

# Laser Power Beaming for Applications on the Moon

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*Future In-Space Operations Seminar*

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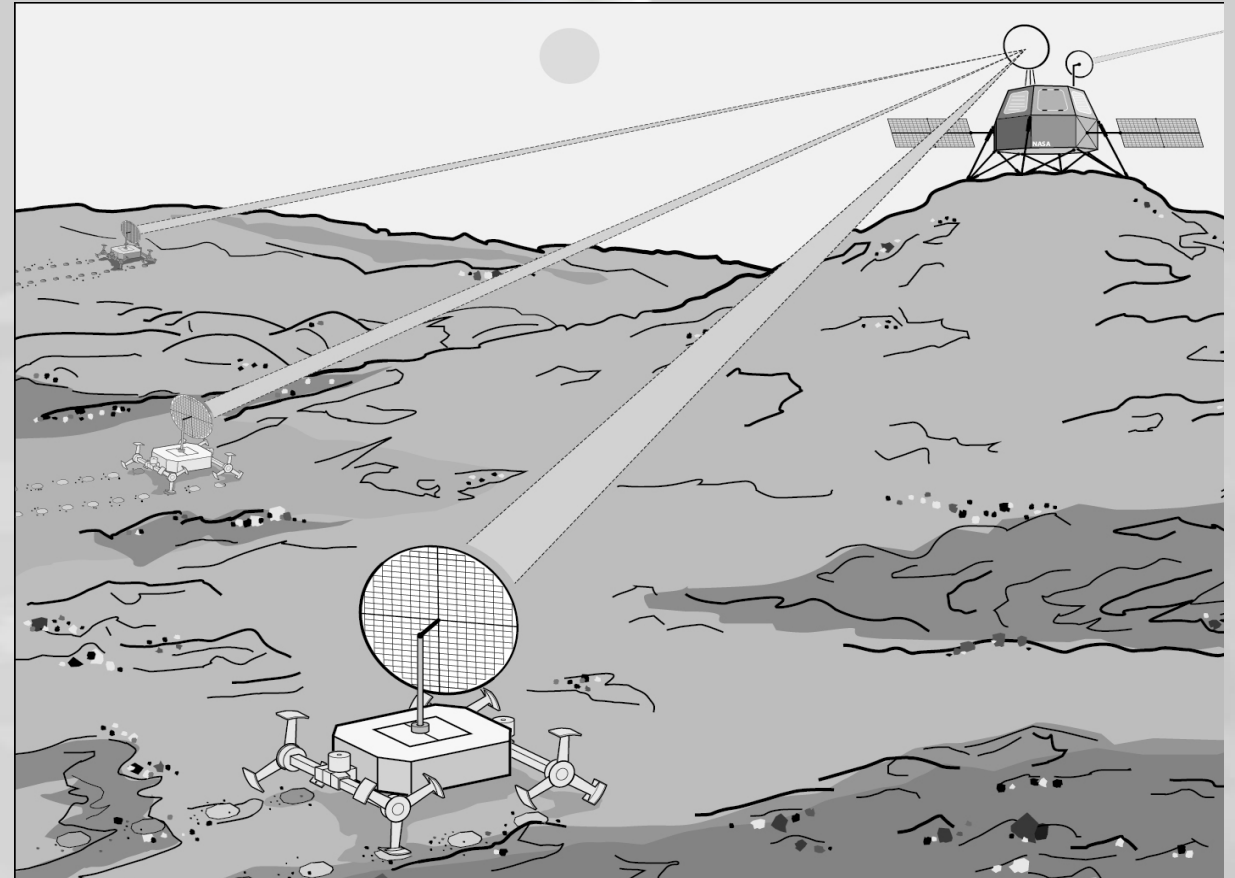
*January 14, 2026*

A **beamed power** system could be used to send power directly to a rover, science station, or lunar base

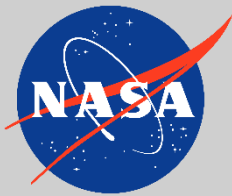
- Power source at the illuminated rim of permanently dark crater
- Collector on rover converts the beamed energy to electrical power

## Possible Beaming approaches:

- Microwave
- Laser
- Millimeter Wave



Sketch of the possible use of a base station on a crater rim beaming power to multiple rovers exploring the permanently shadowed craters of the moon.



# Power Beaming: Comparison of Approaches



## Microwave:

- High transmitter efficiency
- Efficiency depends on frequency– but 85-95% DC to RF efficiency has been achieved
- Possible to make high conversion efficiency receivers
- Well-developed technology at longest microwave wavelengths; in progress at X-band and shorter
- But: transmitters and receivers are large

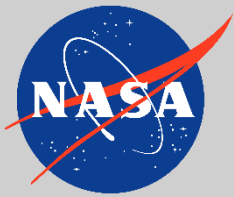
## Millimeter wave:

- Systems are ~10 times smaller than microwave
  - But: transmitters and receivers still quite large for beaming over significant distances.
- Low Technology Readiness level (but tech is progressing fast)

## Laser:

- Power efficiency is lower
  - roughly 50% transmitter efficiency, 50% receiver efficiency
- Technology is developed (but needs space qualification)
- Narrow beam width means **much** smaller systems– cm to meter scale optics

Quick summary: different technologies are best for different applications



# Different technologies for different applications



## Microwave Power beaming

- Large systems, where sizes are large and efficiency is important
- Short distances, where beam spread is less important

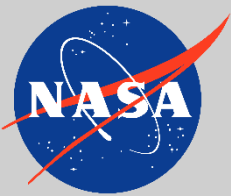
## Millimeter Wave power beaming

- Next generation beyond Microwave: smaller size for same transfer distance
- but needs technology development

## Laser Power beaming

- Small systems, where size is an important parameter
- Long distances, where beam spread is an issue

Note that near-field power coupling approaches, such as inductive coupling, were not considered here. These power coupling methods can have very high energy transfer efficiency, but only transfer power over small gaps (essentially requiring nearly direct contact)

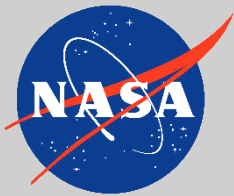


# Power Beaming: Laser



Laser systems have narrow beam width, and can beam power to photovoltaic cells that can also convert sunlight

- Typical wavelengths proposed: 500 to 1100 nm
  - Laser efficiency is 50-60% (electrical to optical power)
    - Slightly higher efficiencies for lower beam quality diode lasers
  - Depends on wavelength
- Receiver technology: photovoltaic cells
  - Efficiency about 50% if cell is matched to laser
  - Cell will also convert solar light (but at lower efficiency)
  - Well developed technology

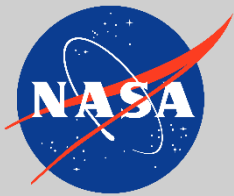


# Laser choice: Beam Quality



- **Low coherence** light sources project can only focus to a spot size based on classical object/image optics
  - (but not less than diffraction limit)
- **High coherence** light sources can project a spot size as small as the diffraction limit
- Beam quality is critical if you are beaming a long distance

Beam quality is typically measured by the parameter " $M^2$ ", a measure of the minimum spot diameter that can be produced by a source  
 $M^2$  equals 1 for a perfect (diffraction-limited TEM00) beam



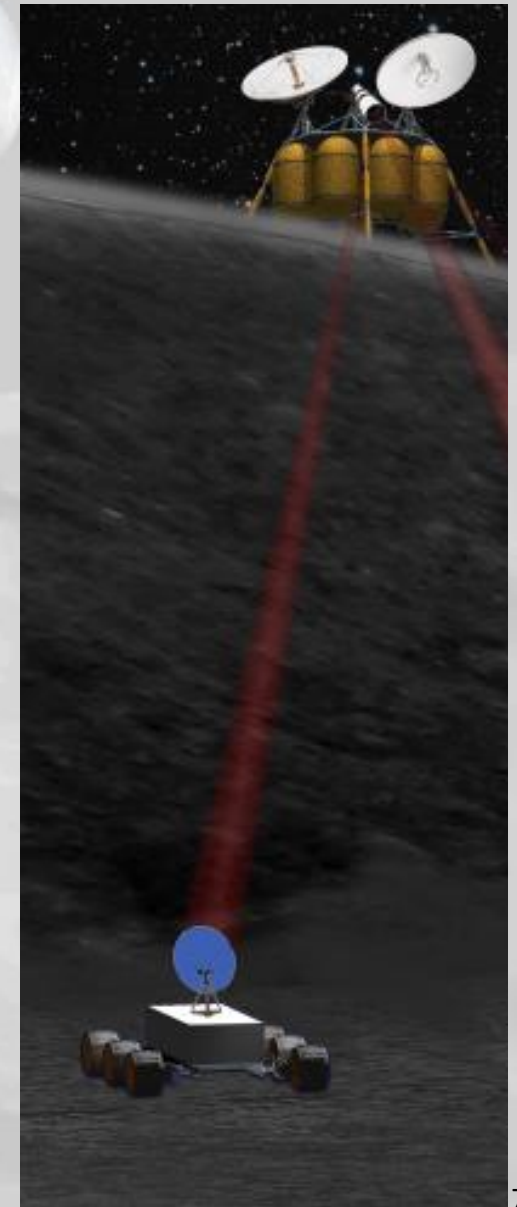
# Laser Power Beaming:

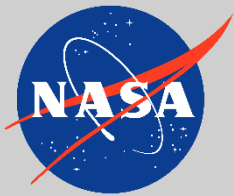
## **Case 1: near term demonstration**

short distance beamed power to small rover

At short distances, we can use a laser with low beam quality

- higher beam divergence less important if the distance is short
- Trade off the beam divergence for higher efficiency and lower cost laser





# Laser Power Beaming:

## Case 1: near term demonstration

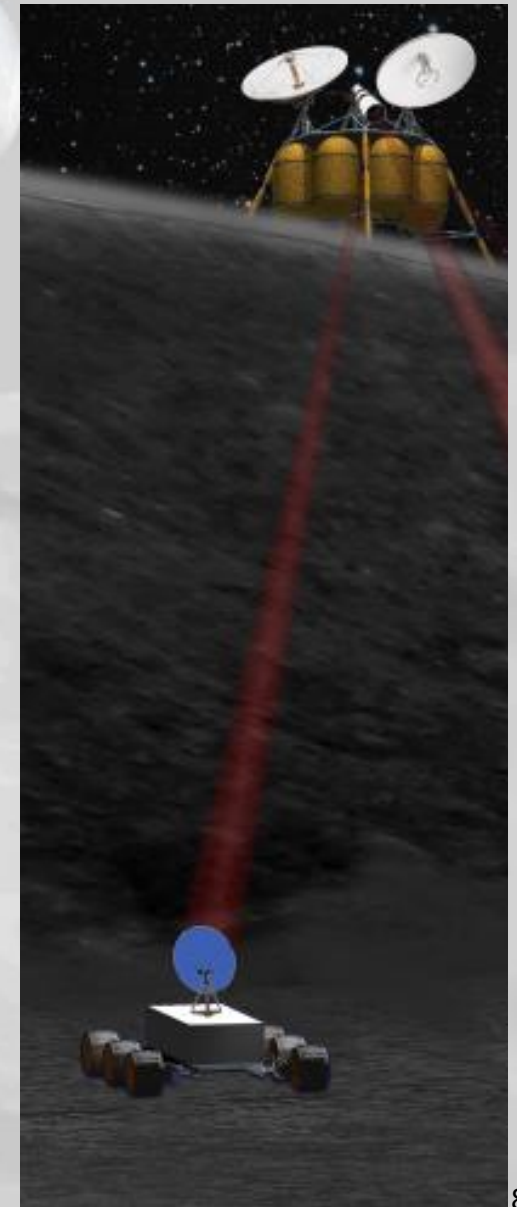
short distance beamed power to small rover



For short distances, we can use a laser with low beam quality

### Parameters

- Power level: 50 W
- Distance: up to 100 m
- Laser: semiconductor diode laser at 860 nm
  - Energy conversion efficiency (DC to optical power): 70%
- PV receiver: GaAs solar cell
  - Energy conversion efficiency (optical to DC power): >50%
  - Well developed technology



## Laser choice: Semiconductor diode laser

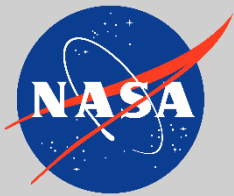
- Semiconductor Diode lasers have high efficiency but low coherence (low beam quality)
  - Essentially a classical light source: light output is not in phase
  - Efficiency is very good and cost is very low
  - Well developed technology for other purposes (CD readers, etc.)
  - Available in hundreds of watts optical output

### Why this technology?

- High beam quality is not needed for short distance
- GaAs solar cells are well matched to diode wavelengths, and are a well-developed technology



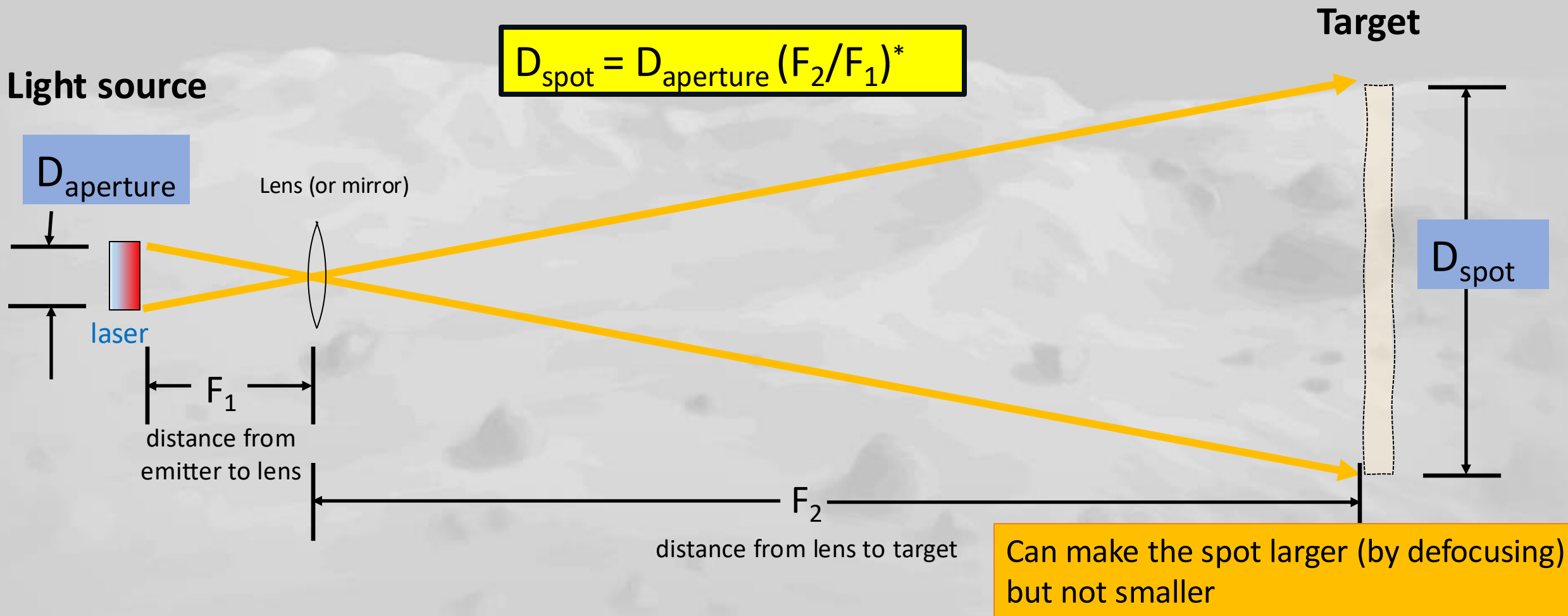
Example of high-efficiency semiconductor bar laser

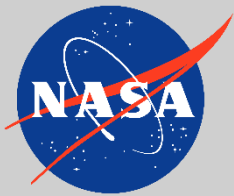


# Classical optics spot size



- In classical (incoherent) optics, the size of the beam on target is a ***projected image of the emitting aperture***





# Laser Power Beaming: Case 1

short distance beamed power to small rover

How big is the system?

- Mission: beam power of 50 W up to 100 m

$$D_{\text{spot}} = D_{\text{aperture}} (F_2/F_1)^*$$

**Example case:**

**semiconductor diode laser with fiber output**

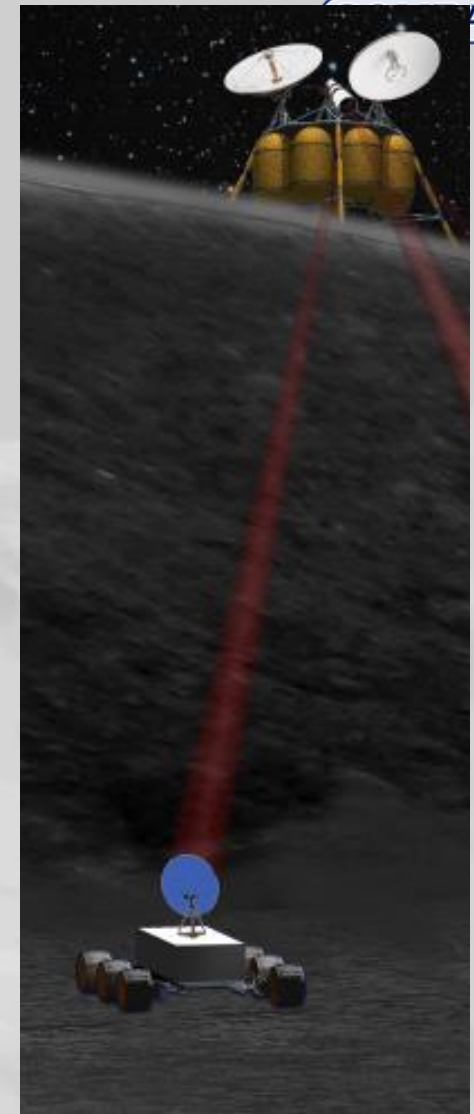
$$D_{\text{aperture}} = 50 \mu\text{m (fiber output)}$$

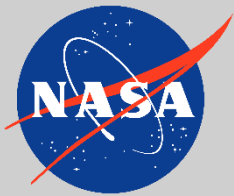
$$F_1(\text{focal length}) = 10 \text{ cm}$$

$$F_2(\text{distance to target}) = 100 \text{ m}$$

$$D_{\text{spot}} = 1000 D_{\text{aperture}} = 5 \text{ cm}$$

Assuming an  $11^\circ$  half-angle of fiber output (typical for multimode fibers), the lens diameter is .38 times the focal length. This is a very small system, requiring a 3.8-cm lens (easily available off the shelf)

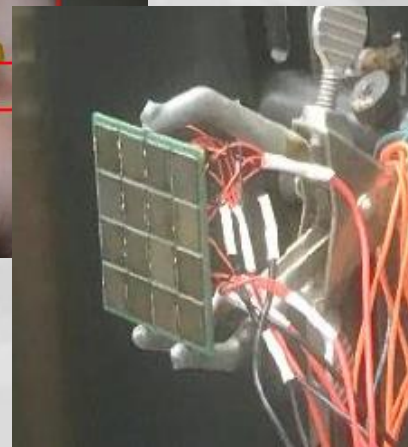
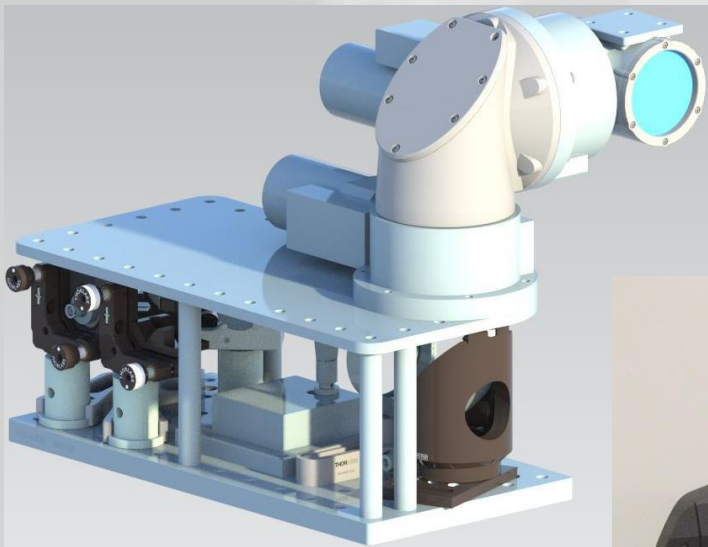




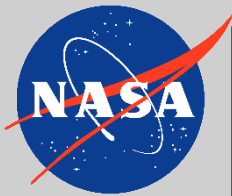
# Moonbeam (University of California Santa Barbara)



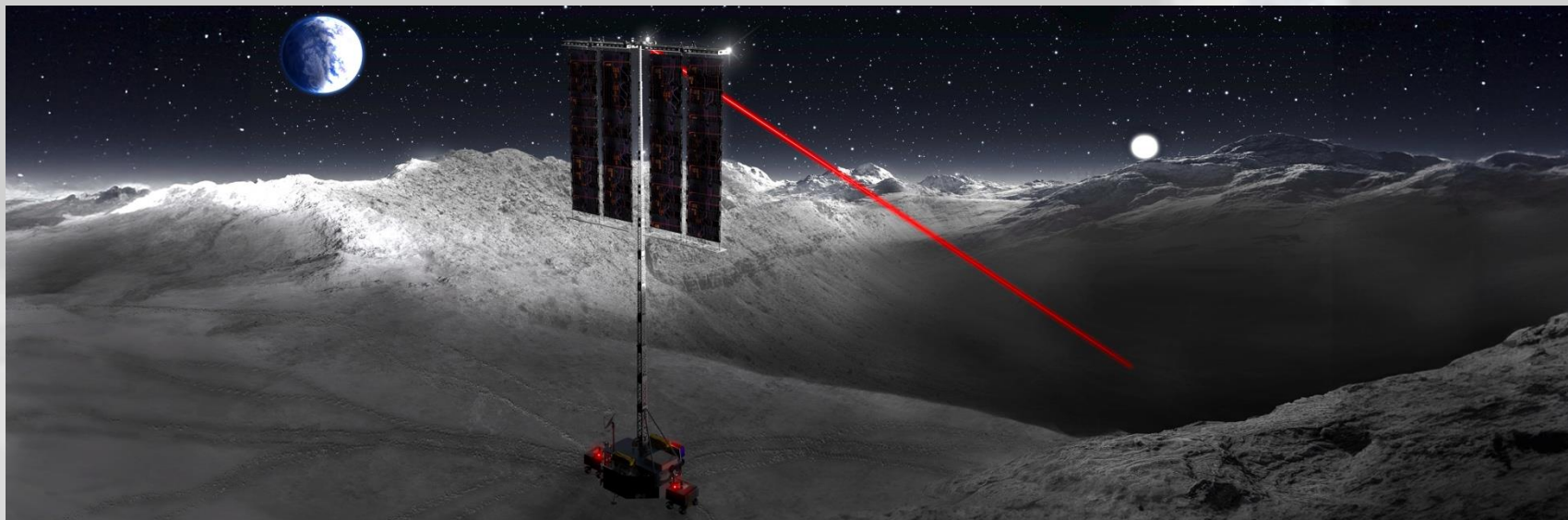
Technology development & prototype hardware by University of California Santa Barbara “Moonbeam” project, led by Prof. Phil Lubin, under the NASA Lunar Surface Technology Research (LuSTR) program



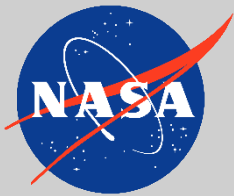
Images from: University of California Santa Barbara “Moonbeam” project, courtesy LuSTR program  
Reference: [https://lsic.jhuapl.edu/uploadedDocs/presentations/1924-1.13\\_Lubin\\_LuSTR%202023%20-%20UCSB%20Moonbeam%20-%20b.pdf](https://lsic.jhuapl.edu/uploadedDocs/presentations/1924-1.13_Lubin_LuSTR%202023%20-%20UCSB%20Moonbeam%20-%20b.pdf)



## Case 2: Operational Surface to Surface Power Beaming



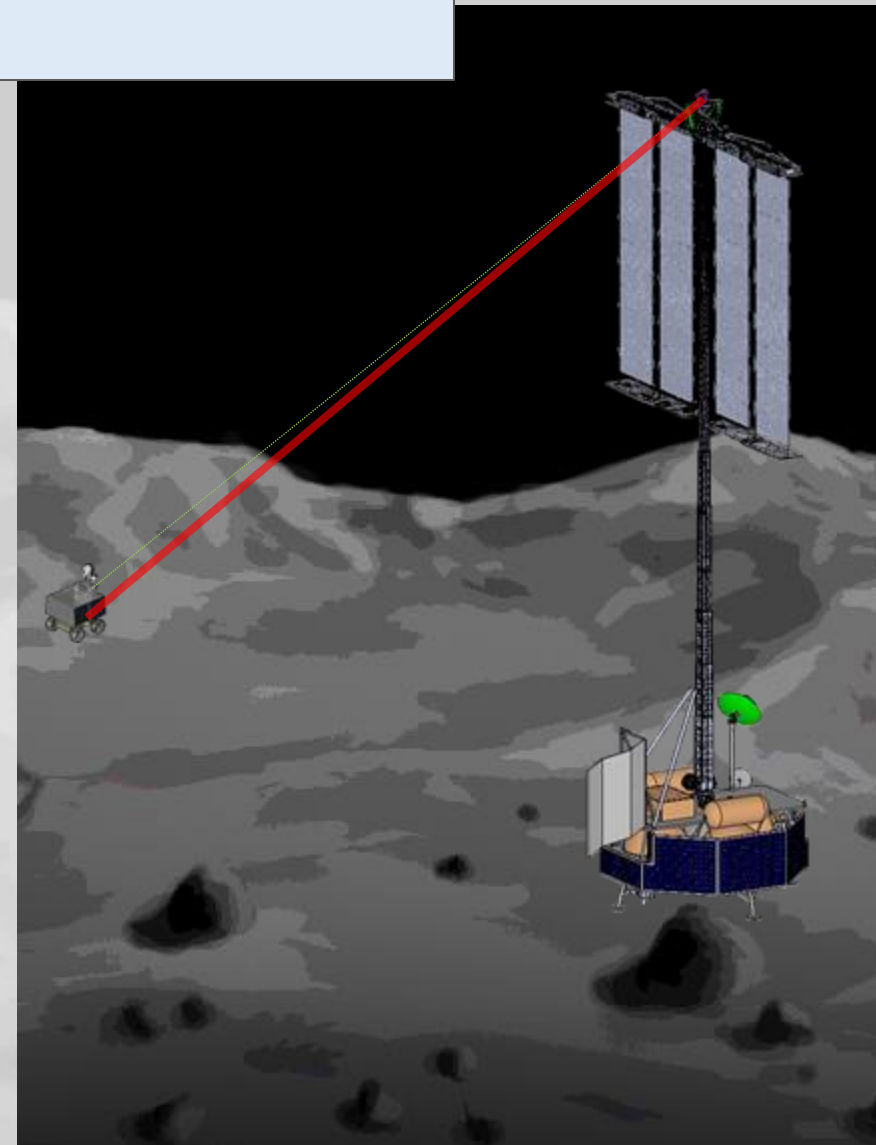
- **Objective:** design study of a near-term application of power beaming for transmission of electrical power to landers or rovers
- **Baseline requirements:** deliver 300 W user power at up to 10 km distance. Beam station mass <625 kg (to fit on CLPS lander)
- **Constraints:** near-term assumptions (no new technology), incorporating realistic mass growth and margins; target deployment 2028.

