



AAC Publications

Grinnell Glacier Area, New Routes

Canada, Nunavut, Baffin Island

Base camp for the 2023 expedition: The formation climbed by Faffin in Baffin is on the right, and Angijjuqqaq is in back. Photo: Ky Hart Collection.

One hundred and fifty kilometers southeast of Iqaluit is the broad ice cap of the Grinnell Glacier and the Everett Mountains, rising more than 600m from the ocean. The tallest peak is Angijjuqqaq, meaning “where the leader sits.” [Editor's Note: Various maps give different elevations and even locations for Angijjuqqaq (which is frequently labeled President's Seat); published elevations range from ca 680m to approximately 860m.] The coastal range is rich in sea life, offering spectacular views of whales, seals, polar bears, and birds.

In July, after many days of canceled flights ended our hopes of heading north to Auyuittuq National Park, Erik Boomer, Sarah McNair-Landry, and I quickly shifted plans to a new area. Sarah and Erik had scouted the mountains around the Grinnell Glacier previously by boat, and after seeing a couple of photos, I was excited to explore.

Sarah and Erik convinced a friend to carry us to a cove near the north end of the glacier in his small boat. After two days, he waved goodbye, leaving us and our gear on shore. We set up camp (62.66222, -66.81083) by a creek with a view of the ice cap, only a couple kilometers from a polar bear we'd spotted on our way in.

It was early afternoon, but after establishing camp, we were so excited by the cirque of rocks surrounding us that we started questing up the southwest face of the closest formation (62.66610, -66.80656), just to the north of camp. We were happy to find the rock was more than acceptable. Our first route involved perfect hand cracks and roofs, with a memorable pillar perch. We reached the summit in time to watch the sun set over Frobisher Bay, a beluga whale swim by, and a bear stroll along the coastline. Due to our late start, we had a short shiver bivy on top, so we called the route Power Nap (440m, 5.10).

We next climbed the northeast face of a formation about 40 minutes' hike south from camp (62.64850, -66.80490). Faffin in Baffin (335m, 5.10) had 14 pitches of fun climbing, gradually getting harder as we made our way up and away from a massive rock scar.

Finally, Erik and I sought out a route on the gorgeous north face of Angijjuqqaq, our steepest line. We climbed 12 pitches of 5.10 to 5.11 cracks to the ridge and then continued to the summit. We decided to name this route Polar Frenzy (300m, 5.11 C2, 62.64712, -66.78690), after a scary incident involving a polar bear the day before.

— Ky Hart, USA

Editor's Note: This report was updated after publication of AAJ 2024 with additional information about Angijjuqqaq.

Images



Climbing on Power Nap.



Climbing on Power Nap.



The power nap on top of Power Nap, Grinnell Glacier Area, Baffin.



Ky Hart soaking up the ambience from Faffin in Baffin. The team's base camp was near the mouth of the valley at right.

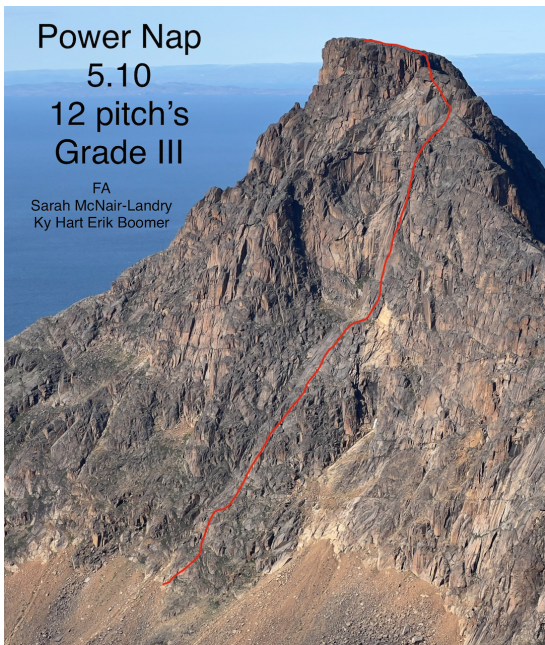


Photo-topo for Power Nap, near the Grinnell Glacier, Baffin Island.

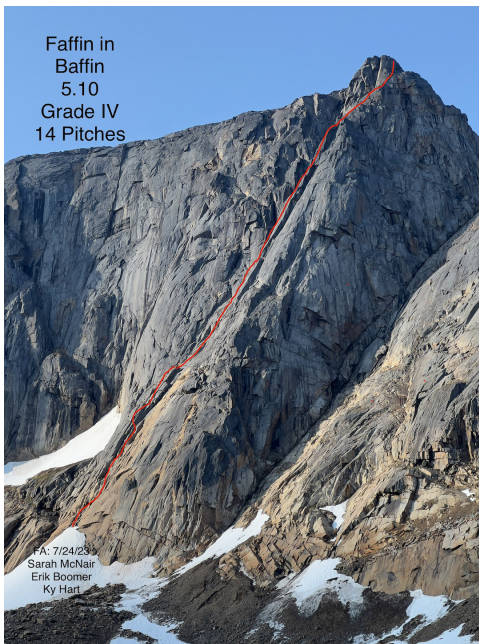


Photo-topo for Faffin in Baffin, near the Grinnell Glacier, Baffin Island.



Photo-topo for Polar Frenzy on Angijjuqqaq. The summit is off picture to the left.



Map of the 2023 base camp and climb locations near the Grinnell Glacier, Baffin Island. The view is looking to the south. The summit of Angijjuqqaq is to the left (east) of Polar Frenzy.



Base camp for the 2023 expedition: The formation climbed by Faffin in Baffin is on the right, and Angijjuqqaq is in back.

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