The south polar residual cap of carbon dioxide ice changes rapidly on Mars. This image was planned as an almost exact match to the illumination and viewing angles of a previous HiRISE image (ESP_014274_0955) obtained in August 2009. Since that time, the pits have all expanded and merged, so that the patterns observed in 2009 can hardly be recognized. Both images were taken in late southern summer.

The almost 10-year gap allowed for additional loss of frost that might make the surface darker, but there are also year-to-year changes. In particular, there was a near-global dust storm in the summer of 2018 and late southern spring on Mars, and extra deposits of dust would have warmed the surface and promoted even more disappearance of the frost.