacts and those arising from potential unplanned events. The assessment must equally consider all reasonable alternatives for achieving the purpose of the mission, and their impacts. For a sample return mission, the impact of returning a sample to Earth that could contain organic material is a primary consideration. The NEPA process will provide the vehicle for documenting the options for a sample return and its immediate processing. This paper will discuss the NASA NEPA process of determining: the scope of public concern, the reasonable alternatives to examine, and the level and detail of analysis required to satisfy the requirements. Past NASA/JPL missions will be used as examples of how the process has been implemented.

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2. Meeting F3:3 Issues in  
Planetary Projection: Sample  
Return Missions
3. John D. Rummel, Ph.D
4. No additional equipment  
needed
5. Oral Presentation
6. No - not needed