

Places to see Wild Azaleas on the Calcasieu Ranger District

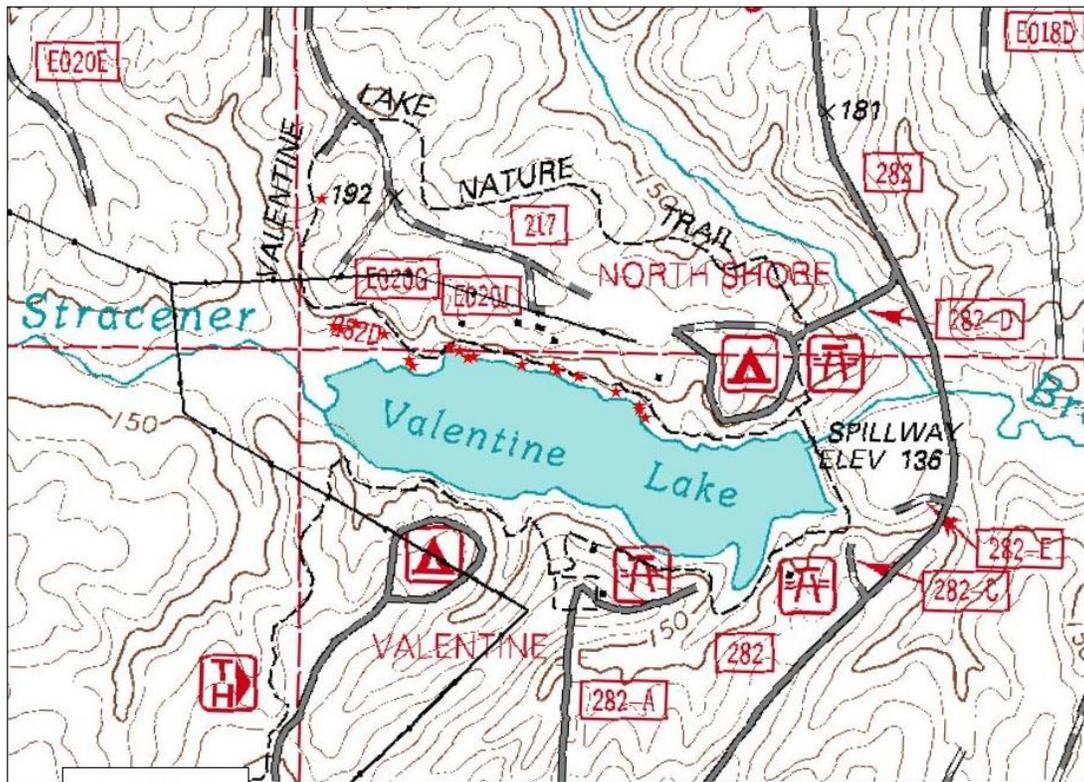
Wild Azaleas (scientific name *Rhododendron canescens*) are flowering shrubs or small trees that generally bloom in March or April. Below are three areas near trails where these azaleas can be seen.



I. Wild Azaleas along the Valentine Lake Trail

Be advised that this is a fee area. If you start from the campground on the north shore of Valentine Lake, take the trail (marked with blue blazes) west (walking away from the fishing pier and spillway). Along the portion of the trail that borders the lake, you will see a good many azaleas right next to the trail, mostly between the trail and the lake. As the trail moves away from the lake, the number of azaleas dropped off considerably.

