

Train hunt will resume on Saturday

BY SHAWN BERRY
Telegraph-Journal

Searchers looking for a train that plunged into the St. John River in 1900 had nature working against them over the weekend but they're hoping a special anniversary will give them the break they've been waiting for this Saturday.

Eric Ouellette, the civil engineer spearheading efforts to find the locomotive at the bottom of the river, is hoping the third time will be a charm, especially since this Saturday marks the 103rd anniversary of the railroad accident in Grand Falls.

Now he's looking for more divers willing to help look for the steam engine.

The Canadian Pacific Railways train fell into the St. John River on June 21, 1900 as a bridge over the river collapsed. Mr. Ouellette believes the engine was never recovered and remains submerged.

The rain and poor visibility in the river made the search efforts over the weekend very difficult, he said in a posting on his Web site late Saturday. One diver, he reported, "had to feel the bottom with his hands to search. What is kind of funny is that he found the pier underwater by banging his head into a log sticking out of it."

The divers managed to find some metal debris underwater, but no train.

"We put in a good effort (Saturday) but Mother Nature did not. The dive still took place, but the overcast skies made visibility even worse than last time."

He's hoping that with more divers at the river this coming Saturday, chances of finding the engine will be improved. He also plans to improve on marker buoys put out during the last two searches in the river.

While the train crash has remained in the local consciousness, the story of what happened to the locomotive was never passed on. Some, like Mr. Ouellette, believe it remains in the river.

If the locomotive can be located, he plans to turn his efforts toward recovering it

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