The Wild Azalea Trail is designated by the Chief of the Forest Service as a National Recreation Trail because of its outstanding vegetation and scenic values.

Location

The Wild Azalea Trail lies south and west of Alexandria, Louisiana. Its end points are at the Kisatchie National Forest's Valentine Lake Recreation Area and Woodworth Town Hall.

Description

Approximately 31 miles in length, the trail is designated for both foot and bicycle travel. It is bisected at about midpoint by State Highway 488 and is accessible by road at several other points. This makes it possible to hike short sections, a convenience for those who haven't the time or the inclination to hike the entire length of the trail in one outing. The trail route is conspicuously marked with bright yellow paint blazes, and is signed at road crossings.

Traversing flat to rolling terrain, the trail winds through pine hills and hardwood bottoms, passing through not only managed forest areas,but clearings and untouched areas as well. For example, hikers can enjoy the Castor Creek Scenic Area, a 90-acre site where large pine and hardwood trees are left in their natural state. In fact, all six of the vegetation communities present on the Evangeline Unit of the Calcasieu Ranger District are found along the trail; bottomland hardwoods, upland hardwoods, mixed pine and hardwoods, pure pine, bogs and natural open areas.

General Information

Hiking Time-Approximately 16 hours w/o a pack.
Finding Your Way-Follow the yellow paint blazes closely because old logging roads are numerous and can be confusing;other trails are blue or white.
Drinking Water-The only drinking water available on the Wild Azalea Trail is at the Valentine Lake Recreation Complex. Streams along the trail are unsuitable for drinking. Bring plenty of your own.
Camping-Camping is permitted adjacent to the trail but campsites should be established at least 30 feet away from the trail centerline.
Trash Disposal-All trash carried in on the trail must be carried out.
Parking- Parking areas are provided at the town of Woodworth (at the Town Hall), on Forest Roads 273 and 279, and at Valentine Lake.

Calcasieu Ranger District
Evangeline Unit
Kisatchie National Forest

Wild Azalea National Recreation Trail

Southern Region

KISATCHIE NATIONAL FOREST

CALCASIEU RANGER DISTRICT

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Wild Azalea National Recreation Trail

Segment	Length	Terminus Points	Difficulty
Segment 1	5.6 miles	Valentine Lake FS 279	Moderate
Segment 2	3.4 miles	FS 279 FS 273	Easy
Segment 3	2.2 miles	FS 273 LA Hwy 488	Easy
Segment 4	3.2 miles	LA Hwy 488 FS 273	Moderate
Segment 5	6.6 miles	FS 273 FS 208	More Difficult
Segment 6	3.5 miles	FS 208 FS 287	Easy
Segment 7	1.7 miles	FS 287 Woodworth,LA	Easy
Trail Total	26.2 miles	Valentine Lake Woodworth,LA	Mixed

More Information

Calcasieu Ranger District Office
9912 Highway 28 West
Boyce, La 71409
(318) 793-9427
Hours: Monday-Friday, 7:30 am - 4:00 pm

Kisatchie National Forest Supervisor
2500 Shreveport Hwy, Pineville, La 71360
(318) 473-7160 Hours: M-F 8:00am-4:30pm

Trail Segment Description:

Segment 1: Running from Valentine Lake to Forest Service Road (FSR) 279, this segment is about 5.6 miles long. One mile from the Valentine Lake Trailhead you cross FSR 288 and pass near the Gardner Fire Tower which was constructed during the 1930's.

Segment 2: Begins at FSR 279 and runs east to the Evangeline Primitive Camp and FSR 273. This segment is about 3.4 miles long. You will cross two undeveloped woods roads before you reach FSR 240 - which is also the access point from the Wild Azalea Trail for the 2-mile Wild Azalea Spur Trail.

Segment 3: Here, you take off at FSR 273, across the road from the Evangeline Primitive Camp parking area. You continue for 2.2 miles, first eastward then southwestward, running parallel to Boggy Bayou until you reach the intersection of FSR 273 and LA Hwy 488.

Segment 4: This segment of about 3.2 miles runs in a south-southeast direction; from the intersection of FSR 273 and LA Hwy 488, back to FSR 273 just southeast of the Castor Creek Scenic Area.

Segment 5: This segment crosses FSR's 277, 287, and 212 on its run from FSR 273 east to FSR 208 - a total of 6.6 miles. This segment is strenuous because of its creek crossings and rugged terrain, and requires frequent hill climbing.

Segment 6: This stretch winds in a generally southwest direction, from a small trailhead parking area at FSR 208 to the FSR 287 near the small town of Woodworth. The trail crosses FSR 249 about 1 mile from the FSR 208 trailhead. This is a good wet weather hike because there are no major creek crossings.

Segment 7: This portion of the trail runs 1.7 mi. It follows the route of a paved residential road from the FSR 287 trailhead to its eastern terminus in the parking lot at the Woodworth Town Hall. The trailhead provided at the Town Hall was developed in cooperation with the town of Woodworth itself.