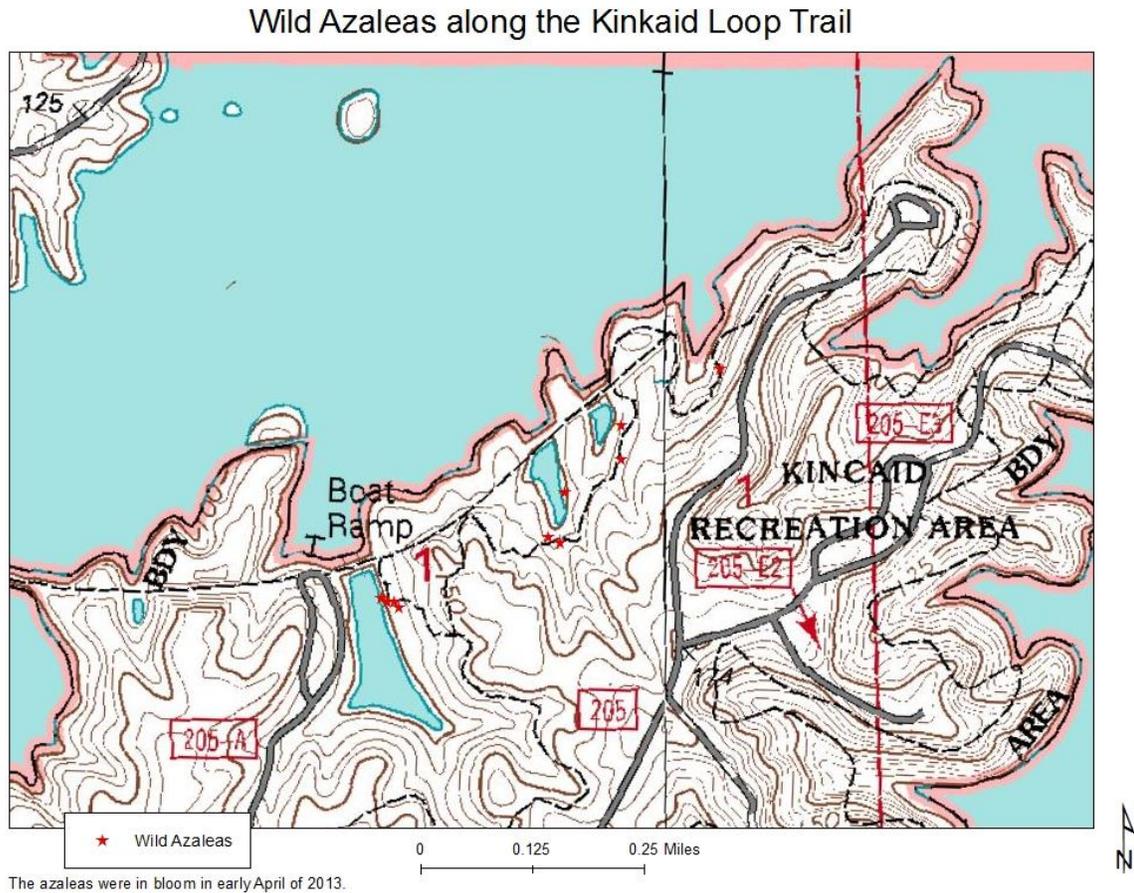
Wild Azaleas along the Valentine Lake Trail



The azaleas were in bloom in early April of 2013.

II. Wild Azaleas along the Kinkaid Loop trail.

Park at the west boat ramp. Follow the trail that goes over the footbridge to the east of the boat ramp. You will see a number of azaleas along this trail. If you continue to where this trail joins the Kinkaid loop trail, take the portion of the loop trail that will take you back towards the lake. You will see a number of azaleas along the portion of the trail between the west boat ramp and the day use area.



III. Wild Azaleas on Castor Plunge Road (also known as FDR 287)

Some wild azaleas are on the west side of Castor Plunge, others on the east side of the road. All of the wild azaleas indicated in the detailed instructions under 1) and 2) below are seen from the Wild Azalea trail.

