This image mosaic of Eros’ largest depression—the 6-mile (10-kilometer) wide feature whose proposed name is Himeros was obtained from an orbital altitude of 31 miles (50 kilometers).
**Himeros Image Mosaic**

This image mosaic of Eros’ largest depression—the 6-mile (10-kilometer) wide feature whose proposed name is Himeros—was obtained from an orbital altitude of 31 miles (50 kilometers). The mosaic shows a region about 4.3 miles (7 kilometers) across that contains several of Himeros’ distinctive and puzzling features. The curving trough at the top and upper right, as well as more subtle curving depressions near the bottom of the mosaic, reflect fracturing of Eros. The bright and dark banding near the top results from material accumulating at the base of the nearly vertical scarp that forms one wall of the curving trough. More subtle dark lineations near the lower right result from thin layers of loose material moving down an approximately 20-degree slope. Many impact craters dotting the area are somewhat eroded and infilled.

**NEAR Mission**

As the first launch in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s (NASA) Discovery Program, the Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous (NEAR) mission is setting the stage for asteroidal exploration and forming a base of knowledge that will be the framework for future asteroid missions. The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (JHU/APL) designed and built the NEAR Shoemaker spacecraft and manages the mission for NASA. The Mission Team is drawn internationally from universities, government agencies and private industry.

Launched February 17, 1996, NEAR Shoemaker began its orbital mission at asteroid 433 Eros on February 14, 2000. From May through August 2000, the spacecraft traveled in a circular orbit at a radius of 31 miles (50 kilometers) from the center of Eros. It was then boosted to a higher orbit to view Eros from the direction of the sun. In late December 2000, NEAR Shoemaker will descend to a 22-mile (35-kilometer) orbit and operate at that altitude or lower for the remainder of the mission. By February 2001, the NEAR mission will provide the first comprehensive data on the physical geology, composition and geophysics of an asteroid.

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For more information visit the NEAR Web site: http://near.jhuapl.edu.

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