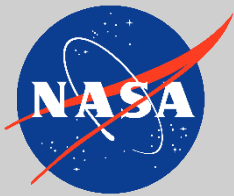


# Surface to Surface Power Beaming



Due to surface irregularities and the close horizon of the moon, to achieve 10-km transmission the laser must be elevated above the surface.



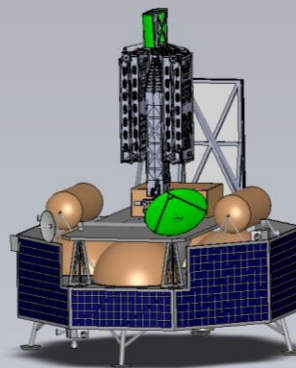


# Overview of structure

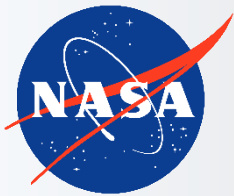


The Vertical Solar Array Technology (VSAT) program is developing a solar array mounted on a 10-m tall mast, intended to fit on a Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) lander.

*Beaming station stowed*



*Beaming station deployed*



# Choice of laser and photovoltaic receiver

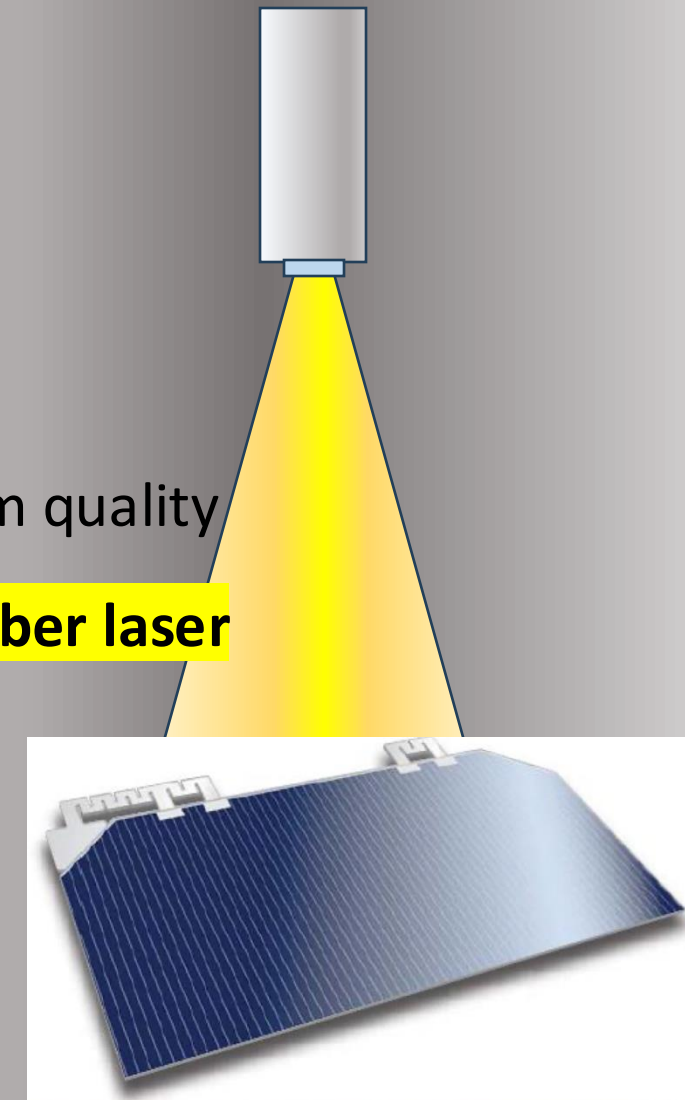


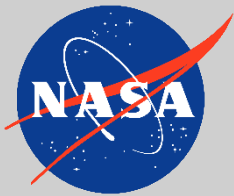
- Laser requirements

- High efficiency (optical power out/electrical power in)
- Good beam quality
- Available at high CW power
- High TRL

- Semiconductor diode lasers have good efficiency but too poor beam quality

- **Choice of laser based on these requirements is a diode-pumped fiber laser**





# Laser

## baseline: commercially available fiber laser

- This is an example showing specifications for a commercially available laser at the wavelength and power level baselined.
- Note that while this example laser is not space qualified, other lasers using this technology have been flown.
- Higher laser efficiencies (>50%) has been demonstrated, but for this project we baselined a commercially available model

### Optical Characteristics

Central Wavelength Range, 1070 nm  $\pm$ 10

Mode of Operation CW/Modulated

Power Tunability, 10-100%

Power Stability,  $\pm$ 0.5%

Output Fiber Core Diameter, 50, 100 and 200  $\mu$ m

Beam Quality, BPP 2, 5, 10 mm  $\times$  mrad

Operating Temperature Range, 10-40  $^{\circ}$ C

Cooling: Water

Supply Voltage, 50/60 Hz, 3-phase, 400-480 VAC

**\* Output Power 4 and 6 kW available soon**

### General Characteristics

#### Average Power Mode, 6kW

Dimensions, 448 $\times$ 760 $\times$ 177 mm

Weight, <80 kg

Power Consumption, 16 kW

Efficiency =  $\sim$ 38 %

#### Average Power Mode, 3 kW

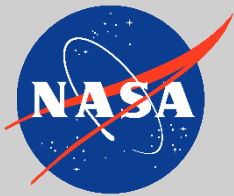
Dimensions, 448 $\times$ 760 $\times$ 88 mm

Weight, <45 kg

Power Consumption, 7.8 kW

Efficiency =  $\sim$  38%

- Spacecraft carries two lasers to give redundancy



# Laser station

## Design

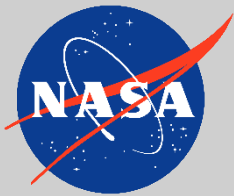
The diode-pumped fiber laser is mounted on the deck of the lander. Laser output is sent to the apex-mounted beam director by a fiber-optic cable.

A 7 m<sup>2</sup> deployable radiator keeps the laser within operating temperature limits. 1595 W of laser optical power is directed by a steerable beam director with a 10-cm primary optic, resulting in a 1.5-m spot diameter (FWHM) at the maximum 10-km range.

A 3.4-W diode-laser beacon on the receiver enables precise pointing of the beam. An array of InGaAs photovoltaic cells with conversion efficiency of 50% at the laser wavelength was baselined.

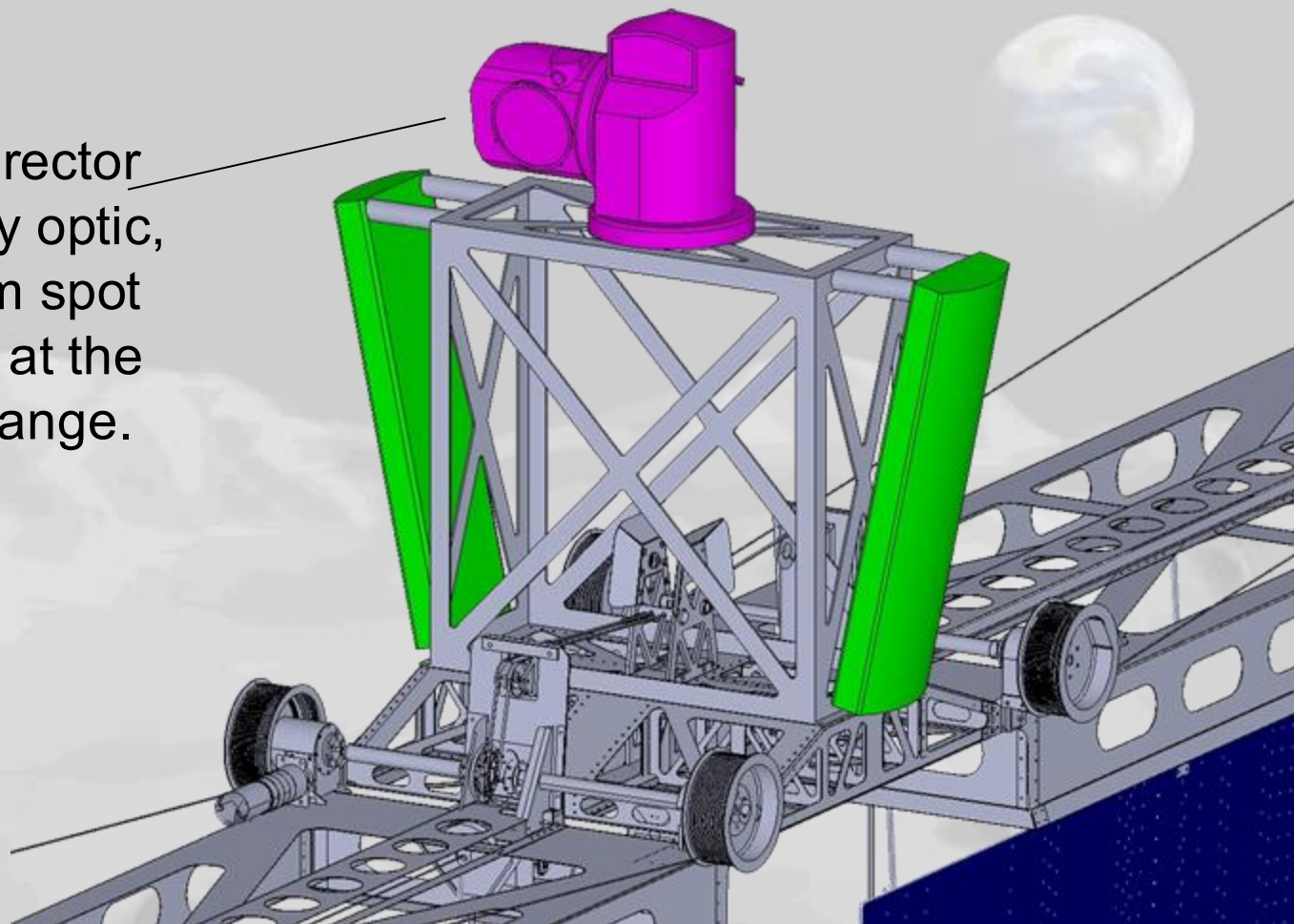
This results in an output of 540-W DC on a 1.5-meter receiving photovoltaic array (slightly more if a larger receiving array is used). Of this received power, 300 watts is directly available to the user, while 242 watts is used to charge batteries for use while the beam is not available.

The system also incorporates a 5G 60-Mbps data relay

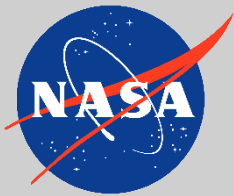


detail

Steerable beam director with 10-cm primary optic, resulting in a 1.5-m spot diameter (FWHM) at the maximum 10-km range.



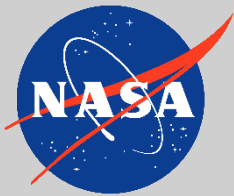
*Detail showing beam director (magenta) and data-relay antenna (green) at apex of mast. The laser itself is in the base, and the output fed to the beam director by fiber*



# Concept of Operations



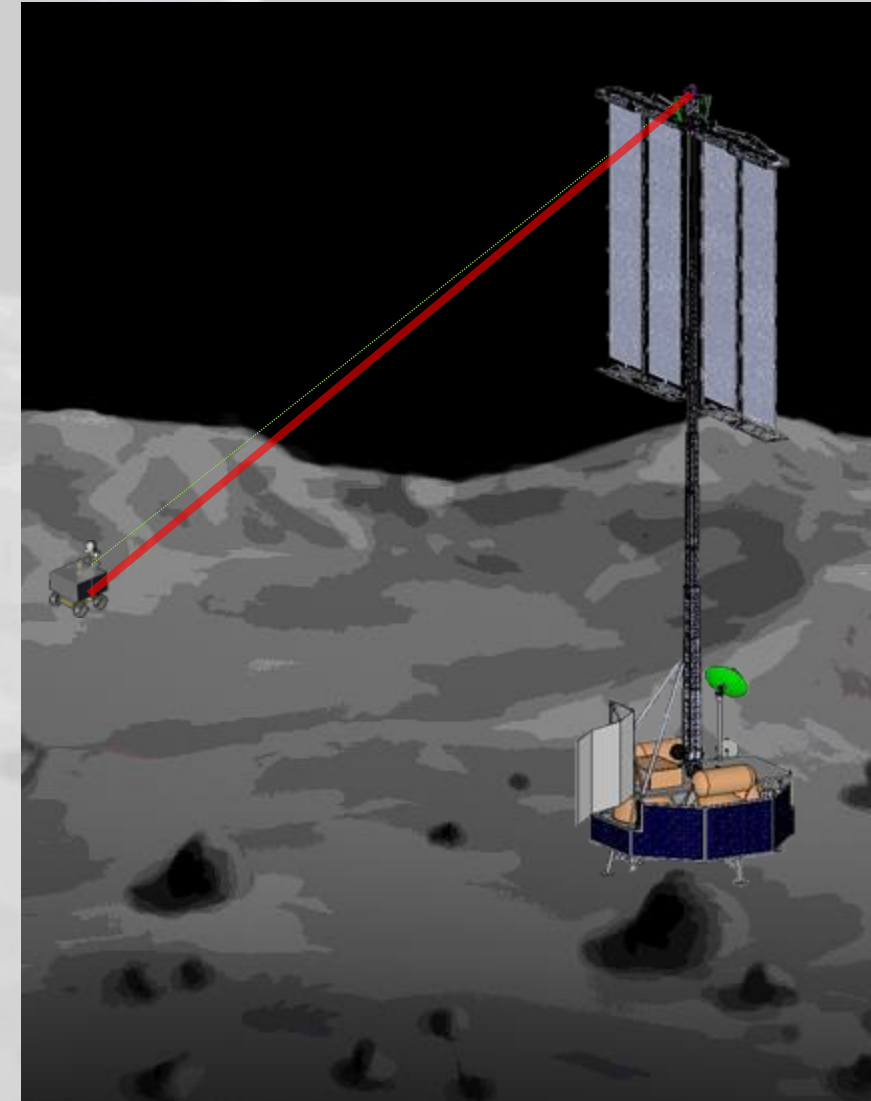
- The system beams power for 57% of the time, with 44% of the time idle (accounting for the time when the VSAT array is itself in shadow). 1595 Watts of optical power are output in the beam.
- Accounting for receiver efficiency and beam losses, this results in an output onto the 1.5-meter receiving photovoltaic array of 542 watts. Of this, 300 watts is directly available to the user, while 242 watts is directed to the batteries for use while the beam is not available.

