

SNC prepares to celebrate sapphire anniversary



Photo Gregg Chamberlain
Geocoins have been available from the South Nation Conservation Authority (SNC) for several years now. They are proving popular souvenir items for the general tourist and for geocachers who visit the watershed region to track down the burial sites for a selected few of the coins.

Finch – Silver and gold mark 25- and 50-year landmarks. Anything past 60 means getting into the jewellery.

Which is why the South Nation Conservation Authority (SNC) could consider a blue sapphire as the official colour theme for its 65th anniversary this year, though it may be a modest celebration as Chairman Lawrence Levere noted that the regional conservation agency is having to practise restraint with its program and project budgeting like all other government agencies at every level.

"We don't want to have to dip into our reserves," Levere said during an interview following Thursday's annual general meeting. "We'll do stuff that won't cost a lot. Now is the time to be lean and mean, and not be extravagant."

But being careful about money does not mean that the SNC cannot make something special out of its 65th year of existence as the oldest and most active conservation group in the entire South Nation River watershed region. Staff and members of the SNC communications committee are working on several ideas to commemorate the occasion. They include assembling a 65th anniversary book for release in the fall, featuring a collection of personal anecdotes from residents about their most memorable experiences and favourite things about the South Nation River, its tributaries, habitats, wildlife, and place in the natural heritage of neighbouring communities.

"We have certainly increased our presence in the community," Levere said.

Meanwhile the 2012 SNC geocoin is struck and ready for both souvenir sales to tourists and also limited distribution at various "treasure burial" sites in the watershed as part of the SNC's participation in geocaching, a growing popular hobby among hikers, amateur treasure hunters, and other eco-tourists. Levere noted that SNC's reputation is growing in the global geocaching community and the region has become a favourite travel destination for geocachers south of the border from neighbouring New York and the New England states.