
GRIT&ROCK EXPEDITION AWARD

ENABLING FEMALE FIRST ASCENTS

Press Release

GRIT&ROCK FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF THE 2023 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 seven years ago, the foundation has contributed grants to over 30 female-led expeditions totalling USD 60,000.



PERFORMANCE CATEGORY

- An experienced all-female rope team of Fay Manners and Michelle Dvorak towards their bigwall climbing expedition to Mythic Cirque in Greenland (USD 1,500).
- A team of Swiss climbers led by Ramona Volken for a human-powered kayak-based expedition to explore new bigwall lines in Mythic Cirque in Greenland (USD 1,500).
- A team of American climbers led by Lindsey Hamm to open new lines on Spanster Brakk and Nasia Brakk in Charakusa Valley in Karakoram region of Pakistan (USD 1,500).

EXPLORATION CATEGORY

- A team of Canadian climbers led by Shira Binner towards their human powered sea-kayaking expedition to explore unclimbed peaks on the Coronation Fjord in northern Canada (USD 1,500). The area has no documented climbing to date.

APPRENTICESHIP CATEGORY

- Having reviewed its long and impressive track record of coaching young female alpinists, the jury decided to renew for the third time a general funding grant to the French National Female Alpine Team (ENAF) (USD 2,000)
- In the same spirit, the jury chose to make a contribution to the funding of female members of the UK's Young Alpinist Group (USD1,000)
- Katarzyna Piatek towards her participation in the Alpine Club expedition to North Sikkim to explore unclimbed peaks (USD1,000)



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Chamonix-based British Fay Manners and American Michelle Dvorak have climbed extensively as a rope team. Their partnership was cemented during their climb of Cassin ridge on Denali in summer of 2022.
- Ramona Volken and Anne Flechsig are past members of the Swiss Alpine Club female team that was a recipient of the GRIT&ROCK Apprenticeship grant in 2018 to fund its expedition to Kyrgyzstan. Ramona has since gone to qualify as an IFMGA guide in Switzerland. Ramona and Anne have climbed extensively together in Kyrgyzstan, Patagonia and the Alps. They are joined on this expedition by Timon Kaufmann.
- Lindsey Hamm, Stephs Williams, Holly Mackin and Thomas Bukowski are American apprentice alpine and rock guides with significant experience climbing around the world.
- Canadian team of Shira Binner, Amanda Bischke, James Klemmensen and Noah Besen, having met in Squamish, have climbed together extensively across North America. Their expedition is focused on exploring a fragile corner of the world touched by climate change and their choice of access - sea kayaking - seems particularly apt given rapidly receding Coronation glacier.
- French National Female Alpine team (ENAF) has been formed in 2007 on the basis of the French National



Young Alpine team (FFME and ENJA). Next cohort of the team is the sixth 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.

- British Young Alpinist Group has been set up to advance development of the next generation of UK alpine climbers.
- Katarzyna Piatek is a British-based outdoor instructor and an Alpine Club member.

The 2023 jury, said: 'Our nominations this year are a testament to the spirit of times: sobriety, realism and sustainability. We picked the teams who have skills to execute on their plans, traveling on modest budgets, some human powered, and climbing in good alpine style.'

MASHA GORDON, the founder of GRIT&ROCK, said: 'Once again we are happy to champion and enable development of female alpine talent. Much has changed in the past 7 years since we launched our expedition grant pool. Women are finally getting more media recognition and sponsorship spotlight. Still a lot remains to be done in the field of development of confidence and skills. That is why we are renewing our general grant funding to the formidable French National Female Alpine team (ENAF) that has done so much over the years to raise attainment of female alpinism to the next level and making a contribution to the British Young Alpinist Group.'

