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Allagaateqarfialu
The Greenland National
Museum & Archives

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[ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY PAAKITSOQ 2010]

Report on archaeological survey conducted along transmission line between Ilulissat and Paakitsoq hydropower plant site and an inspection of storage site at Sarfaq.

Executive summary

The archaeological survey conducted by the Nunatta Katersugaasivia Allagaateqarfialu/Greenland National Museum (NKA) along the transmission line from the Paakitsoq hydropower plant site to Ilulissat revealed no conflicts between construction work and monuments protected by law. This work can therefore continue without further contact between the developer and the NKA, unless of course anything previously unnoticed comes to surface, in which case the developer is legally obligated to recommence consultations with the NKA.

Regarding the storage area at Sarfaq the NKA observed that the developer had already taken the area in question into use before having obtained the relevant permissions. Unfortunately the archaeological record shows that the area which has now been levelled and is occupied by buildings and heavy equipment used to be an Inuit summer settlement protected by law. Therefore this is now a case pending with the relevant authorities.

Introduction

In the spring of 2010 construction of a hydropower transmission line between Ilulissat and Paakitsoq was initiated. The planned 60 kV transmission line consists of 138 masts and an archaeological survey is required by law to ensure that protected monuments on this stretch of land are not damaged before the masts are erected. (*cf. Eqqissimatitsisarneq aamma allatigut kulturikkut eriagisassanik kulturikkut kingornussatut illersuineq pillugu Inatsisartut Inatsisaat nr. 11, 19. maj 2010-meersoq/Inatsisartutlov nr. 11 af 19. maj 2010 om fredning og anden kulturarvsbeskyttelse af kulturminde*). According to the aforementioned legislation this survey is the responsibility of the NKA. The developer ÍSTAK also needed a heavy equipment storage area near the entrance of the Paakitsoq fiord. Consequently the NKA inspected an area just north of Sarfaq which at that time had already been taken into use by ÍSTAK. The first part of the survey (masts 138-121) was completed in May 2010 by curator Mikkel Myrup with the participation of Kristine Eisner, Alfred Olsvig and John Eisner (All affiliated with Ilulissat Museum). The remaining survey (masts 120-1 and the Sarfaq inspection) was conducted by archaeologist Christian Koch Madsen (The National Museum of Denmark) and curator Mikkel Myrup (NKA & ed) in the last half of June 2010.



Map 1. This map made by ÍSTAK shows the transmission line and the position of the masts. A list of mast coordinates were also handed out to the NKA.

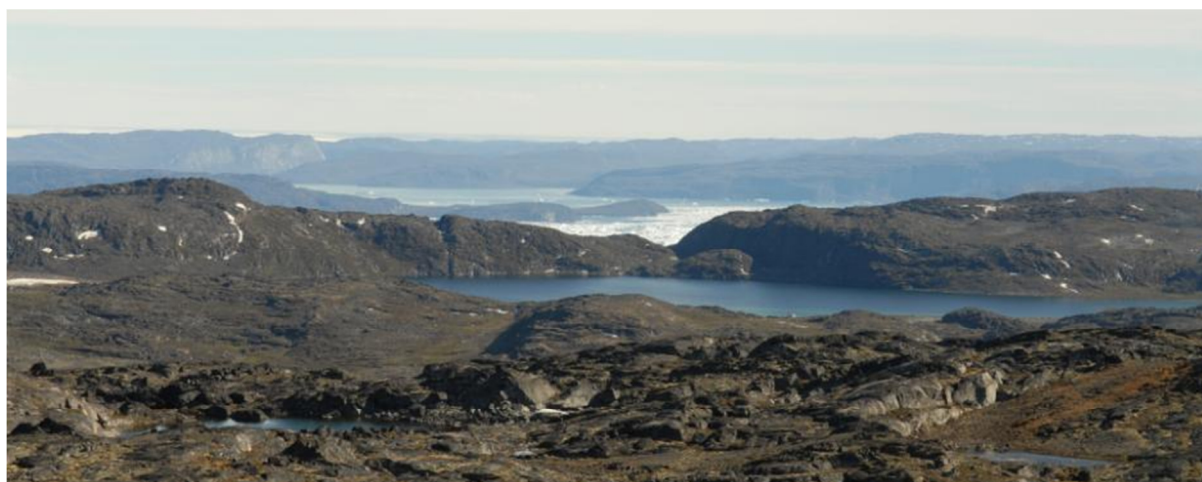
Paakitsup Nunaa land use

The cultural history of Greenland is well represented in the Qeqertarsuup Tunua (Disko Bay) region. The archaeological record has established that the region has been populated since man set foot in Greenland for the first time. The Inuit cultures of prehistorical and historical times in West Greenland are comprised by Saqqaq (2500-900 cal B.C.), Dorset (800 cal B.C.-1 cal A.D.) and Thule (1300 cal A.D.-Historical times) (Jensen 2006). These cultures are richly represented on many sites in this region, but the most famous and well known settlements with remains of all of the abovementioned cultures are Sermermiut and Qajaa, situated on the shores of Kangia (Ilulissat icefiord).

Throughout prehistorical and historical times the inland of the central and south west coasts of Greenland have been used for hunting caribou (*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*). This resource constituted an important part of the diet in former times. Small dispersed and more or less isolated caribou populations also occur on the Nuussuaq peninsula north of Qeqertarsuup Tunua, the southern part of Qimusseriarsuaq (Melville Bay) on the Tuttulissuaq peninsula and in the Avanersuaq (Thule) region and the hunting of these northerly populations is historically and archaeologically recorded.

With caribou hunting taking place south as well as north of Qeqertarsuup Tunua this summer's hike across Paakitsup Nunaa offered the opportunity to attempt establishing whether or not this type of prehistorical and/or historical hunting took place in this particular area. Structures linked to former inland caribou hunting are for instance camp sites with tent rings, hunter's beds, caches, fire places, single stone route markers, rock shelters, shooting blinds. If drive hunting took place, rows of cairns constituting a drive hunting system would have been evidence of that.

The 2010 survey revealed none of these structures along the transmission line routing. The only man-made structures encountered on the survey were two stone markers on two different locations on the dog sledge routes crossing Paakitsup Nunaa from the Sikuiuitsoq fiord. The absence of physical remains indicating Paakitsup Nunaa land use in the form of caribou hunting in any extent is thus concurrent with the absence of such information in the written sources.



View from Paakitsup Nunaa across Kangia towards Tasiusaq and Qajaa.

Sarfaq inspection

ÍSTAK had prior to the commencement of the transmission line survey expressed that it was in the process of applying for the necessary permits to establish a storage area and a road leading to a quay on a location near Sarfaq which is the rather shallow entry into the Paakitsoq fiord. Therefore the NKA was asked if it would undertake the task of inspecting the areas in question, so that ÍSTAK could continue this process. Upon arrival the NKA found that the storage area had already been established and most of the road stretch constructed. No traces of summer settlement 69V2-00I-023 were found. Additional protected monuments in this area were not observed.



This map illustrates where the road is constructed and the location of the storage area on June 26th 2010. As can be seen in conflict with the summer settlement site 69V2-00I-023.



This photo shows the ÍSTAK storage area and where 69V2-00I-023 used to be.

Reference

Jensen, J. F. 2006. The Stone Age of Qeqertarsuup Tunua (Disko Bugt). A regional analysis of the Saqqaq and Dorset cultures of Central West Greenland. - *Meddelelser om Grønland, Man & Society* 32. Copenhagen, The Commission for Scientific Research in Greenland, 2006.