

TRAIN MYSTERY

Engineer hopeful find is missing train engine

BY TRACY CARR
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Searchers may have found the resting place of a 19th century locomotive, and solved a 104-year-old mystery in the Grand Falls area.

Civil engineer Eric Ouellette said that he and his crew found a long mound this week between two piers of the bridge that collapsed almost 100 years ago, causing the front part of a Canadian Pacific train to fall into the St. John River.

He said that mound may just be the locomotive engine of the train.

"It's about the same length and same width as the train would be," he

said.

"Everything's right, but there are no distinguishing features visible that would tell us for sure that this is the locomotive."

The discovery was both heartening and discouraging for Mr. Ouellette, who has been searching for the wreckage for a full year as of Thursday.

"It's something, but it's nothing conclusive," he said of the find. "I can't jump up and down about it just yet."

After extensive research into the crash and a number of unsuccessful dives into the river in search of the engine, Mr. Ouellette arranged for a

fellow engineer to bring underwater surveying equipment onto the frozen river to explore the murky water at the reported accident site.

Mr. Ouellette said he's known all along the locomotive could be buried in sand and silt from the river. The size and shape of the mound, in addition to reports from divers three years ago that they saw the wreckage between the piers, causes Mr. Ouellette to believe this could be the real deal.

In addition, previous magnetometer readings show a large amount of metal in the exact location of where the crew found the mound.

"We covered the whole area, and

there was nothing else that stands out like this does," he said. "All the information fits: it might be it, and it might not. It's like a mystery that won't go away."

But he's not about to give up the search now. He said he plans to have divers go down again this summer to explore the mound and see if they can discover what lies beneath it.

"I'm not going to let it go now," he said.

"It's been a year, and we've made a lot of progress. I'm hopeful we'll find it."

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