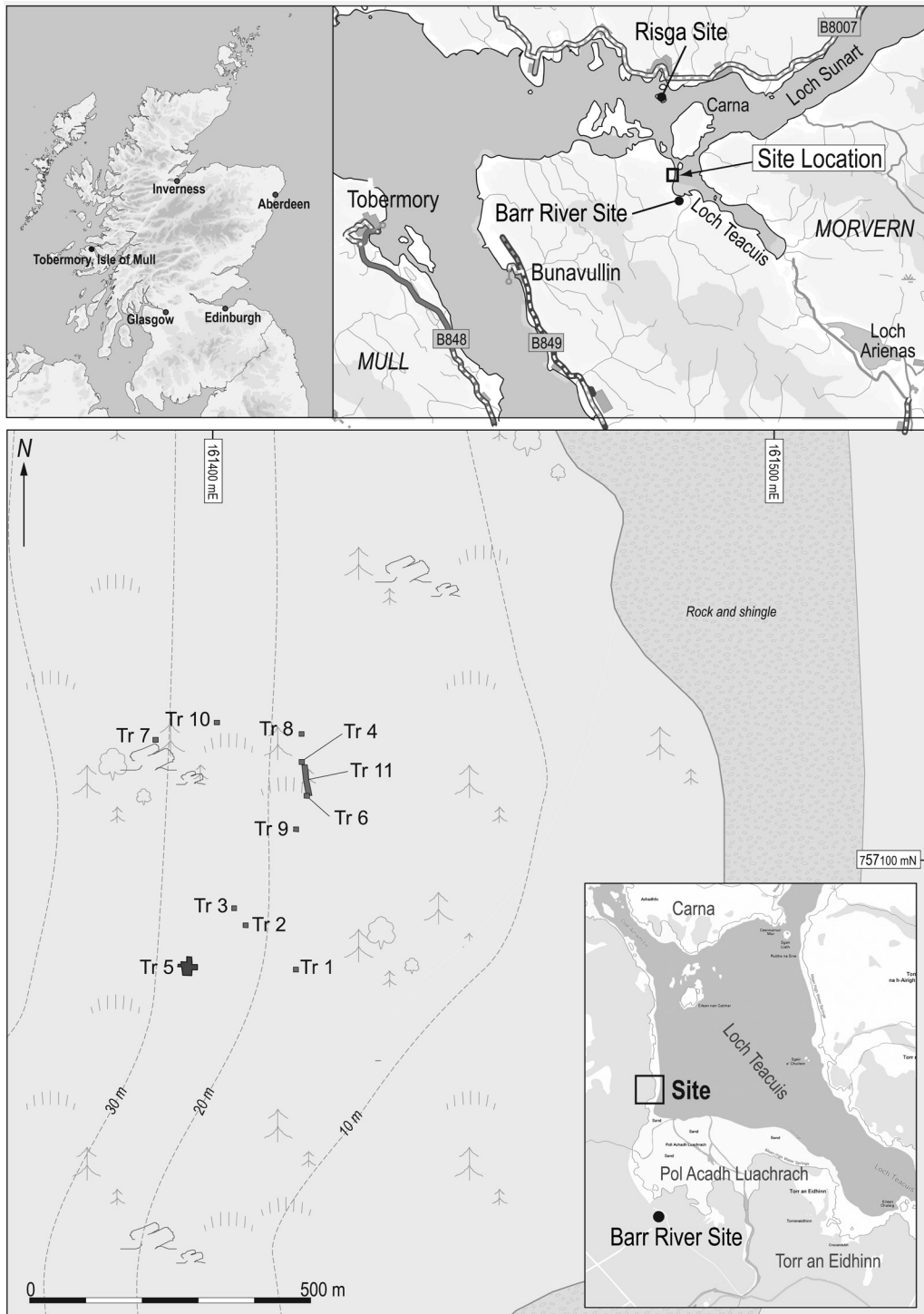


3. SITE LOCATION AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

During the machine excavation for broadleaf tree planting in May 2010, Pete Madden (FCS) collected several lithic artefacts from a discrete area on a coastal terrace overlooking Loch Teacuis (Illus 1). Visual inspection of the planting mounds by FCS

archaeologist Matt Ritchie produced further lithics and revealed that charcoal and ash-rich sediments had also been dug through during creation of the planting mounds, which suggested the potential for in situ preservation. Assessment of the collections identified a dominant Mesolithic component as well as later prehistoric elements indicated by the initial find of a barbed and tanged arrowhead (Finlay



Illus 1 Site location

2010). Four microliths picked up by Steven Birch in August that year are also discussed below.

Located in Morvern, Lochaber District in Highland Region, the North Barr River site (NGR: NM 61430 57082) is situated on the east-facing slopes of Tom nan Eildean, overlooking and to the west of the estuary of Barr River and Loch Teacuis (Illus 1). The site is located at about 10m OD on a distinctive terrace, measuring up to *c* 70m north to south by *c* 25m east to west. Its western extent is defined by a steep slope representing a former shoreline. The geology across most of the site is Late Glacial raised beach deposits of gravel sands and silts and clays, with further deposits of marine beach deposits on the eastern fringe. The solid geology consists of granofelsic psammite belonging to the Morar Group with a microdiorite and lamprophyre dyke and microgabbro and basalt

dyke in proximity (British Geological Survey 1977).

Several Mesolithic sites are known in the vicinity: the island of Risga, well known for its shell midden, is visible to the north (Lacaille 1954; Pollard 1996; Pollard 2000; NMRS no.: NM65NW 22) and a scatter site at Barr River, excavated by the late John Mercer in 1972, offers the closest parallels (Mercer 1979; NMRS no.: NM65NW 5). There are a few other Mesolithic scatters from Morvern, such as Acharn Farm (Thornber 1974a; Rich-Gray 1975; NMRS no.: NM65SE 6). Later prehistoric activity is known in the wider region, with a barbed and tanged arrowhead having been discovered *c* 2.5km to the south and other forms of Bronze Age activity are attested by several burial cairns (for example, Ritchie & Thornber 1975; Ritchie & Thornber 1988; NMRS no.: NM64NW 5).