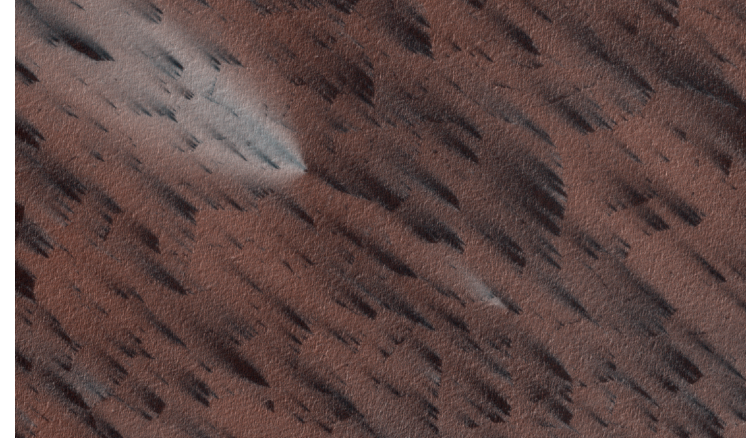# Tens of Thousands of Citizens of Planet Earth Classify Images of Spring on Mars

Candice Hansen, Ganna Portyankina, K. Michael Aye, Meg Schwamb

- Every spring Mars' polar regions are covered with a seasonal layer of frozen CO_2 (dry ice)

- As the ice sublimes in the spring gas escaping from below the ice carries fine material from the ground up to the top of the ice where it falls into fan-shaped deposits directed by the ambient wind

- These fans are markers for where the seasonal ice cracked and which way the wind was blowing at the time

- The timing, distribution, direction and length of the fans are an important data source for understanding seasonal processes and the martian weather, but there are so many fans that the science team is relying on the public to help with the data analysis.

- To that end the zooniverse project has set up a website, planetfour.org, for citizen scientists to contribute their time to identify and measure fans.

- Volunteers are currently locating fans imaged by HiRISE, the camera on the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, in the second and third springs – soon springs 1 and 4 will be added to the data set.

- This is a dynamic project, but a snapshot today, January 17, shows that over 59,000 people have participated and 3 million image tiles have been analyzed.

PLANET FOUR

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56,522
participants worldwide

2,846,912
MRO images classified

With the help of Stargazing Live, 56,522 citizen scientists are exploring the surface of Mars like never before.

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