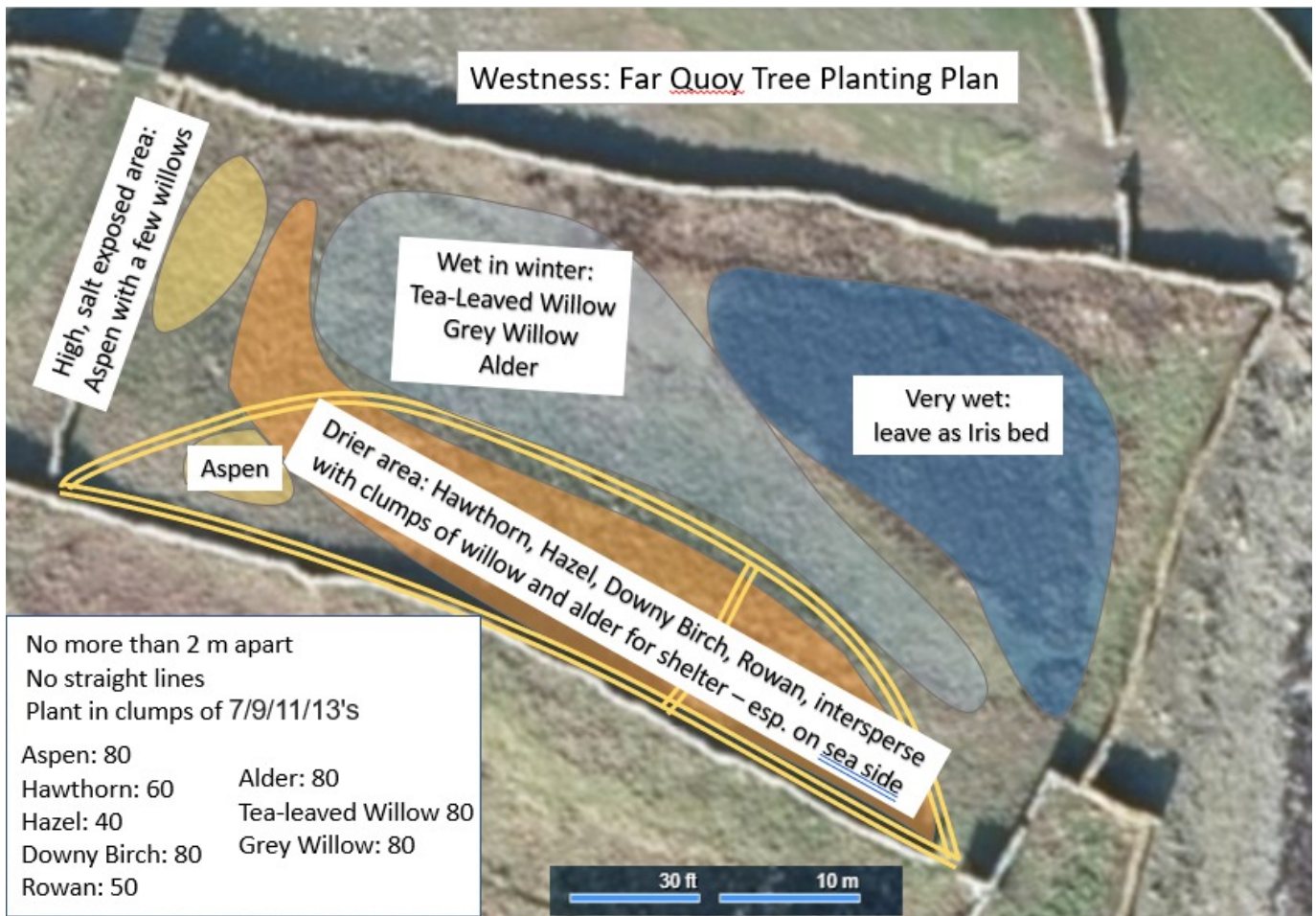


## Westness Woods

By Alexandra Wright, Breckan

This March has been a busy one for us as we have planted 550 trees in the Far Quoy. This specific location, situated by the Trinley pund and forming a charming little valley, was carefully chosen (upon consultation with the RSBP and the Orkney Woodland Project) due to its ability to attract migratory birds, without affecting the wader breeding grounds at the Mire.



We contributed 40% of the cost while the Woodland Trust, MoreWoods grant, paid the remaining 60%. The total amount was just over £1000, but the majority of the expenses were associated with the tree guards rather than the trees themselves. One of the key advantages of this grant was that we received invaluable advice and guidance from the Orkney Woodland Project Officer, Jane Rawle, who selected appropriate native trees for our region. We planted trees grown in the north of Scotland and Orkney, ensuring that their provenance is correct for our area. These trees are also historically found in our region, which includes the north of Scotland.



The trees are: Aspen, Downy Birch, Hawthorn, Common Alder, Hazel, Rowan, Tea Leaved Willow, and Grey Willow.

We were fortunate to receive an abundance of help with the planting process, starting with ten adorable, squeaky piglets from Milldam. Their little snouts proved invaluable, ploughing through the tufted grass that would have otherwise made digging with a spade an arduous task.



Additionally, we could not have completed the planting without the generous assistance of our fellow islanders. It was truly heart-warming to work together and hopefully create a flourishing woodland in the future.

My daughter Amanda came over from Denmark especially for the planting.



*My oldest daughter, Amanda preparing the planting hole by adding a mycelium mix.*

While I am enthusiastic about this tree planting project, I cannot help but feel it is somewhat experimental. I half expect the trees to blow away in the strong Orkney winds! It is still too early to determine the success of the planting, but I have noticed some trees coming into leaf. Fingers crossed for our little trees, as we eagerly await their growth and development.



*Sian and Benji putting in the wooden stakes to support the tree guards*



*Malcolm and June with mesh tree guards - keeping pesky rabbits at bay while still promoting ample airflow and sunlight.*

*Benji and Olly - showing the bar we used to make the holes and you can see the cable ties fastening the wooden stakes to the tree guards*



*Anne and Benji planting the last tree - a willow. The Willows are cuttings rather than rooted plants like the rest of the trees*