Relocating and assessing the condition of known prehistoric mounds.

Illinois has over 58,000 reported archaeological sites containing 9000+ prehistoric earthen mounds. Many of these mounds sites were reported early in the last century and the records are missing critical data on location, size, numbers, and current condition. Since mounds are protected by state law their location and condition is important information for both the preservationist and development communities.

In 2004 the Illinois State Archaeological Survey (ISAS) developed a master database of mound sites. Recently, ISAS began using Illinois Height Modernization Program LiDAR elevation data to assess its usefulness in locating and assessing the condition of known mounds. Initial efforts have been highly successful. ISAS has been able to create detailed elevation models of mound groups and observe their current condition, with the added benefit of relatively high horizontal accuracy.

This project indicates LiDAR data would prove a valuable tool in helping to preserve Illinois mounds while facilitating development across the state.

For Additional Information:
www.isas.illinois.edu/public_engagement/lidar.shtml