

2020 SOLAR SYSTEM EXPLORATION PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INSTITUTE

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Introduction: This 2-day event was held February 4-5, 2020, at the Lunar and Planetary Institute and at Space Center Houston.

- The event was funded by the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) VORTICES program, part of NASA's Solar System Exploration Research Virtual Institute, and coordinated by the Lunar and Planetary Institute and APL.
- Based on input from the leaders of NASA's Solar System Ambassador's program, the event was held in conjunction with the annual Space Exploration Educators Conference (SEEC) conducted by Space Center Houston. The Institute was attended by 17 scientists and educators (informal, formal, and Solar System Ambassadors) from across the United States, as well as 4 family members, and 4 presenters: Christine Shupla and Sha'Rell Webb (LPI), and Joelle Clark and Lori Rubino-Hare (Northern Arizona University).

- Facilitators modeled over a dozen solar system exploration activities that can be conducted with public audiences in a variety of venues and programs.
- Activities were selected based on popularity, ease of use, and their connection to broad solar system topics.
- In addition, the Science Activation PLANETS team members Joelle Clark and Lori Rubino-Hare were invited to participate and share their planetary activities (Water in the Solar System).
- Science Activation infrastructure project Solar System Treks (Brian Day) presented resources remotely.

Goals: Participants were invited to share their goals at the beginning of the institute. Most (13) indicated that they wanted tools, activities, and knowledge of how to engage their audiences. Several wanted to learn more about space science. A few mentioned refining their skills at engaging audiences or experience in speaking.



Participants create scale models of the Earth-Moon system.



Participant quotes:

- *I, absolutely, loved each of the Icebreakers and will definitely put them to use in our community events.*
- *(Activities were) hugely valuable in working with young learners*

Program Description: This institute focused on public engagement, to provide an experience for those who conduct public engagement. **The institute's objectives are to support participants' interest and enthusiasm for engaging audiences in solar system exploration, and to increase their ability to do so by providing appropriate activities and content, including connections to NASA-funded subject matter experts.** As such, the program focused on solar system exploration content and interaction with planetary scientists, who participated and gave presentations on a variety of topics.

Results:

- Participants rated presentations very highly and several of the participants indicated that the presenters were the most interesting part of the institute.
- In the evaluation surveys, all responses rated the overall institute as "excellent" or "above average" with 94% ranked the institute as "Excellent." Eighty-eight percent rated the activities overall as excellent, with the remaining 12% (2) rating them as above average. All activities and resources will be available at <https://www.lpi.usra.edu/education/solarsystem/activities/>.