


Mars water: will it be contaminated by Earth cooties¹?

Humans are amazing. We can fly a spaceship to Mars but we can't clean the Mars Rover – or Earth, for that matter?

They found running water on Mars! Amazing! Could there be actual life there? Scientists are still speculating about its origin. Does it rise up from underground ice or delicious sounding "salty aquifers"? Perhaps it even condenses out of the meagre Martian atmosphere? So many interesting sciencey questions.

Mars → 

It is so exciting but they can't even send the Mars Rover over to look at the water because it is not sterile. The Rover could have EARTH GERMS ON IT!

EARTH COOTIES! EWWW²

← Martians
← possibly racist stereotype
← rover

We all know how bad Earth Cooties can be.

If that wasn't enough excitement for outer space water fans, science has also found the largest and oldest mass of water ever detected in the universe.

You won't believe this!

Try me...

SUPER DUPER SPACE O-SCOPE

The water is 1.6 billion light years away in a cloud with 140 trillion times more water than all of Earth's oceans combined. It's around a quasar known as APM08279+5255 which contains a black hole 20 billion times more massive than the sun. The mind boggles.

APM08279+5255 ← Space →

Water → black hole

our sun → our oceans → a lobster

Not to actual scale even a bit

Meanwhile here on earth almost 800 million people have no access to water and nearly 2.5 billion people do not have access to adequate sanitation.






EARTH COOTIES! EWWW


For around \$200 billion we could give every person on earth clean water and sanitation.

Here's a fun fact - the global bottled water industry earns almost \$200 billion a year and is pretty much an environmental disaster.

\$200 billion! I wonder what else we could get for \$200 billion.

Humans are amazing look at what we can do:

- Fly a spaceship to take pictures of water on another planet  ✓
- Put a non-sterile vehicle on Mars  ✓
- Build a telescope that can see right up a quasar's water hole  ✓
- Provide everyone on Earth with clean water*  ✗
- Give the entire world access to adequate sanitation*  ✗

* Choose not to First Dog on the Moon³ 

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- ¹ Cooties: child's term for an imaginary germ or disease that one can catch by touching a person who is disliked or socially avoided
- ² Ewww: exclamation of disgust
- ³ First Dog on the Moon: pseudonym of the award winning Australian political cartoonist Andrew Marlton
- ⁴ Published following news in September 2015 of NASA's discovery of water on Mars and concerns about its contamination by the Mars Rover

- How do the various cartoon techniques help establish both tone and meaning?