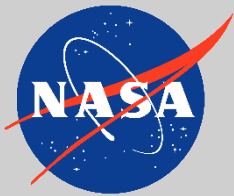


# Mass equipment list



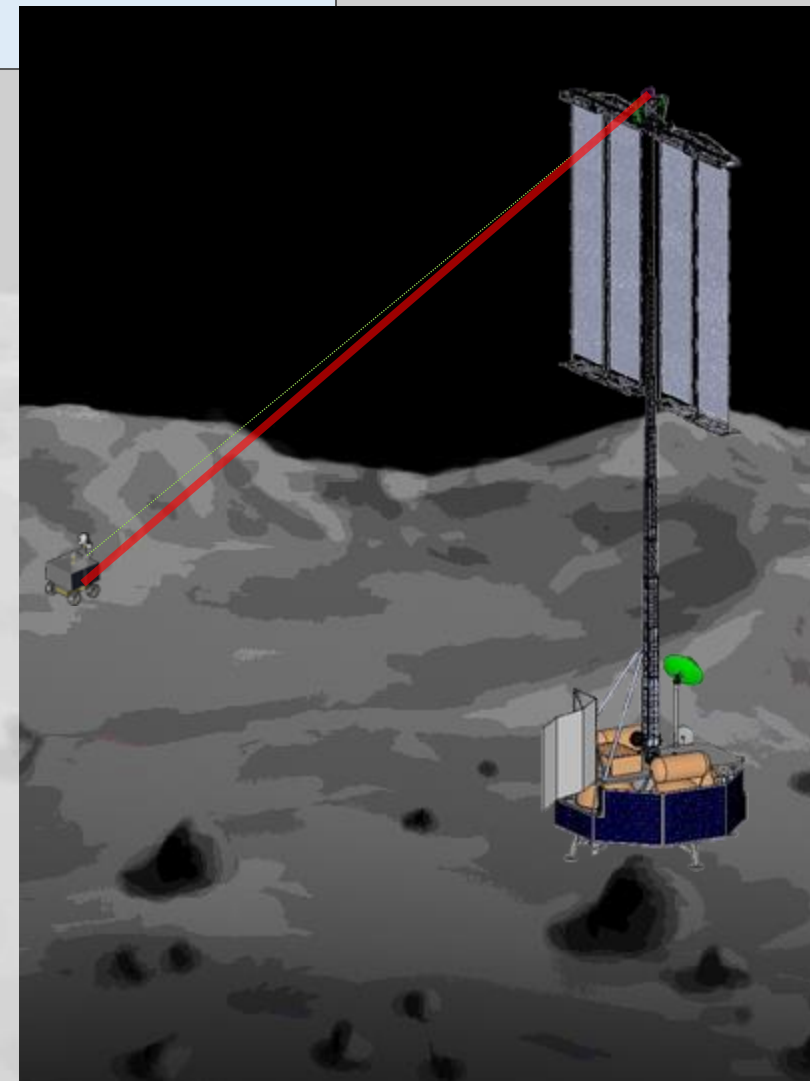
| MEL Summary: Case<br>2_VSAT_Beamed_Power_LSR CD-2023-203 | VSAT_LSR        |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Main Subsystems                                          | Basic Mass (kg) |
| Laser and beam director                                  | 35.9            |
| Attitude Determination and Control                       | 1.6             |
| Command & Data Handling                                  | 13.0            |
| Communications and Tracking                              | 22.5            |
| Electrical Power Subsystem                               | 106.7           |
| Thermal Control (Non-Propellant)                         | 70.9            |
| Structures and Mechanisms                                | 206.1           |
| <b>Element Total</b>                                     | <b>456.7</b>    |
| <b>Element Mass Growth Allowance (Aggregate)</b>         | 98.0            |
| <b>MGA Percentage</b>                                    | 21%             |
| <b>Predicted Mass (Basic + MGA)</b>                      | 554.7           |
| <b>System Level Mass Margin</b>                          | 68.5            |
| <b>System Level Growth Percentage</b>                    | 15%             |
| <b>Element Dry Mass (Basic+MGA+Margin)</b>               | 623.2           |
| <b>Element Inert Mass (Basic+MGA+Margin)</b>             | 623.2           |
| <b>Total Wet Mass (Allowable Mass)</b>                   | <b>623.2</b>    |

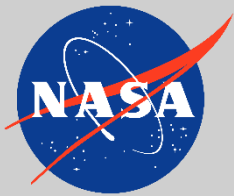




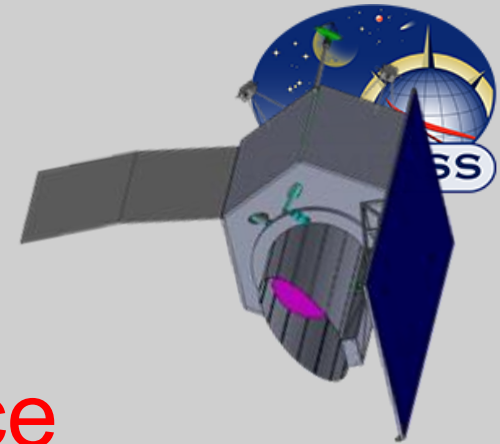
# Summary: surface to surface power beaming

- A conceptual engineering design was done for a fiber-laser based beaming station on a VSAT solar array
- Beams power to a photovoltaic array on a rover or lander inside a permanently shadowed lunar crater at a distance of at least 10 km
- System can fit in the constraints of a Commercial Lunar Payload System (CLPS) lander





## Case 3: Night power of surface science stations from orbit

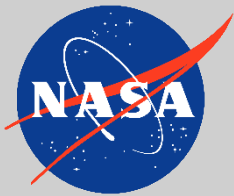


- Science missions envision a network of surface stations (or rovers) deployed at multiple locations across the lunar surface
- Could be any location on surface
- Need to operate at all times during the lunar cycle:
  - both day and night operation

### Problem statement

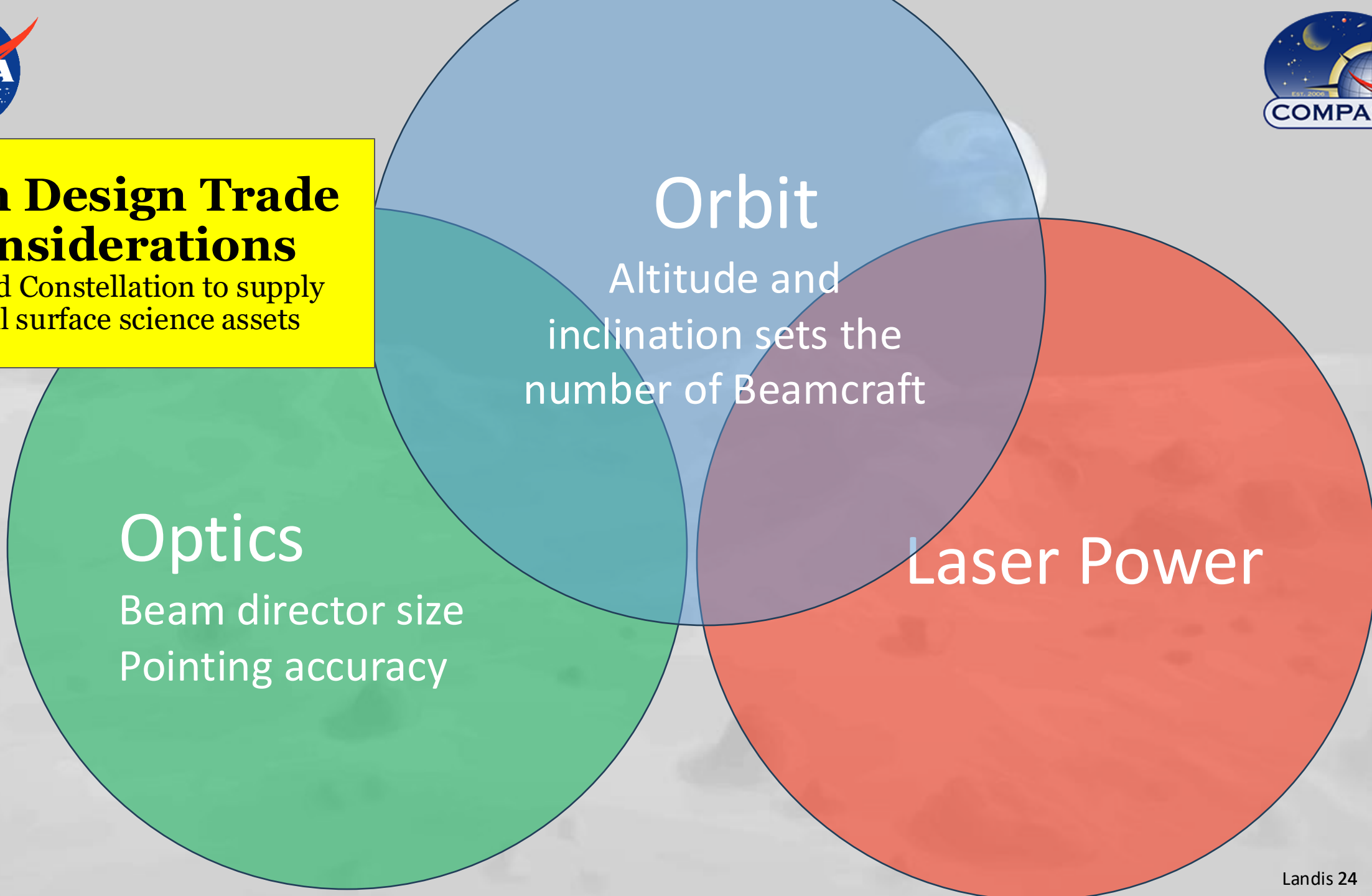
- Night time operation is a **severe** problem for small landers
- Explore a power/relay beamcraft for providing ~50W of nighttime power to multiple science landers in the 2030's *anywhere* on the moon

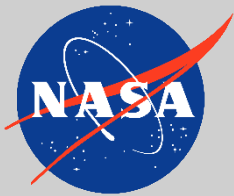




## Main Design Trade Considerations

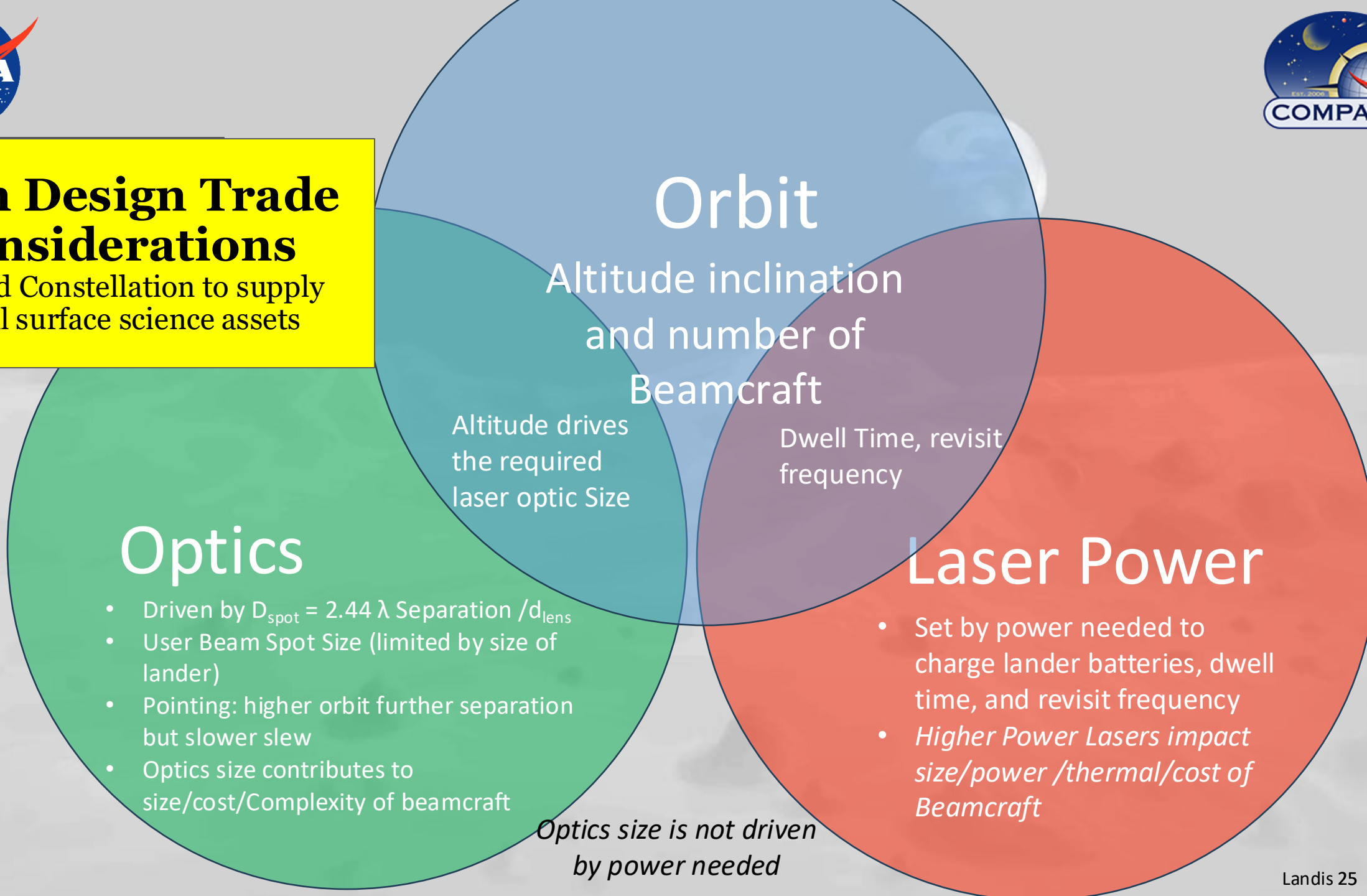
Beamed Constellation to supply global surface science assets

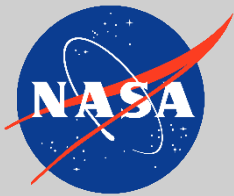




# Main Design Trade Considerations

Beamed Constellation to supply global surface science assets





# Main Design Considerations

Beamed Constellation to supply global surface science assets

*Lower orbits:  
Allow smaller optics BUT  
require more  
beamcraft/more ΔV. Longer  
outages require larger lander  
batteries*

*Higher orbits:  
Require larger optics BUT fewer  
beamcraft. Shorter  
outages/longer dwell times  
allow smaller lander batteries  
and lower power lasers*

## Orbit

Altitude inclination  
and number of  
Beamcraft

Altitude drives  
the required  
laser optic Size

Dwell Time, revisit  
frequency

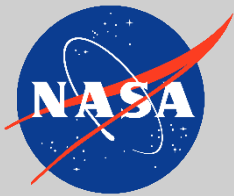
## Optics

- Driven by  $D_{spot} = 2.44 \lambda \text{ Separation} / d_{lens}$
- User Beam Spot Size (limited by size of lander)
- Pointing: higher orbit further separation but slower slew
- Optics size contributes to size/cost/Complexity of beamcraft

*Optics size is not driven  
by power needed*

## Laser Power

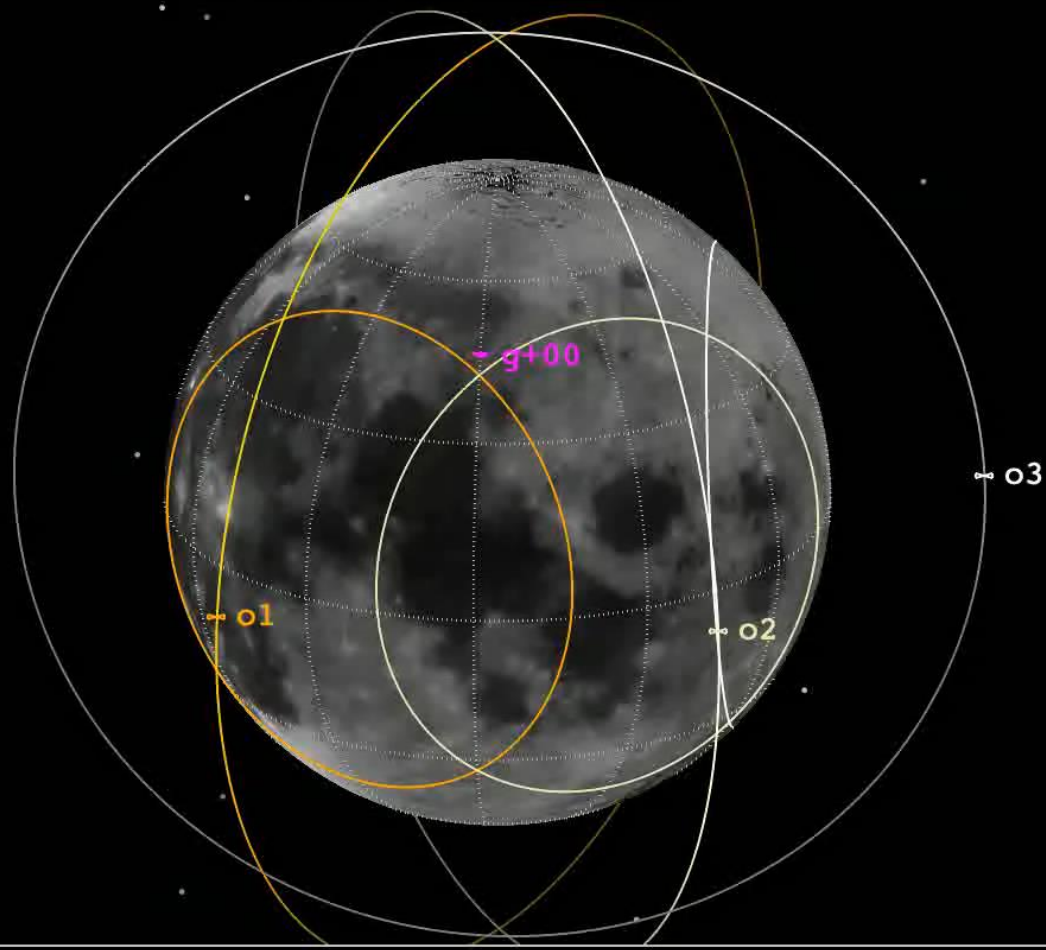
- Set by power needed to charge lander batteries, dwell time, and revisit frequency
- *Higher Power Lasers impact size/power /thermal/cost of Beamcraft*



# Mission: SOAP Contact Window Analysis

(3 Polar Orbiters, 90° Inc to Mid-Lat Station)

## .Moon CI Observer View



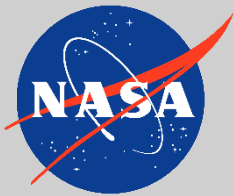
elevation: gnd+00 to orbiters  
2024/01/03 20:02:00.0001 UTC

Satellite Orbit Analysis Program (SOAP) software used to evaluate contact windows between various orbit configurations and surface science stations

- Three satellites in 800-km circular polar orbits
  - The requirement for three orbital planes is driven by the need to service all latitudes. If the science stations are only at near-polar latitudes (or only at near equatorial latitudes, only one beamcraft is needed)

### Assumptions

- Operational orbits were determined to be 800 km, circular, polar.  $T_p = 3.17$  hr
- Orbiter station keeping assumed
- RAAN separation:
  - Full coverage for 3 orbiters by spacing orbits 60° apart (3x N-S + 3x S-N passes)
  - Full coverage for 2 orbiters by spacing orbits 90° apart (2x N-S + 2x S-N passes)
- TA spacing: staggering passes for times of overlapping coverage (i.e., station in view of more than 1 satellite) would be beneficial and should be included in future work
- Orbiters simulated with 47.5° half-angle, Nadir-pointer, simple conic sensor (SOAP sensor package)



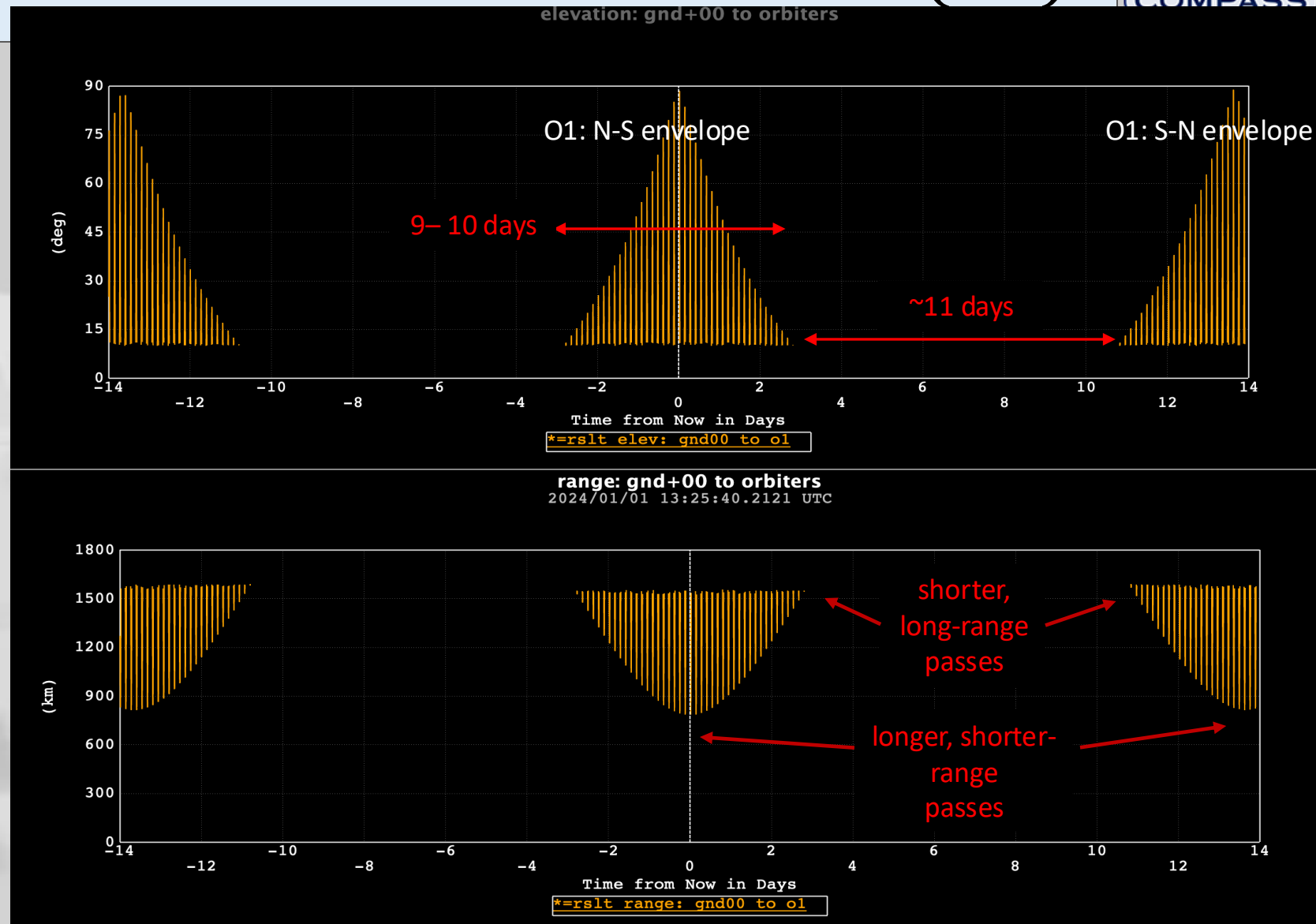
# Mission: Closer Look at Orbiter Passes (O1)



Each orbiter can be seen by the ground station 1x per 3.17 hr orbit until the moon's rotation under the orbital plane drifts the pass to where the orbiter can no longer be seen over the 10° horizon mask

This “series of passes” forms an envelope lasting ~9-10 days with quality of passes ranging from short-long-range, to long- short-range and then back to short-long-range

Each orbiter's contact envelope repeats approximately every 14 days with the first contact during the N-S passage, and the second on the S-N passage.



# Power System Component Illustration

Laser Beam

Dual Axis Tracking  
Solar Array & Laser  
Receiver

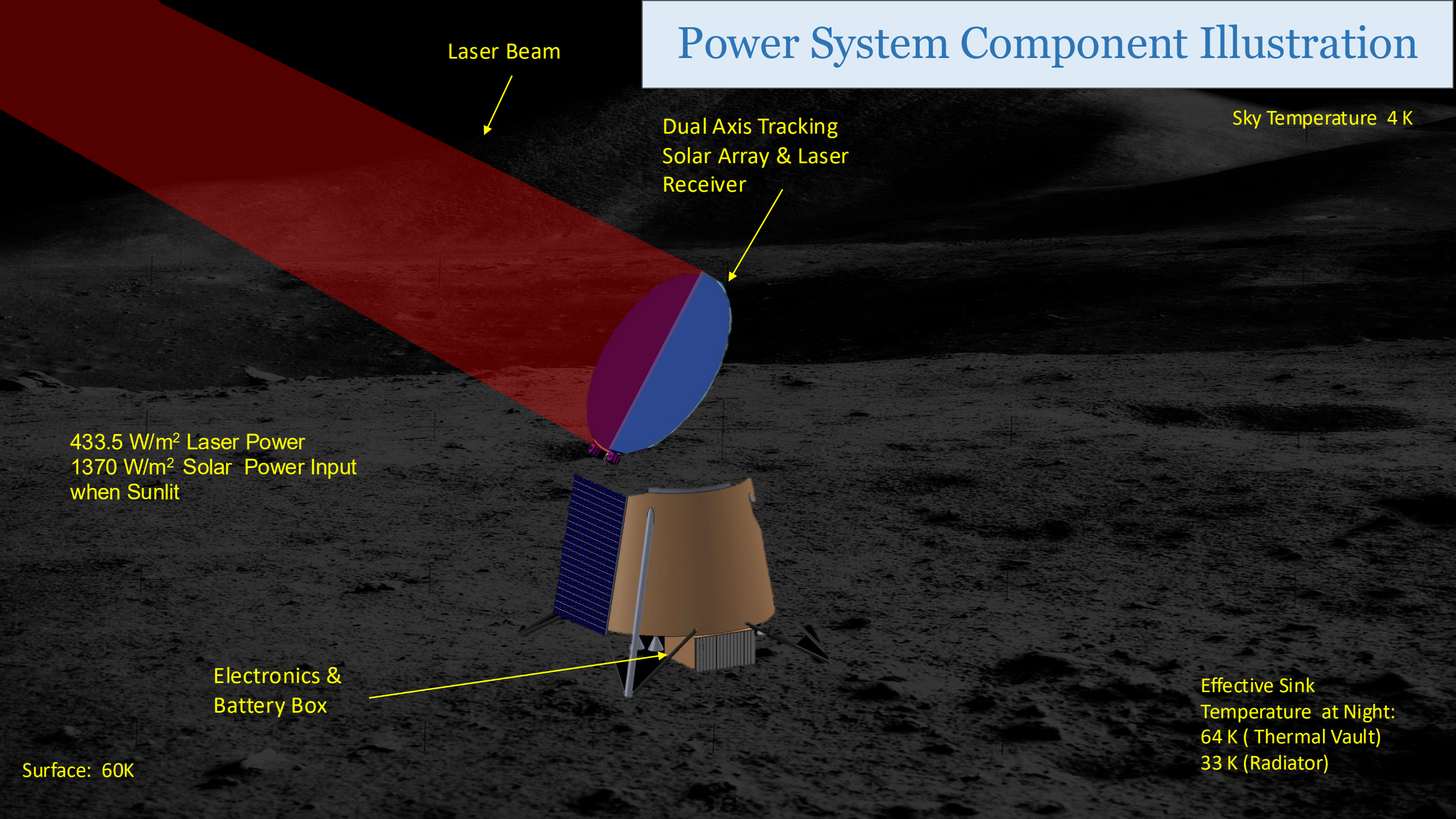
Sky Temperature 4 K

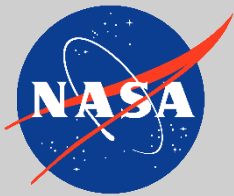
433.5 W/m<sup>2</sup> Laser Power  
1370 W/m<sup>2</sup> Solar Power Input  
when Sunlit

Electronics &  
Battery Box

Effective Sink  
Temperature at Night:  
64 K (Thermal Vault)  
33 K (Radiator)

Surface: 60K





# Laser Beam Power Requirements



The laser beamed power output ( $P_{\text{lout}}$ ) requirement is based on the continuous power level the load utilizes ( $P_c$ ) and the total energy that needs to be transmitted ( $E_t$ ) and the various inefficiencies of the system.

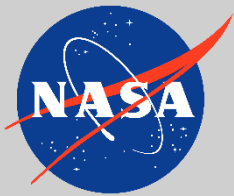
$$E_t = P_c t_b \eta_{bc} + P_c t_t$$

$$P_{\text{Lout}} = (E_t / t_t) / (\eta_{ff} \eta_{bs} \eta_{sc})$$

$$P_{\text{Lin}} = P_{\text{Lout}} \eta_L$$

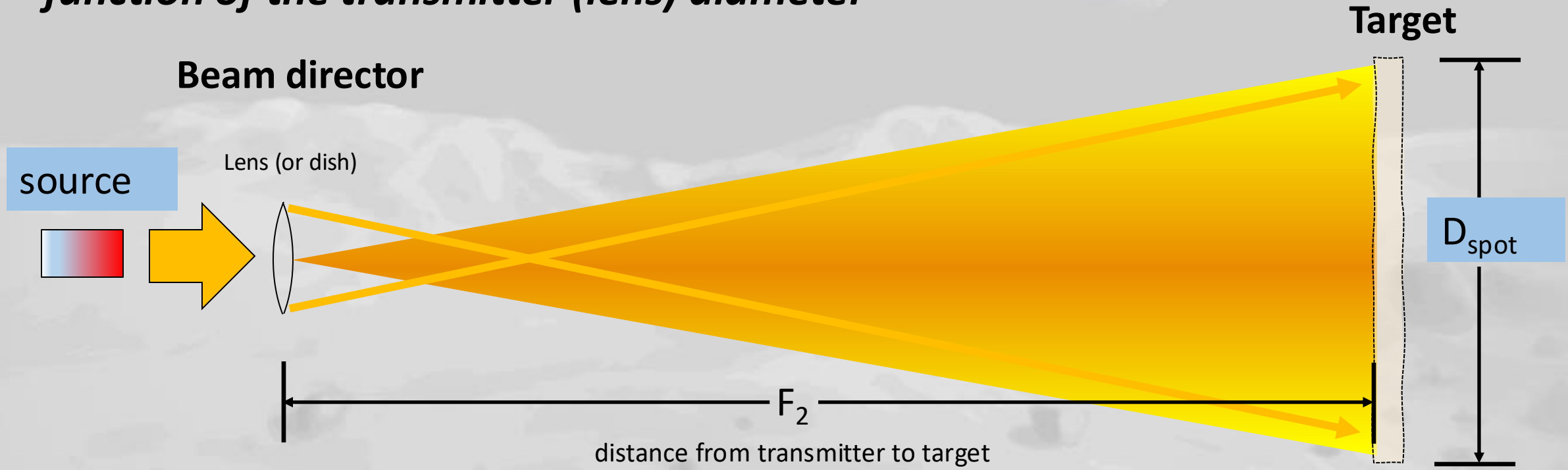
| Item                                                | Value   |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Power Transmission Time ( $t_t$ )                   | 0.25 Hr |
| Shadow (No Power Transmission) ( $t_b$ )            | 2.75 Hr |
| Battery Charging Efficiency ( $\eta_{bc}$ )         | 0.95    |
| Array Fill Factor ( $\eta_{ff}$ )                   | 0.85    |
| Laser Beam Spill ( $\eta_{bs}$ )                    | 0.5     |
| PV Cell Efficiency (based on laser) ( $\eta_{sc}$ ) | 0.5     |
| Laser Efficiency ( $\eta_L$ )                       | 0.4     |

| Continuous Load Power ( $P_c$ , W) | Laser Beam Power ( $P_{\text{lout}}$ , W) | Power to Laser ( $P_{\text{in}}$ , W) | Receiving Array Output (W) | Power to Battery (W) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 39.75                              | 3000                                      | 7800                                  | 637                        | 510                  |



# Diffraction-limited spot size (high beam quality lasers)

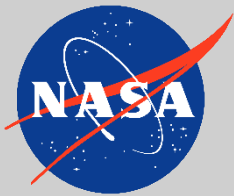
- In the diffraction limit, the size of the beam on target is a **function of the transmitter (lens) diameter**



$$D_{spot} = 2.44 \lfloor F_2 / d_{lens}$$

Bigger lens  $\rightarrow$  smaller spot size at target

$D_{spot}$  is defined here as the first zero of the Airy diffraction pattern (= 84% beam energy.).

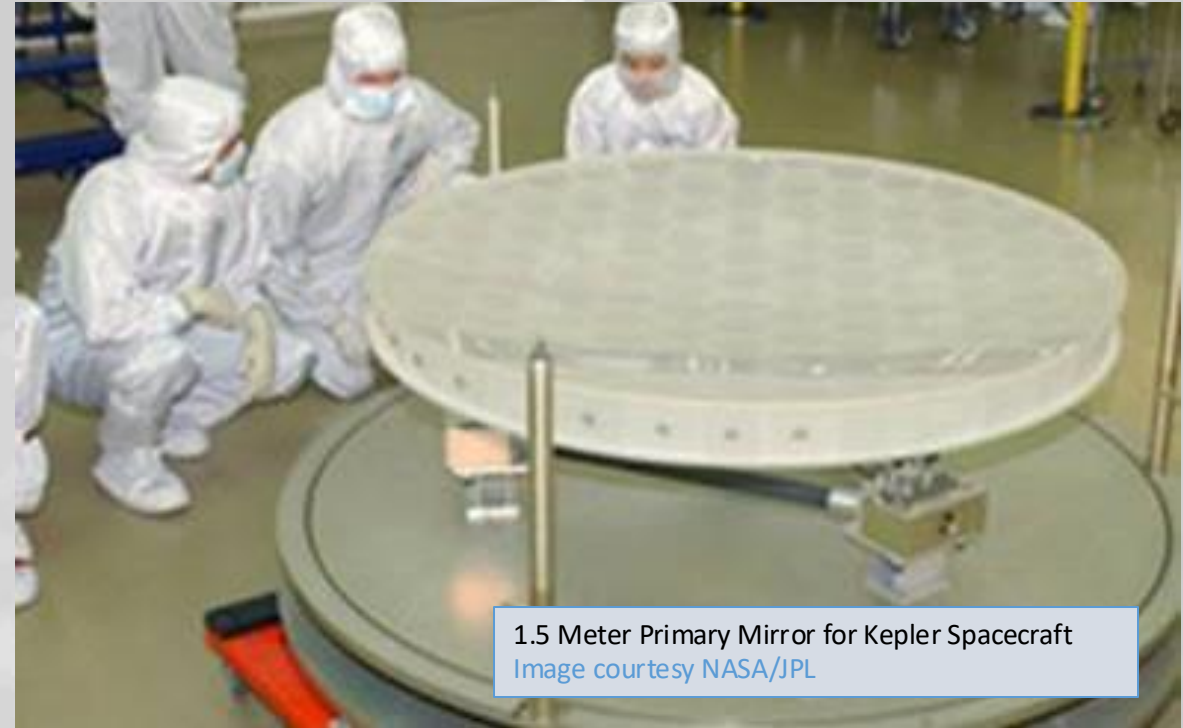


# Primary Mirror



We are basing the primary mirror on the Kepler telescope mirror:

Diameter of mirror: 1.45 m  
Mass: 86 kg  
Material: Corning Ultra-low expansion (ULE) glass  
Reference: Kosi 2008



This beam director puts a 1.5-m (FWHM) spot on the receiver array at the maximum beaming distance of 1500 km

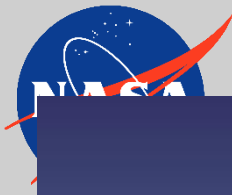
- at shorter distances, the beam can be defocused to keep spot size the same

## References:

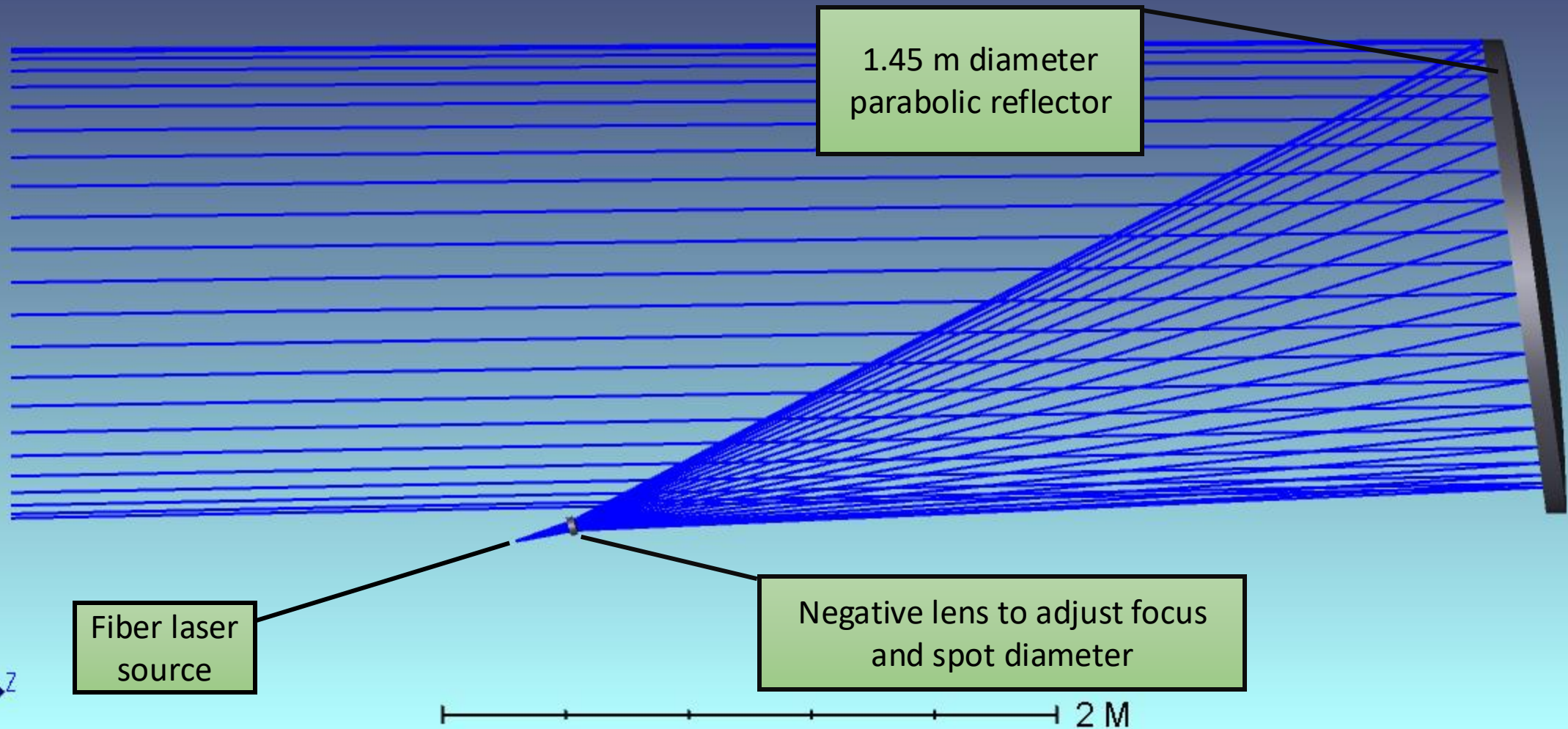
K. Kosi (2008), "Focus Mechanism for Kepler Mission," 39th Aerospace Mechanisms Symposium, NASA/CP—2008–215252, p. 373;

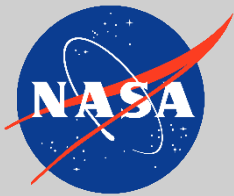
<https://ntrs.nasa.gov/api/citations/20080023060/downloads/20080023060.pdf#page=373>

H.P. Stahl (2020), "Advanced ultraviolet, optical, and infrared mirror technology development for very large space telescopes," *Journal of Astronomical Telescopes, Instruments, and Systems*, 6, No. 2, 025001, <https://www.spiedigitallibrary.org/journals/Journal-of-Astronomical-Telescopes-Instruments-and-Systems/volume-6/issue-2/025001/Advanced-ultraviolet-optical-and-infrared-mirror-technology-development-for-very/10.1117/1.JATIS.6.2.025001.full>



# Beam director optical layout/Principle of Operation



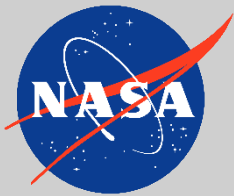


# Estimated Power Delivery and Laser/Optic Sizes

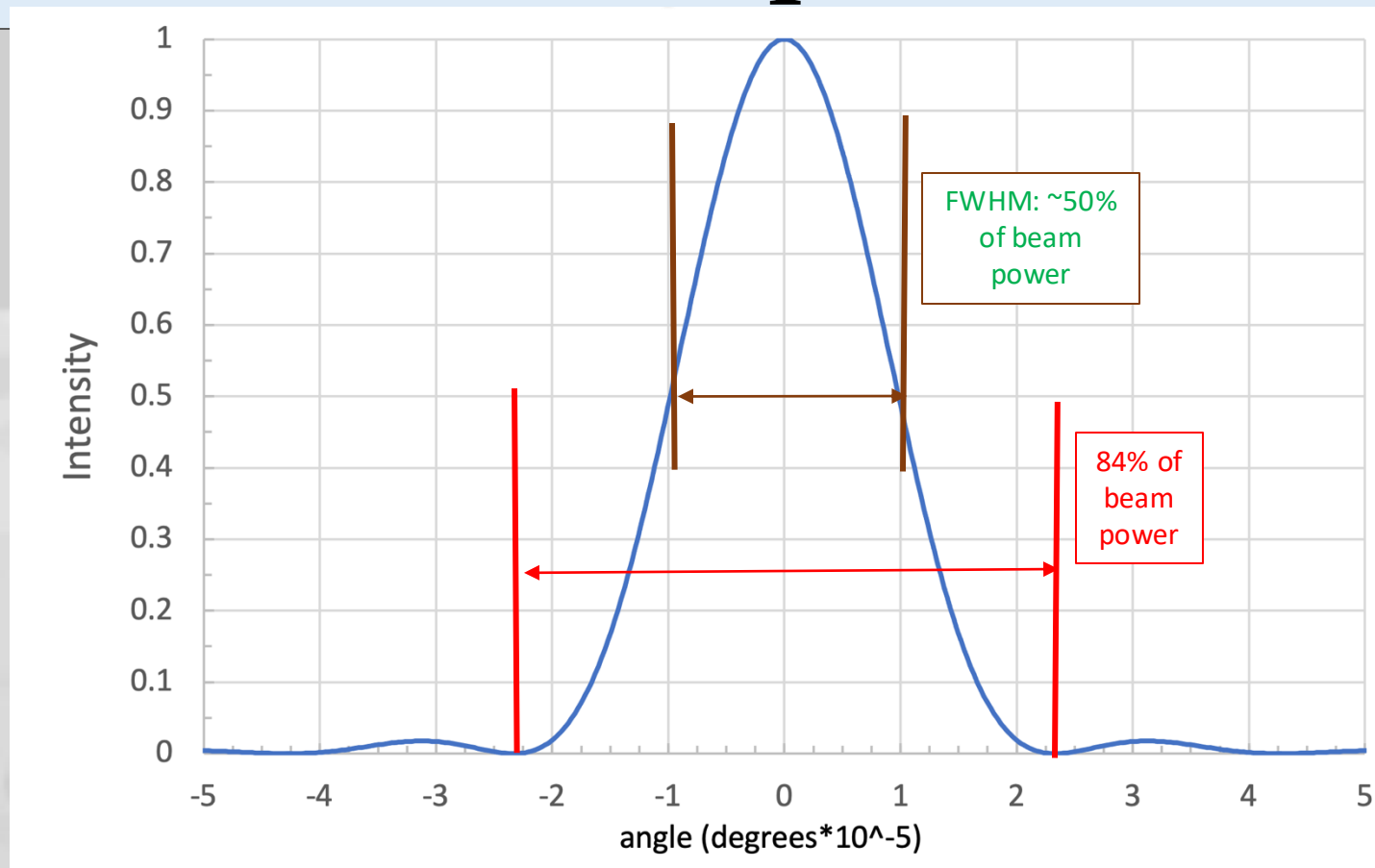
| Beam spot size                  |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| laser wavelength                | 1.07 microns           |
| beam director diam.             | 1.4 meter              |
| beam div angle (full)           | 1.86486E-06 radians    |
| beam div angle (°)              | 0.384654397 arcseconds |
| spot diam. (84% of power)*      | 2.98 meters            |
| spot diam (FWHM, ~50% of power) | 1.49 meters            |

\*Assumes tracking collector.  
Divide by Cos(45°) if flat.

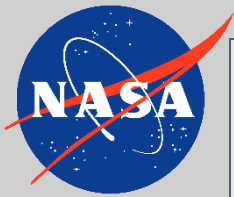
|                                                   |             |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| number of nighttime users per orbit plane         | 3           |
| nighttime power needed (W)                        | 50          |
| Night length (days)                               | 14          |
| Whr required (for battery if unbeamed)            | 16800       |
| Surface assets battery mass (if unbeamed)         | 114         |
| # of Beamcraft per orbit plane                    | 1           |
| Time between Beamcraft visits (hrs)               | 3.2         |
| W-hr required (for battery if beam serviced)      | 160.0       |
| Surface asset Battery mass (kg) (if beamed)       | 0.8         |
| Duration of Beamcraft pass (min)                  | 15          |
| Watts needed at surface asset per pass            | 640         |
|                                                   |             |
| surface asset receiver size                       | 1.5 - 1.7 m |
| fraction of array covered with photovoltaic cells | 0.9         |
| Laser receiver eff                                | 0.5         |
| Power beam energy needed at receiver (W)          | 1422        |
| Fraction of beam collected                        | 0.5         |
| Power beam at surface (W)                         | 2844.4      |
|                                                   |             |
| Cosine loss cross track                           | 0.98        |
| Beamcraft beam laser eff                          | 0.38        |
| Beamcraft input laser power (kW)                  | 7.6         |
| Beamcraft energy storage kW h                     | 6           |
| Beamcraft battery tech (Whr/kg)                   | 192         |
| Beamcraft battery mass kg                         | 30          |
| Beamcraft illumination time (hrs)                 | 2.5         |
| Beamcraft solar array size estimate (kW)          | 2.3         |



# Beam spread



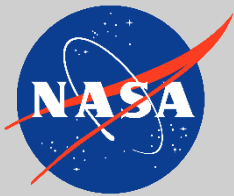
- 1070 nm laser, 1.4 m mirror. Intensity relative to intensity at beam center



# Laser spot non-uniformity challenges



- Laser spot is non-uniform (higher power in center)
  - Could design an array to be tolerant of non-uniform illumination
  - could use a diffuser to remove non-uniformity (adds losses x%)
  - Fresnel lens (makes tracking harder)
  - ✓ Active maximum power-point tracking on *sets* of cells for variable illumination intensity using DC/DC convertor
- Distance varies 800-1500 km; changes spot diameter ~ 50%
  - We added focus adjustment to allow spot size to be dynamically controlled
- Pointing accuracy means central spot NOT necessarily in center of array
  - Need to control spacecraft jitter

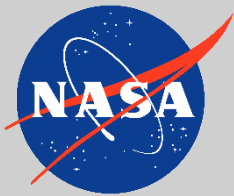


# Pointing: Beacon Option



- Laser beacon on the lander:
  - Beamcraft looks for laser for fine guidance in pointing
  - Diode laser at different wavelength from power beam
  - Coarse pointing to beamcraft (divergence angle  $\sim 10$  mrad)
  - Lander knows roughly where and when to point to the Beamcraft
- Required laser power 7 W
  - Semiconductor diode laser can be used
    - (does not require high beam quality)
- Photon counter on Beamcraft
  - (dichroic beam-splitter uses same main optic)
- This solution allows the beamcraft to correct spacecraft jitter in realtime

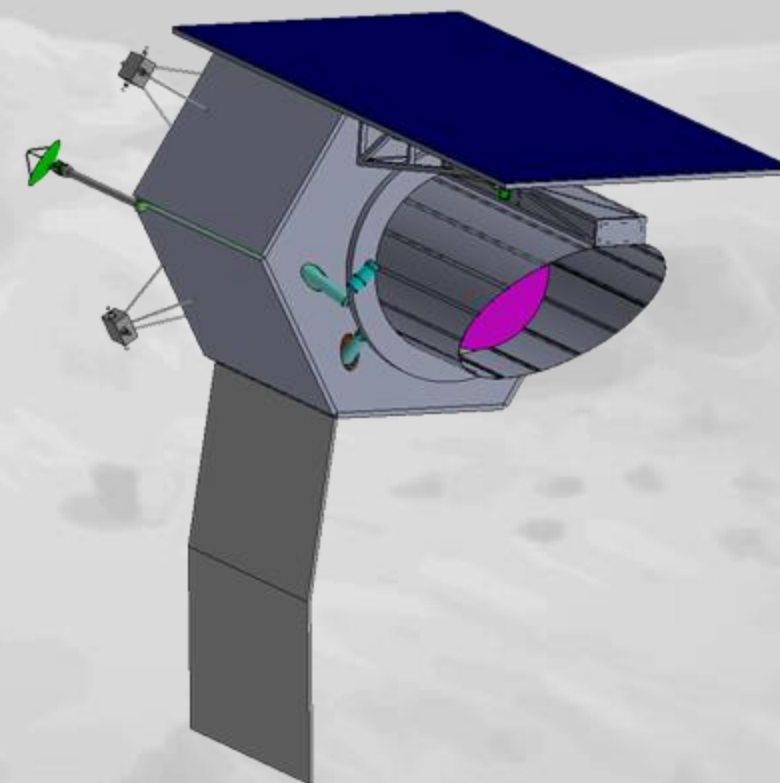
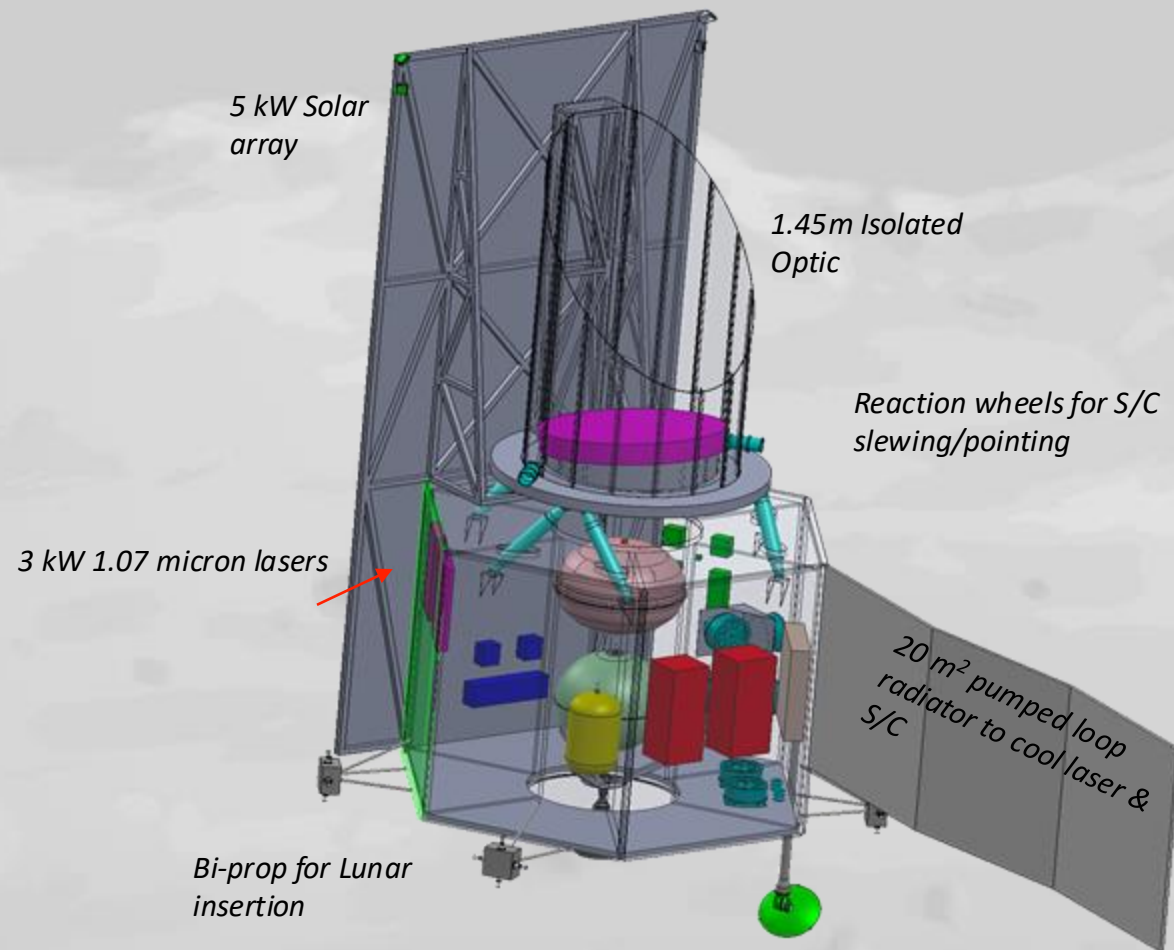


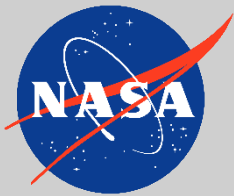


# Laser Beamcraft for Global Science Landers



~ 3500 kg Beamcraft



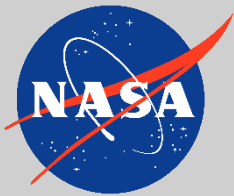


# Lunar Beamcraft and Lander Payload Mass Equipment List



| Description                         | Basic Mass  | Growth     | Growth     | Total Mass  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Case 1_Lunar_Beam_Craft CD-2023-207 | (kg)        | (%)        | (kg)       | (kg)        |
| <b>Lunar Beam Craft</b>             | <b>2905</b> | <b>14%</b> | <b>418</b> | <b>3324</b> |
| <b>Spacecraft</b>                   | <b>2818</b> | <b>14%</b> | <b>401</b> | <b>3220</b> |
| Laser system                        | 186.3       | 24%        | 44.6       | 230.9       |
| Attitude Determination and Control  | 108.0       | 7%         | 7.7        | 115.7       |
| Command & Data Handling             | 39.2        | 36%        | 14.1       | 53.3        |
| Communications and Tracking         | 12.8        | 11%        | 1.4        | 14.2        |
| Electrical Power Subsystem          | 450.5       | 35%        | 157.7      | 608.2       |
| Thermal Control (Non-Propellant)    | 197.1       | 18%        | 35.5       | 232.6       |
| Propulsion (Chemical Hardware)      | 114.1       | 5%         | 6.0        | 120.1       |
| Propellant (Chemical)               | 964.0       | 0%         | 0.0        | 964.0       |
| Structures and Mechanisms           | 746.4       | 18%        | 134.3      | 880.7       |
| <b>Lander Modifications</b>         | <b>87</b>   | <b>19%</b> | <b>17</b>  | <b>104</b>  |
| Science                             | 14.6        | 0%         | 0.0        | 14.6        |
| Command & Data Handling             | 11.6        | 36%        | 4.2        | 15.8        |
| Communications and Tracking         | 5.3         | 12%        | 0.6        | 5.9         |
| Electrical Power Subsystem          | 27.5        | 30%        | 8.3        | 35.8        |
| Thermal Control (Non-Propellant)    | 10.8        | 18%        | 1.9        | 12.7        |
| Structures and Mechanisms           | 17.3        | 11%        | 1.9        | 19.2        |

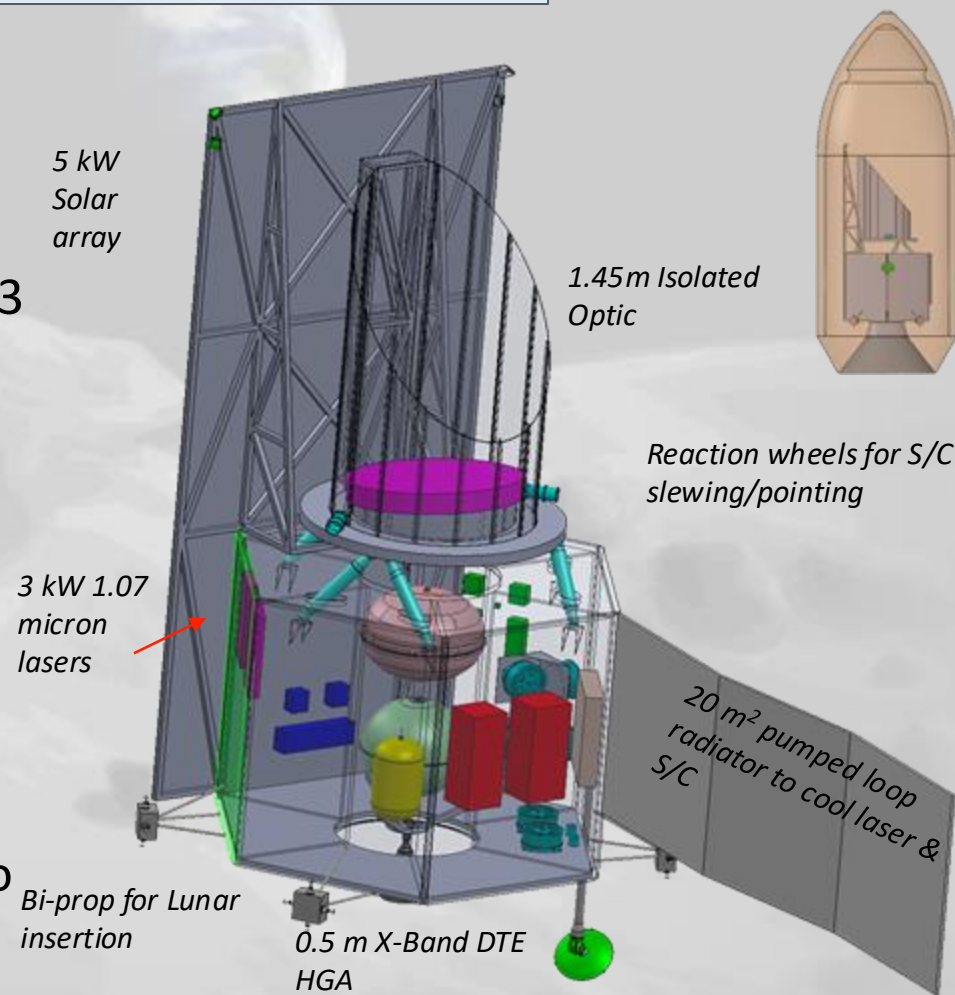
mass growth allowance  
per AIAA mass  
estimation standards



# Summary: power from lunar orbit

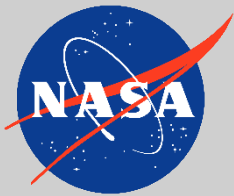


- Feasible to make a 3-kW Laser Beamcraft to power science landers in the dark and relay on the far-side
- Mission: Three Beamcraft launched individually to 800 km polar lunar orbits, offset by 60°, each supports 6 science landed assets at a time (3 shadowed/ 3 sunlit)
  - If surface stations are located only in near-polar or in near-equatorial locations, one beamcraft is needed
  - Three orbital planes are required for mid-latitudes
- Laser: 3 kW (8 kWe input), 1.07  $\mu\text{m}$  terrestrial technology, 38% efficient
- Optics: Based on 1.45 m Kepler telescope,  $\sim 2.5\text{m}$  laser spot at maximum 1500 km distance
- Cost analysis:  $\sim \$2.2\text{B}$  for three Laser Beamcraft with 25% reserves, no launch or Phase E
  - Breakpoint showed at least 10 science landers make the beamcraft option attractive
  - Saves  $\sim \$2.8\text{B}$  compared to landing large, overnight power systems



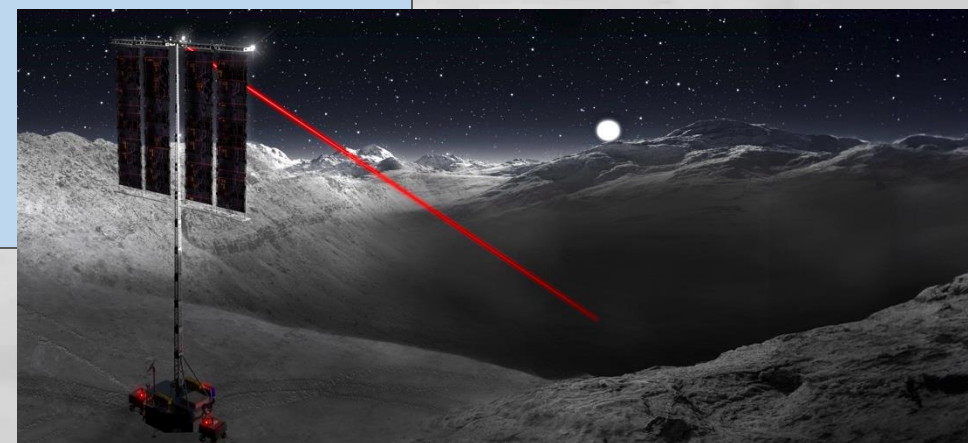
# Conclusions

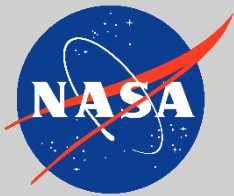
- Laser power beaming is a plausible technology to provide power on the moon in locations where solar power is unavailable
- Possible at a wide range of power and distance scales, from small rovers exploring permanently shadowed lunar craters, to science assets operating in the lunar night
  - Different technologies may be optimal for different applications
- No showstoppers for use of this technology on the moon



# Acknowledgement: the NASA Glenn Compass team

- Compass is NASA Glenn's concurrent engineering design team
  - The team includes experts from each discipline of space vehicle and mission design, collected from their respective discipline-area branches (matrix)
  - Branch knowledge and experience is leveraged through review of their representative's product(s)
- Our charter is to do realistic engineering designs to show the value (and difficulties) of new technologies in enabling challenging missions
  - Similar to other spacecraft engineering teams (e.g, JPL's "Team X"), but with focus on implementation of new technologies, rather than on putting together mission proposals
  - Customer oriented:
    - starting point is always "what are the user requirements?"





# Some references



- Overall reference on power beaming fundamentals: P. Jaffe, T. Nugent, and B. Strassner II, *Power Beaming: History, Theory, and Practice* (World Scientific 2024)  
[https://books.google.com/books/about/Power\\_Beaming\\_History\\_Theory\\_And\\_Practic.html](https://books.google.com/books/about/Power_Beaming_History_Theory_And_Practic.html)
- G.A. Landis, *et al.*, “Laser Power Beaming for Applications on the Moon,” *Space Power Workshop 2025*, Torrance CA.  
<https://ntrs.nasa.gov/citations/20250003925>
- Case 1: G.A. Landis, “Laser Power Beaming for Lunar Polar Exploration,” paper AIAA-2020-3538, *2020 AIAA Propulsion & Energy Forum*, New Orleans LA, August 24-26 2020. <https://ntrs.nasa.gov/citations/20205005063>
- LuSTR, P. Lubin, “NASA LuSTR Review: Moonbeam Lunar Beamed Power”, Lunar Surface Innovation Consortium Spring Meeting [https://lsic.jhuapl.edu/uploadedDocs/presentations/1924-1.13\\_Lubin\\_LuSTR%202023%20-%20UCSB%20Moonbeam%20-%20b.pdf](https://lsic.jhuapl.edu/uploadedDocs/presentations/1924-1.13_Lubin_LuSTR%202023%20-%20UCSB%20Moonbeam%20-%20b.pdf)
- Case 2: S.R. Oleson, G. Landis, E. Turnbull, *et al.*, “Beamed Energy And Communications Optical Node (BEACON) Demonstrator”, AIAA Science and Technology Forum, Orlando FL, Jan. 6-10 2025.  
<https://ntrs.nasa.gov/citations/20240014584>
- Case 3: G.A. Landis, S. Oleson, *et al.*, “Power Beaming from Lunar Orbit for Small Science Landers,” paper AIAA-2024-4938, *AIAA ASCEND (Accelerating Space Commerce, Exploration, and New Discovery) Conference 2024*, Las Vegas NV, 30 July-1 August 2024. <https://arc.aiaa.org/doi/abs/10.2514/6.2024-4938>
- G.A. Landis, “Space Power by Laser Illumination of Photovoltaic Arrays,” *Space Photovoltaic Research and Technology* 1991, NASA CP-3121, May 1991. <https://ntrs.nasa.gov/citations/19910020889>