

Tuesday, February 19, 2019  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact: Christa Christensen  
309-547-3721

## **Public Invited to Welcome Reception for the new Director of Dickson Mounds Museum on March 10**

LEWISTOWN, IL—Dickson Mounds Museum is hosting a welcome reception for new Museum Director Dr. Duane Esarey on Sunday, March 10, 2019, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. The reception will provide an opportunity for the public to meet Dr. Esarey and learn about some of his plans for Dickson Mounds.

Esarey's return to Dickson Mounds comes 15 years after he left his position as the Museum's Assistant Curator to pursue a doctoral degree at the University of North Carolina. Prior to that, Duane served 21 years (1983-2004) at Dickson Mounds, raising his family in Havana and taking interest in every aspect of western Illinois' prehistory, history, and natural history.

Completing his PhD at Chapel Hill in 2013, Duane received that year's award for outstanding dissertation in Anthropology. For six years, Esarey served as Assistant Director at the Illinois State Archaeological Survey (one of five Illinois state scientific surveys housed in the University of Illinois' Prairie Research Institute). Having originally started at Dickson Mounds at age 28, Duane's previous time here served to make the Spoon River region an enduring home, with no part of the region being more home than Dickson Mounds itself. Having researched and drafted text for the Museum's permanent and traveling exhibits between 1984 and 2000, the changes and needs of the Dickson Mounds were subsequently never far from his mind.

Duane Esarey notes that it is "particularly rewarding to return home and see that so much remains the same, and yet so much is different."

Especially gratifying is seeing the transformation that is Emiquon, and especially seeing how strong the Museum's partnerships now centered on the Emiquon complex (the preserve itself, multiple wildlife refuges, state land-holdings, the region's communities, and the scientific research organizations) have grown to be. These were a distant hope first dreamed of in 1993, when Duane was called upon to provide a name for a planned refuge that would hopefully unite many different aspects of the biological, physiographic, and cultural realms of the region.

In embracing these more diverse roles, Duane Esarey observes that Dickson Mounds has built itself into more of a community asset than ever before.

This is a storied setting and the work is laid out before us,” Esarey said. “The Museum’s unique role integrating the quality of life needs of the local communities with such a vigorous natural resource and scientific presence holds the continuing promise of making many different aspects of the past relevant to the future.”

The reception will be held between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. with light refreshments provided. No RSVP is required. Admission is free.

The Illinois State Museum-Dickson Mounds is located between Lewistown and Havana off Illinois Routes 78 and 97. The museum is open free to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day. Tours and special programs are available for groups with reservations. For more information call 309-547-3721 or TTY 217-782-9175. Also visit us on Facebook at Illinois State Museum-Dickson Mounds or online at the Dickson Mounds link on the Illinois State Museum website at [www.illinoisstatemuseum.org](http://www.illinoisstatemuseum.org).

###