Castor Creek Scenic Area

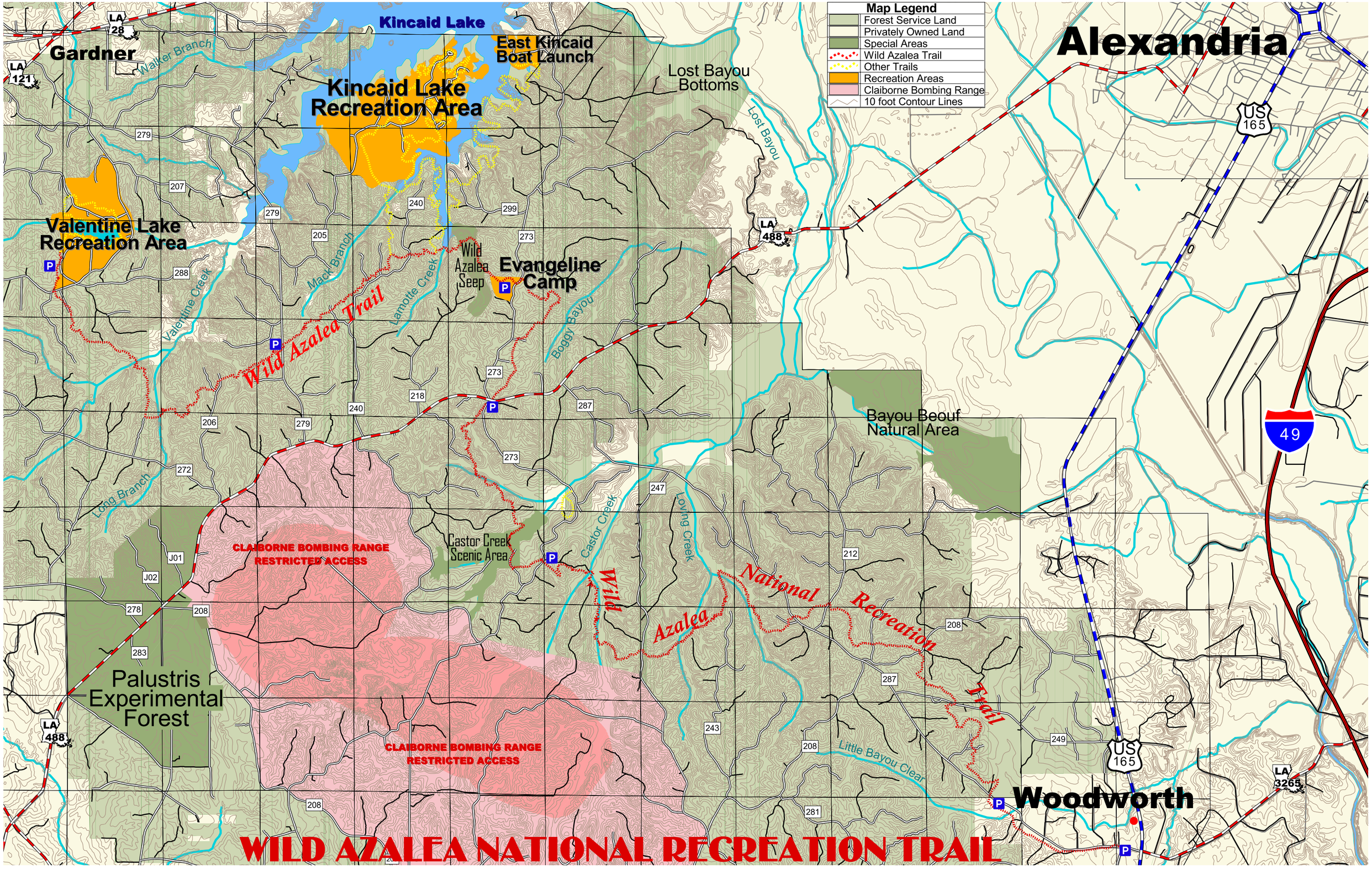
This beautiful area at the junction of Brushy Creek and Castor Creek features a variety of large loblolly pine, gum, ash, and beech, magnolia and baldcypress trees. Segment 4 of the Wild Azalea Trail passes through the area. Because of its outstanding natural beauty, this 90-acre area has been set aside for protection of its scenic qualities and is available for judicious public use.

Wild Azalea Seep

Noted for the unique plants that it supports, this unusual 123-acre woodland is on the Louisiana Natural Area Registry. This excellent example of an acid seep is home to several species of orchids and the only known population of bog moss west of the Mississippi River. The area lies along Segment 2 of the Wild Azalea Trail.

Other Available Trails

Located in the same general area as the Wild Azalea Trail are a number of other trails of interest to the avid hiker and bicyclist. They are the Wild Azalea Spur Trail, the Kincaid Trail, The Indian Ridge Trail, the Lakeshore Trail, and the Lamotte Creek Trail (Lamotte Creek pictured below).



WILD AZALEA NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL