

## Message from the SIOSA President

Hello All!



Friday, November 15, 2013, what a beautiful fall day. Five of us meet at a 10 acre CRP plot to burn. Rich talks us through the fire plan and calls in the burn. We break into two groups, one heading down the west side, and one down the east. The firebreaks are

mowed but need to be blown clean, so

with leaf blower on back I head off to do that. The other four start the burn in the northwest corner as the wind is blowing from the southeast. After about two hours, and with a few calls on the radios, the two teams meet in the southwest corner. The site is surrounded with black line and for the most part completely burned. Only a few branches are still ablaze under the one lone oak in the middle of the site. Burn one done.

We head to the Decatur County Conservation shop to get additional equipment and fuel for both machines and men. At 11:30 we head to Slip Bluff Park. The equipment is unloaded, UTV's and backpack sprayers take on water, and drip torches are filled. A few more folks arrive to help and watch. Rich again goes over the burn plan. One change here is the wind. The plan was written expecting a northwest wind, but it is still blowing out of the southeast. Easy fix, we just adjust the starting point and head out to point "B" on the map. Once there we again break into two teams, one heading towards point "C" with their drip torch the other heading to point "A" with theirs. With the UTV's it is easy to patrol

the fire lines and watch for any fire where it doesn't belong. The team on the east side stays in contact via radio with the other team. They get to their destination, point "D", ahead of the west side team. Most stay and continue to patrol the fire line, while a couple head over to help the west team. They are working the edge of a large prairie and the wind is blowing some embers into another prairie area, not slated for burning. All goes well and no fire ends up where it doesn't belong. Once past the prairie, the west team continues along the road though a forested area and ties into the pond. It takes about three hours but the 55 acres is now ringed in black. Gregg and Travis head to the interior and start some additional fires to keep things going. At 4:30 we head back to the shelter, pack up the equipment, and say thank you to all that helped. Burn two done.

That's how it works. You should see some constants in both burns. Talk through the burn plan, work in teams, stay in contact via radio, and start the burning into the wind. We burned about 65 acres, met some new folks, got some additional training on burning, and we helped the land. That is what SIOSA is all about.

As we move into 2014 funds to do new projects are going to be limited. We will be doing what we can in new places, as well as





Photo courtesy of Bill Brown

continuing to manage old ones. Please get involved however you can, whether it be time or money, we can use them both.

You can find out about additional burns or post a burn you are having at [prescribedburning.com](http://prescribedburning.com). Or visit us at [siosa.org](http://siosa.org). Please come join us for a great day like we had on Friday.

See you in the black..  
Casey

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## ARTICLE

The following is an excerpt of an article that I thought would be an interesting read for our newsletter recipients. A nice, short story about searching for more than just morels.

- Jen Abraham-White, SIOSA admin. assistant

### Kana

A father grasps at the nature of wonder  
BY CHRIS DOMBROWSKI

TO REACH THE HONEY HOLE I have to cross a channel of knee-high, silt-stained river with twenty-month-old Luka, my mushroom-picking partner, on my

shoulders. I wade in: the soles of my sandals clambering for purchase on the moss-covered cobbles, the cold flow kiting my pant legs, Luka's knees tightening around my neck. Ashore, cuffs draining, I tell the boy, "We'll beeline it for the old burn" where I sense the freshest morels are poking out in droves from the undergrowth. But ten yards into our beeline, I'm crouching to pluck a three-inch-tall yellow morel from a patch of Solomon's seal, then two, thimble-sized, from the dappled shade of a ratty cottonwood.

A red-shafted flicker's call slits the quiet of the wet May woods. "Wha's that?" Luka asks.

"That's a flicker," I say, mimicking its call with a whistle.

"Flicka," he says, then tests the air with his own scream-like rendition. The bird responds to neither.

Shifting, squirming on his perch, the boy wants down. I let him off, my shoulder muscles uncrimping—then spot a small gathering of the honeycombed, conical caps on a south-facing ditch bank, a little board meeting of morels. "Look, Bud—mushrooms!" I say, nearly diving to slice my stationary quarry off at the stem. "And how about this one?" I'm marveling at a hand-tall specimen. None too impressed, Luka stares into the budding branches, their wide grasp of sky.

IT'S A STRANGE CREATURE whose pulse quickens at the sight of a fungus. Hunched and creeping over the old overgrown road, I must look strange indeed to my son who seems content to watch sunlight-loosened beads of dew slide down blades of grass. I must look stranger yet to the eyes of the woods—the deer we don't see but that certainly see us,

the pair of red-tails casting their shadows intermittently alongside ours: a two-legged with a smaller two-legged by his side, bowing now and then to gather something from the leaf-rot.

For a week now the weather—hot spell after hard rains—has had me thinking mushrooms, and almost daily I've been bringing Luka into the woods in search of the mother lode we haven't quite found yet. To date we've picked a few baseball caps full. Mostly I pinch off the hollow stems and place the moist morels where the boy can find them, so that I can hear him say "and a mushroom!" but he's also found a few on his own, surprising me with his keen eye.

We're not looking for the Aunt-Edna-lode, though; we're searching for the gnome's stash, the Shangri-La from which we can fill a double-layered paper grocery sack as quick as we can pick. I've gotten gluttonous, I know, but I can taste the sliced caps cooked down in butter, salt, and pepper and piled atop a jack-cheese omelet. I'm thinking: mushroom reduction over elk backstrap. I'm thinking: stuff the trophy 'shrooms with poached Oregon salmon and fry them, ever so lightly, tempura-style. I'd like to give a few bowlfuls, too, to our eighty-two-year-old neighbor, Frank, who, before his knees went bad, loved to hunt the hard-to-find fungi. Most of all, I'd like to harvest a few extra pounds to trade with the best chef in town for two meals at his bistro—to which I would take the well-deserving mother of my picking partner on a date I couldn't otherwise afford.



"WHERE ARE WE?" LUKA ASKS.

By now we're deep in the old burn, stooped over stumps whose charred bark flakes off in scales—the morels are everywhere, thickest in the thickest nettle patches. I cut farther in, not answering the boy I hold on my hip, bending over at every other step to pull morels from the pithy soil. Not worrying what effect these inane, imbalanced calisthenics will have on my hernia; not pausing to smell each fruit's damp, nutty scent, or to break a piece of burnt bark from a tree and mark our faces with it; not stopping to look at the scratches the whipping, thorny branches are leaving on Luka's arms and legs.

The ground blurs: a Monet of thistles, grass, and crumbling tree trunks. I can tell from the rhythm of my twig-cracking steps that I'm moving too fast. I backtrack, stare at the ground again: old stumps of 'shrooms I just picked. Seemingly everywhere a moment ago, the morels have disappeared, slunk back into the ground. Could I get any further ahead of myself? Could I move any more hurriedly after these fruits of mulch and

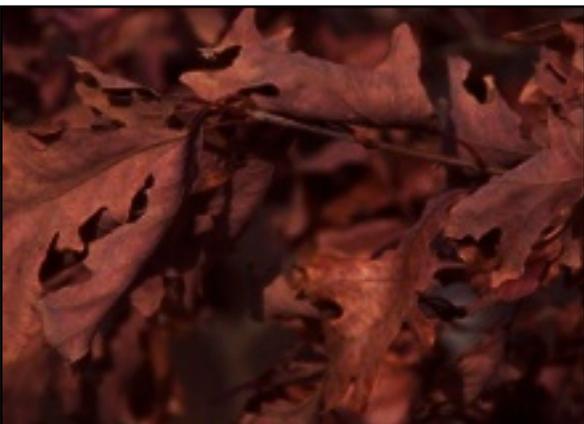
fire that do not move? Often while prepping for a meal, I'll slice open a cap and find along its inner walls a slug. Slug always finds his 'shroom, an old-timer once told me. Slow down: move at Luka-pace. He's stumbling through the brambles with his lips pressed together, pushing a motor-like sound from his mouth, trying to imitate, I assume, the racket-causing, maple-boring pileated woodpecker that startled him a few moments ago. May light, soft as the



## IMAGES FROM THE 2013 FALL BURN WORKSHOP

“The love of wilderness is more than a hunger for what is always beyond reach; it is also an expression of loyalty to the earth, the earth which bore us and sustains us, the only paradise we shall ever know, the only paradise we ever need, if only we had the eyes to see.” –

[Edward Abbey](#)



underside of a leaf, falls on his face, on his head, which must be warm. Go on, Great White Mushroom Hunter, run your fingers through the dark mat of his hair and feel the sun collecting there, press your nose to his scalp and smell spring arriving.

[Click here](#) for to see full story.



**SPECIES SPOTLIGHT** Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*)

**IDENTIFICATION** The Indiana bat is roughly 2 inches (51 mm) in length and weighs approximately .2 –.3 ounces. Generally, the Indiana bat is uniformly dark grey to grayish-brown in color and often has a pinkish colored nose. An Indiana bat's feet are small, about 1/3 in. in length, with few if any hairs. These hairs do not extend beyond the tips of the toes. Indiana bats are generally found in tightly packed clusters.

**RANGE** The Indiana bat is found within the central portion of the eastern United States, from Vermont to Wisconsin, Missouri and

Arkansas and south and east to northwestern Florida. Almost half of the entire Indiana bat population hibernate in caves in southern Indiana. The 2009 population estimate was about 387,000 Indiana bats, less than half as many as when the species was listed as endangered in 1967.

**BEHAVIOR** With the coming of spring, Indiana bats disperse from their winter homes, known as hibernacula, some going hundreds of miles. They feed solely on flying insects and presumably males spend the summer preparing for the breeding season and winter that follows. Females congregate in nursery colonies, only a handful of which have ever been discovered. These were located along the banks of streams or lakes in forested habitat, under the loose bark of dead trees, and contained from 50–100 females. A single young is born to each female, probably late in June, and is capable of flight within a month. With luck, it may approach the ripe old age of 31, a record set by the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*). In August or early September, Indiana bats swarm at the entrance of selected caves or mines. This is when mating takes place. Sperm is stored in the female's body; eggs are fertilized in the spring. Like other hibernating species, the Indiana bat accumulates layers of fat which sustain it over the winter period of dormancy.

**CURRENT STATUS** Interestingly, 85 percent of these bats winter in only seven caves or mines, with nearly one-half of the world's population being found in only two caves. Even though other populations have been discovered in recent years, the additions have not offset the losses recorded over the full extent of the specie's range.

(Source: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/inba/> & <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6972.html>)

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**WE RELY ON YOUR SUPPORT!**

**SIOSA Membership Rates**

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If you would like your contribution to specifically support one of the following SIOSA services, please indicate which one:

- Habitat & Restoration
- Membership Recruitment
- Outreach & Education
- Annual Meeting

**Please print and mail the completed form with check/money order payable to SIOSA to:**

SIOSA c/o Richard Hillyard  
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*THANK YOU for your support!*

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SIOSA newsletters are published quarterly.