

5. Ravine.

Before entering the ravine the stream sweeps around the edge of the Palm Lawn. Although the banks are not steep here there are two sources of potential problems. One is the fact that in this general area hundreds of square metres of planted borders have been covered in recent times with a mulch of woodchips, some of which may float into the stream as the result of torrential rainfall. The other is that the palm theme has been greatly strengthened recently by increasing the range of palms growing there, partly explaining the rapid jump in area covered with woodchip mulch. As explained in more detail elsewhere, palm fronds are particularly troublesome when caught in a screen.

Despite being deep, narrow and tortuous, to my knowledge there is no record of this ravine ever having been the scene of a blockage. Growing on its very steep sides is a grove of black mamaku treeferns, several of them long dead with trunks still standing and bulky buttresses slowly decaying. On the brink and surrounds is a thriving group of kingferns.

In a worst-case scenario, this ravine could be temporarily blocked by subsidence of a treefern buttress, stolen cycle abandoned by a rural commuter or simply a joy-rider, a vandalised park rubbish bin, an unfortunate tangle of timber and fronds or a multitude of other objects which over the course of time will find their way into the watercourse. The detained water could build up to submerge the Palm Lawn and lower parts of the Playground, scavenging their rich deposits of bark and woodchip. Under increased hydraulic loading the blockage could yield, sending a raging torrent straight at the waterwheel! This could be disastrous because there is a very strong likelihood that the wheel would disintegrate under the massive impact and loading, sending a flotilla of boards and planks straight at the screen and culvert.

This stimulated
action. In
a few days
I was invited
to an on-site
meeting to
discuss action
to be taken.