



Paleoecology and geoarchaeology of Cape Smith, Nunavik, Canada

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Cape Smith is an island near Akulivik, located on the northeastern coast of Hudson Bay (Canada). The Kangiakallak site (JeGn-2) is a large and mixed Palaeoeskimo and Thule/Inuit archaeological site located in a valley in the northeastern part of Cape Smith. The Dorset occupants built shallow semi-subterranean houses here on a plateau at the top of the valley. Later, the Thule/Inuit inhabitants constructed much deeper semi-subterranean sod houses (qarmait) on the edge of the beach ridges. The evidence shows that study region was a significant site for winter camps, likely because of its proximity to the partial polynya situated between the island and the mainland. The Kangiakallak site was among the first sites excavated by southern scientists in the 1940's and 1950's (Manning 1951)

Our multidisciplinary research team conducted from 2011 excavations to answer some of the questions posed by the local Akulivik residents. The success of this project is largely due to community involvement and it shows the value of community-based research. The combination of paleoecological, paleogeographical and geoarchaeology data with archaeological and historical data made it possible to document the evolution of paleoenvironments and the habitability of the northeastern of Cape Smith, as well as the interactions between humans (Dorset, Thule/Inuit) and the environment in the context of climate change. In this presentation, we will provide a summary of the data from this interdisciplinary research.