

Divers take to river Saturday to find locomotive

BY SHAWN BERRY
Telegraph-Journal

A Grand Falls man looking for a locomotive that plunged into the St. John River 103 years ago Saturday plans to pinpoint the location of the crash and begin a fundraising drive for salvage efforts now that he has received word that a group of Moncton divers spotted the engine three years ago.

The Canadian Pacific Railway train went into the river June 21, 1900, after a portion of the bridge it was travelling on collapsed. Eric Ouellette, a local civil engineer who became intrigued by the story, began his search for Locomotive 508 last year.

A Moncton diver told Mr. Ouellette that a group he knows of found the train in the river back in September 2000.

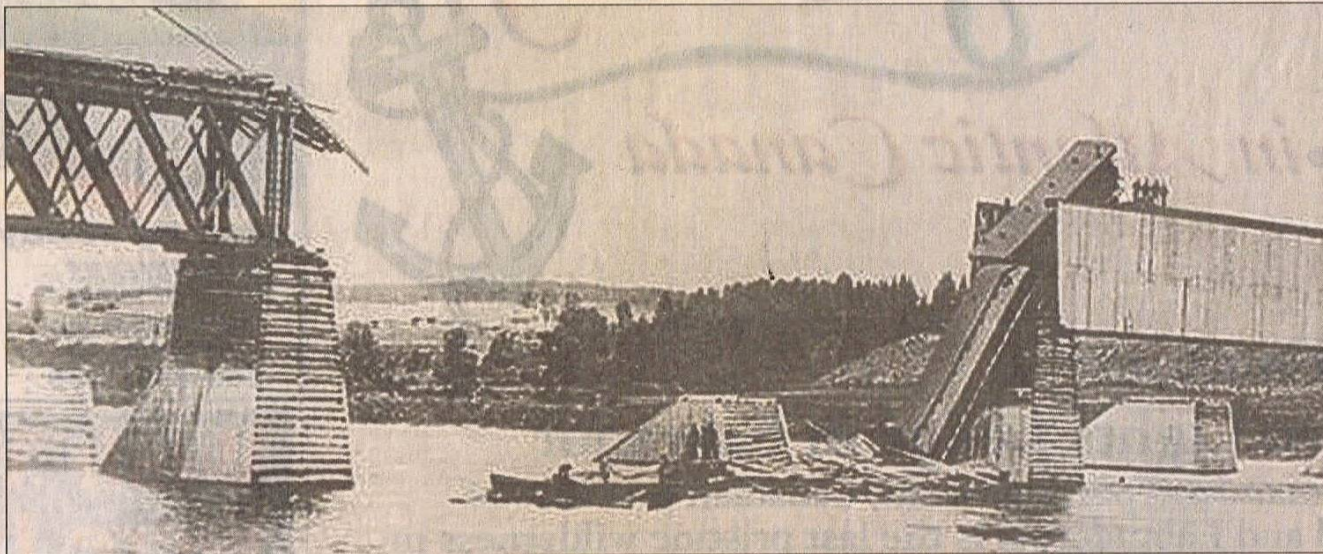
With the revelation that the engine is somewhere in the river, Mr. Ouellette plans to take to the river with six divers on Saturday to locate it.

"It's even more adrenaline-rushing now that we know it's there. Saturday we know we aren't wasting our time and we're going to find it.

"We know exactly where it is according to the divers' description of where it fell. It never moved, it just fell to the bottom, fell on its side and stayed there."

Evidence of the crash was located during two previous searches with divers. Inclement weather last weekend made it impossible for the divers to see anything in the river.

Now that the engine has



A Canadian Pacific Railway train sank in the St. John River June 21, 1900.

been found, Mr. Ouellette plans to move on to the salvage effort.

He wants to form a committee and obtain the necessary environmental permits, technical advice and materials to preserve the locomotive and keep it from corroding when it is pulled from the river.

He was determined to find the locomotive's location this summer because a 250-ton barge capable of recovering the engine is working on a nearby bridge carrying automobile traffic over the St. John.

Mr. Ouellette has said he hopes a recovery effort is undertaken and that the engine will be put on display in 2004.

While he was always certain the train could not have been recovered from the steep banks

along the river, Canadian Pacific Railway documents showed that Locomotive 508 remained in use until 1910.

"Now I'm kind of intrigued," Mr. Ouellette said. "I'm curious now to see what happened there. Is it the 508, is it the 525?"

The evidence says there is definitely something large and metallic at the bottom of the river in the area Mr. Ouellette has been searching.

"There are definitely some magnetic anomalies there," said University of New Brunswick geology professor Karl Butler, who reviewed the data from a magnetometer scan conducted on the river two weeks ago.

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RODENT: Skinny pigs more cuddly

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Mr. Muzzerall said.

"They do tend to be a little more cuddly than the normal guinea pig because they like body heat. They're cold all the time so they like to snuggle in. They're kind of fun, especially when you can say, 'hey, look, I've got a house hippo.'"

Depending on your imagination, the skinny pigs do resemble tiny hippos or even a miniature horse. Or bald rodents.

Despite their exotic look, skinny pigs are easy to care for and require regular feeding, clean water and a clean cage. They're also easy to tame, Mr. Muzzerall said.

He urges potential buyers to ask pet store workers about skinny pigs or to read up on them.

"If you have questions about anything, don't be afraid to ask," Mr. Muzzerall said.

Pets Unlimited has information on how to care for guinea pigs, and skinny pigs. There is also some information on the Internet, including online clubs for hairless guinea pig owners and breeders.

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Shawn Berry/Telegraph-Journal

Civil engineer Eric Ouellette will be on the St. John River today hoping to solve the mystery of Locomotive No. 508, thought to be sitting at the bottom of the river. It sank in 1900.



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