1. Wild Azaleas on the west side of Castor Plunge Road

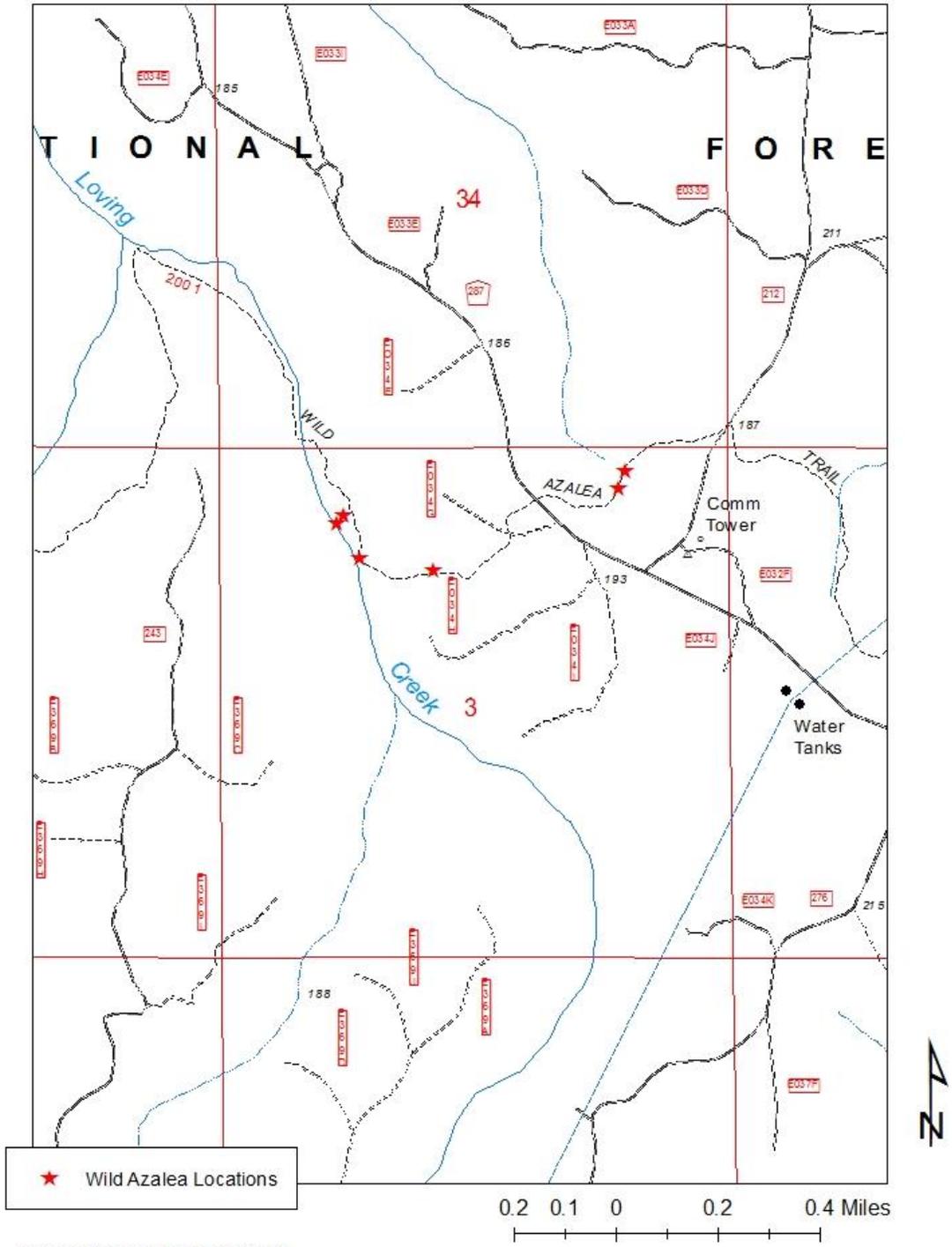
Turn south off of LA 488 (Twin Bridges Road) onto Castor Plunge Road. Proceed on Castor Plunge southwards for about 3.8 miles until you reach dirt road E034G on the west side of Castor Plunge Road (there is a narrow brown rectangular sign with the road designation for this road). Park on the side of

E034G, and walk a short distance down the road until you see the yellow paint or diamond-shaped markers indicating where the Wild Azalea trail crosses the road. Take the part of the trail going south, away from Castor Plunge Road (if you go the wrong way on the trail you will shortly end up on the edge of Castor Plunge Road). As you walk down the trail, at about 0.2 miles after you left road E034G, you will come to your first wild azalea, but most of the wild azaleas are near Loving Creek, from about 0.38 to 0.5 miles down the trail from E034G. In 2013, the wild azaleas were in bloom by March 22.

2. Wild Azaleas on the east side of Castor Plunge Road

Once again, turn south off of LA 488 (Twin Bridges Road) onto Castor Plunge Road (FDR 287). This time you will drive south on Castor Plunge Road for about 4 miles, until you come to road 212 (a gravel road) on the east side. You will turn onto 212, and drive 0.35 miles until you see the yellow paint or diamond-shaped markers indicating where the Wild Azalea trail crosses road 212. Park on the side of the road and take the portion of the trail going west (back towards Castor Plunge road). From about 0.23 to 0.27 miles you will see wild azaleas along the trail. In 2013, the wild azaleas were in bloom by March 25.

Wild Azalea locations along Castor Plunge Road



Map compiled on March 28, 2013

