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NEO Characterization**

**PLANETARY DEFENSE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES: 25 YEARS OF SHOEMAKER
NEO GRANTS AND THE NEW STEP GRANTS**

Bruce Betts⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾*The Planetary Society, 60 S. Los Robles Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101, USA, +1-626-793-5100, bruce.betts@planetary.org*

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ABSTRACT

The Planetary Society offers two grants programs of potential interest to NEO researchers. Both are open, international competitions with calls for proposals approximately every two years. For 25 years, The Planetary Society's Gene Shoemaker NEO Grant program has provided funding for NEO observatory upgrades, primarily for amateur observers and under-funded professional observers. The Planetary Society recently began another broader grants program called STEP (Science and Technology Empowered by the Public), open to a wide range of planetary science and technology proposals, including NEO research of various kinds.

Over the 25-year history of Shoemaker NEO Grants, approximately \$515,000 has been granted to 70 winners in 21 countries on 6 continents. The program is named for pioneering planetary geologist Gene Shoemaker. Grant winners have made significant contributions to asteroid discovery, tracking, and characterization. At the conference, examples of Shoemaker NEO winners' contributions and geographical distribution will be presented.

The recently established Planetary Society STEP grants are planetary science and/or technology grants. Proposals must fit within one or more of The Planetary Society's core enterprises, one of which is Planetary Defense (the others are Explore Worlds and Find Life). One of the first two projects selected was a near Earth asteroid characterization project using extensive computer modeling and data analysis. More information on the program will be provided at the conference.

More information on the Shoemaker NEO grants and grant winners also can be found at: planetary.org/neogrants and STEP grants information can be found at: planetary.org/stepgrants

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Comments: