



## STEVE HILL 2026

Basic Materials and Supplies for Hill Workshops (Studio & Plein Air) at Dakota Pastels

If you already have an assortment of hard and soft pastel sticks, great!  
If not, here's what I recommend to start with or augment your collection.

**Soft Pastels:** I now highly recommend any of the Blue Earth Pastel sets over all other brands. They have several, but even just the "Nomad" set will get you started with almost every color and value needed for northwest landscape painting. You can add to that set on Day 1, with a few sticks of wild and crazy colors, as you see fit.

*Note: Blue Earth sets are organized into 7 values for each color family, greatly simplifying the selection process. They almost finish the painting, before you start!*

Other Soft Pastels I use in order of my personal preference are: Unisons, Terry Ludwig, Mount Visison, Great American, Girault, & Sennelier. Find your own personal favorites -  
Try any and all of the pastel stick brands offered at Dakota - there's not a bad seat in the house.

*Tip: Buy "half-stick sets if using any of these for economy.*

**Hard Pastels:** Either the NuPastel 36 color set, or the CretaColor set of 24 will work for starters

**Pan Pastels:** will be used every day in my demos, as well. Recommended for soft distant shapes, forms and colors including fog, mist, clouds, mountains, water-in-motion, transparent water standing still, large ground areas of the mystical Skagit Valley and elephants hiding in the grass. The 20 color landscape starter set will do it for starters. You will want to buy an additional 20 or 40 color palette with darker value colors and tints for landscape applications.

**SOFFT Tools:** you will only need a package of Angle Sponges (round and flat) plus a pkg of "mixed shapes".

**Surfaces:** Pastel Papers/boards 9x12 pads will work for everything you'll need in my workshops. I use: Sennelier La Carte Card, Pastel Premier, Art Spectrum Colourfix for best textured surfaces, Any other brands for less texture are o.k., as well. You will want to experiment and try as many surfaces as you can.

**For Plein Air Workshops:** You will need a good, sturdy, stand-alone field easel, like a French Easel or my personal fave, Mabef Field Easel, for lightweight portability, strength and longevity. I own over one dozen easel set-ups, and use my Mabef field easel 90% of the time. Mine is 25 years old and I wouldn't trade it for any other easel out there. Pochade boxes will work, too (if you have one) but I prefer the larger easel, as it allows your hand room to do the work, at the bottom of the pastel paper and adjusts to almost any height.

A backing board (black gatorfoam 16x20 is the perfect size) miscellaneous drawing tools like a sketchbook, soft pencil, tape to attach pastel papers (I use 1-2" wide blue house painters tape).

Composition finders with rubylith for isolating values into simple shapes (3-in1 viewfinders are perfect)!

That's it! Any shortfalls in your repertoire of supplies can be instantly remedied on Day 1, when we're all at Dakota doing "plein air set-up" and working from landscape reference photos to get started... and at a 10% workshop discount!

I stopped using umbrellas about 10 years ago, because they should be better named as sail boats when (not if) you encounter wind. A wide brimmed hat (or baseball cap) will shade your eyes very effectively. If you have one and want to use it, go for it... but be cautious about never stepping more than arm's length from your easel, once it's all set-up.

You may purchase your art supplies at Dakota Art Pastels at an additional workshop discount of 10%.