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How to cite:

Bedford, C. C.; Bridges, J. C.; Schwenzer, S. P.; Wiens, R. C.; Rampe, E. B.; Frydenvang, J. and Gasda, P. J. (2017). Assessing Source Region Characteristics from Gale crater Lacustrine mudstone. In: 7th Astrobiology Society of Britain Conference, 13-14 Sep 2017, Milton Keynes, UK.

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Version: Not Set

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## ASSESSING SOURCE REGION CHARACTERISTICS FROM GALE CRATER LACUSTRINE MUDSTONE.

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The NASA *Curiosity* rover has encountered mudstones deposited in a lake environment within the respective Yellowknife Bay<sup>[1]</sup> (YKB) [Bradbury Group] and Murray<sup>[2]</sup> [Mt Sharp Group] formations of Gale crater, Mars. Chemical and mineralogical studies conducted on YKB mudstones show a habitable lake environment at the time of deposition<sup>[1]</sup>. The Chemistry and Camera (ChemCam) instrument suite has acquired major, minor and trace element compositions through Laser-Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy<sup>[3,4]</sup> generating an extensive dataset of ~9500 observation points (where one observation point is the average of 30 – 50 spectral analyses). This study has excluded targets that have not hit *in situ* host rock to assess host rock geochemical variation between stratigraphic groups<sup>[5]</sup>.

Our results show that Murray is enriched in SiO<sub>2</sub>, Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, and K<sub>2</sub>O, but depleted in CaO and MgO compared to YKB mudstone. Despite Murray demonstrating higher Chemical Indices of Alteration than YKB<sup>[6,7]</sup>, Murray's dominant basaltic mineralogy and secondary mineralogy infers that open system alteration has not masked source characteristics<sup>[8]</sup>. Hence, we hypothesise that Murray's geochemical difference is related to a change towards a more silica-rich, tholeiitic provenance from the regional, subalkaline basalt that was initially eroded and deposited at YKB<sup>[9,10]</sup>.

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