



Turtle info session by paddle

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The Chesterville Kayak Club and a *The Chesterville Record* editor joined with South Nation Conservation's Species at Risk Technician Karen Paquette (left side of the banner) for an informational paddle up the river to check on turtle traps, set up as part of an ongoing rare turtle study, now completing its sixth year. Members of the reptilian species considered at risk in the river include the Spotted Turtle, Stinkpot or Musk Turtle, Blanding's Turtle, the Northern Map Turtle and, of course, the Snapping Turtle. (The Painted turtle isn't endangered and isn't part of the program.) No turtles turned up in the two catch-and-release hoop traps examined by the group that evening, and Paquette said she hoped to run other educational sessions with groups of interested kayakers and canoers next year. Aimed at monitoring turtle locations, providing and protecting nesting sites, enhancing habitat, and redirecting turtles away from road surfaces and through culverts, SNC's related turtle protection project relies on yearly funding of \$25,000 from the province and about \$60,000 from the federal government. Provincial funding has been secured for the 2011-12 Rare Turtle study to date. If complete funding is not available, SNC hopes to continue with the protection program; however it may need to be scaled back accordingly.

Baker photo