This painting records the last few moments of a July day when a dull, overcast sky finally gave way to a sunset worthy of complementing Chiwaukee’s spectacular remnant prairie flora. Even in the dimming light the patterns of wet swales and low ridges could be discerned by the various textures and colors in the incredibly diverse vegetation.
Philip Juras’s Inspiration for **Gensburg Markham Prairie**

Painted quickly between summer rain showers, this small field study explores the wide range of patterns, textures, and colors produced by the rich species diversity of this extraordinary prairie remnant.
Philip Juras’s Inspiration for
Inspired by Poplar Creek Prairie

Based on multiple photographs of the beautifully restored prairie, this studio painting celebrates the species that were visually dominant in July 2013. From an eye-level view, it also conveys the horizon-obscuring verticality of the summer’s rapid plant growth.
Selected Natural Areas in the Chicago Region, USA
Paintings of Prairie Environments By Philip Juras
Chicago Botanic Garden & Field Museum

Title: Doug’s Knob
Details: Oil on canvas, 18 x 26 in., June 13, 2018
Location: Nachusa Grasslands, Illinois
Plant Community: Dry Gravel Prairie
Description: A large prairie landscape in Illinois, the 3500-acre Nachusa grasslands supports a variety of high quality habitats. One of the unique and rare features is a knob - a remnant, and never plowed, dry gravel prairie. Rain percolates quickly through the substrate, resulting in plants tolerant of dry conditions. With less available moisture, plants are generally shorter than their counterpart in mesic or wet prairies.

Philip Juras’s Inspiration for Doug’s Knob
By capturing the color, height, and variety of the late spring vegetation found on one of Nachusa’s hilltop remnants, this June field painting aims to convey the richness and dynamic beauty of the preserve. It is one of a series of paintings of Doug’s Knob that together illustrate its seasonal variation. The presence in the foreground of last year’s dead grass stems reveal this hillside was left unburned in the previous fire season.

Photos: Robin Carlson (RC), Katy Chayka (KC), Michael Huft (MH), Jim Jabcon (JJ), John and Jane Balaban(JJB), Peter M. Dziuk (PD), John Hilty (JH), Philip Juras (PJ) Joan O'Shaughnessy (JO), Iza Redlinski (IR), and David Sollenberger (DS)

Indigenous Language Acknowledgement: Anishinaabe people are people of various Native nations who share a common ancestry, similar cultures, and related languages and have resided in the Great Lakes region. The Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomie are among the Native nations to identify as Anishinaabe. The Ojibwemowin (Ojibwe language) plant names are included where possible. After years of forced assimilation policies, Native Americans are currently recovering Indigenous knowledge, including place, and plant names in their original language.

Indigenous Language Translations: Andrea S. Carlson
Alisma subcordatum
Common Water Plantain

Philip Juras’s Inspiration for Spring Creek Valley c. 1833
Inspired by Colbee Benton’s 1833 description of a marsh on the nearby Fox River and personal observations of a July 2015 sunrise on Bateman Road at the Spring Lake Preserve, this marsh scene recreates the open view across Spring Creek valley as it might have appeared before European settlement.
Philip Juras's Inspiration for Pembroke Savanna

Inspired by a late afternoon visit in May 2019, this composition highlights the site’s remarkable dune topography, characteristic tree forms, spectacular violets, and unusual prairie pocket gopher excavations. It relies on a striking color combination of spring-green verdure, the golden hue of last year’s grass stems, and a deep blue sky to convey a sensory impression of the visit.