
GRIT&ROCK EXPEDITION AWARD

ENABLING FEMALE FIRST ASCENTS

Press Release

GRIT&ROCK FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF THE 2021 GRIT&ROCK FIRST ASCENT GRANTS

BACKGROUND

In September 2016 GRIT&ROCK FOUNDATION, a UK-based charity, established an annual international expedition grant award to promote female first ascents. The aims of the **GRIT&ROCK EXPEDITION AWARD** are to encourage female participation in pioneering alpine ascents and to further the understanding and exploration of the unclimbed peaks. The Award is open to individuals and climbing teams of any nationality with a majority female participation.

Since its inception five years ago, the foundation has contributed grants towards 25 female-led expeditions totalling USD 50,000.



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On February 4, 2021, the jury chaired by Victor Saunders, reviewed applications and made a decision to award the following grants:

PERFORMANCE CATEGORY

- An all-female team of Slovenian alpinists, Sara Jaklič and Marija Jeglič, towards an expedition to attempt a first ascent of Chombu (6362m) in India's Sikkim region (USD 2,000)
- An all-female team of French alpinists, Lise Billion, Fanny Schmutz Tomasi, Maud Vanpouille and Camille Marot, towards an expedition to attempt a first ascent in the Rolwaling Valley of Nepal (USD 2,400)
- A team of Nancy Hansen and Ralf Dujmovits towards an expedition to attempt a first ascent of Biarchedi I peak in Pakistan's Karakorum region (USD 2,000)

APPRENTICESHIP GRANT

- General funding for female participants of the Young Alpinist team (USD 2,800) renewable for two further years
- Funding for the Spring'2021 skills building expedition of the French National Female Alpine Team (ENAF) (USD 2,400)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Sara Jaklič and Marija Jeglič are ex-members of the Young Slovenian Alpine Climbing team, coached by



Marko Prezelj. Both alpinists climb to high standard (rock up to 8a) and have competed successfully in Ice Climbing World Cups.

- Nancy Hansen has been mountain, rock, and ice climbing for over 20 years. She has climbed extensively in Alaska, the continental USA, Canada, Nepal, Pakistan, Bolivia, Peru, Antarctica, and many European countries. She has completed 46 routes from the 1978 cult-classic guidebook *Fifty Classic Climbs of North America*.
- Lise Billion, Fanny Schmutz Tomasi, Maud Vanpouille and Camille Madot are highly experienced climbers with a long list of impressive ascents. Lise and Fanny are qualified French guides, and Maud is an aspirant guide with the French National School of Ski and Alpinism (ENSA). Camille is a physician in emergency medicine with a hospital in Grenoble. Over the years, all four have climbed together, in various combinations, all over the world. Lise Billion became a second ever female recipient of Piolet d'Or in 2016 for her ascent of Cerro Riso Patron.
- Young Alpinist Group (UK) aims to advance the next generation of world-leading UK alpinists, encouraging elite-level performance in alpinism whilst emphasising adventure, ethics, style, exploration and independence. The group will actively seek to improve diversity and gender equality in alpinism. The group recruits a team for a three year cycle and is led by Tom Livingstone, a 2019 Piolet d'Or recipient.
- French National Female Alpine team (ENAF) has been formed in 2007 on the basis of the French



National Young Alpine team (FFME and ENJA). Current cohort of the team is the fifth one since its inception. ENAF has graduated some 35 female alpinists, with more than half going off to become guides or performing at a high level in alpinism. Its objective is to advance female performance in high mountains by providing rigorous training and expedition experience. The team is trained by two French guides, Lise Billion, 2016 Piolet d'Or recipient, and Jonathan Crison.

VICTOR SAUNDERS, the Chair of the jury, said: 'The 2021 awards went to several impressive projects in the Performance category. The jury was really happy with the selection and look forward to the successful outcome of their expeditions. In the Apprenticeship Category we have decided to support two important skills-building initiatives, the French National Female Alpine team (ENAF) and female members of the British Young Alpinist Group. These programs will help ambitious young women develop their Alpine careers, and builds on previous Grit&Rock awards, such as the 2019 grant to the highly successful expedition to Kyrgyzstan by the female team of the Swiss Alpine Club where several members of the team went on to become UIAGM aspirant guides.'

MASHA GORDON, the founder of GRIT&ROCK, said: 'The past two years have proved to be very difficult, if not impossible, for expedition alpinism. In that context, we were pleased to see continued drive of many female alpinists. The jury was inspired by the ambition of presented projects,

where the skill matched the difficulty of routes. We wish all the teams safe climbing.'



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