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THE PLANETARY SCIENCE DECADAL SURVEY: ORIGIN, ORGANIZATION AND OUTCOME

Abstract

The NRC's decadal survey process is a strategic approach to developing science and mission priorities that was initiated by the astronomy and astrophysics community in the 1960s and repeated in a more comprehensive manner in every subsequent decade. The scientific, programmatic and political success of the astronomy and astrophysics surveys led to the development of decadal surveys by the planetary science, solar and space physics and Earth remote-sensing communities in the 2000s. The second planetary science survey was initiated in early 2009 and the issued in 2011. Details concerning the decadal survey process are outlined with specific references to the origin, organization and outcome of the planetary survey. Brief comments are made on issues arising during the preparation of the survey and suggestions are given as to how the process might be improved in subsequent iterations.