

The Native Azaleas of Hooper Bald

*Middle Atlantic Chapter of the
American Rhododendron Society
Species Study Group Project*



Hooper Bald is located
in a remote region of the
Nantahala National Forest
in Western North Carolina



Hooper Bald

Hooper Bald is located in a remote region of the Nantahala National Forest in Western North Carolina

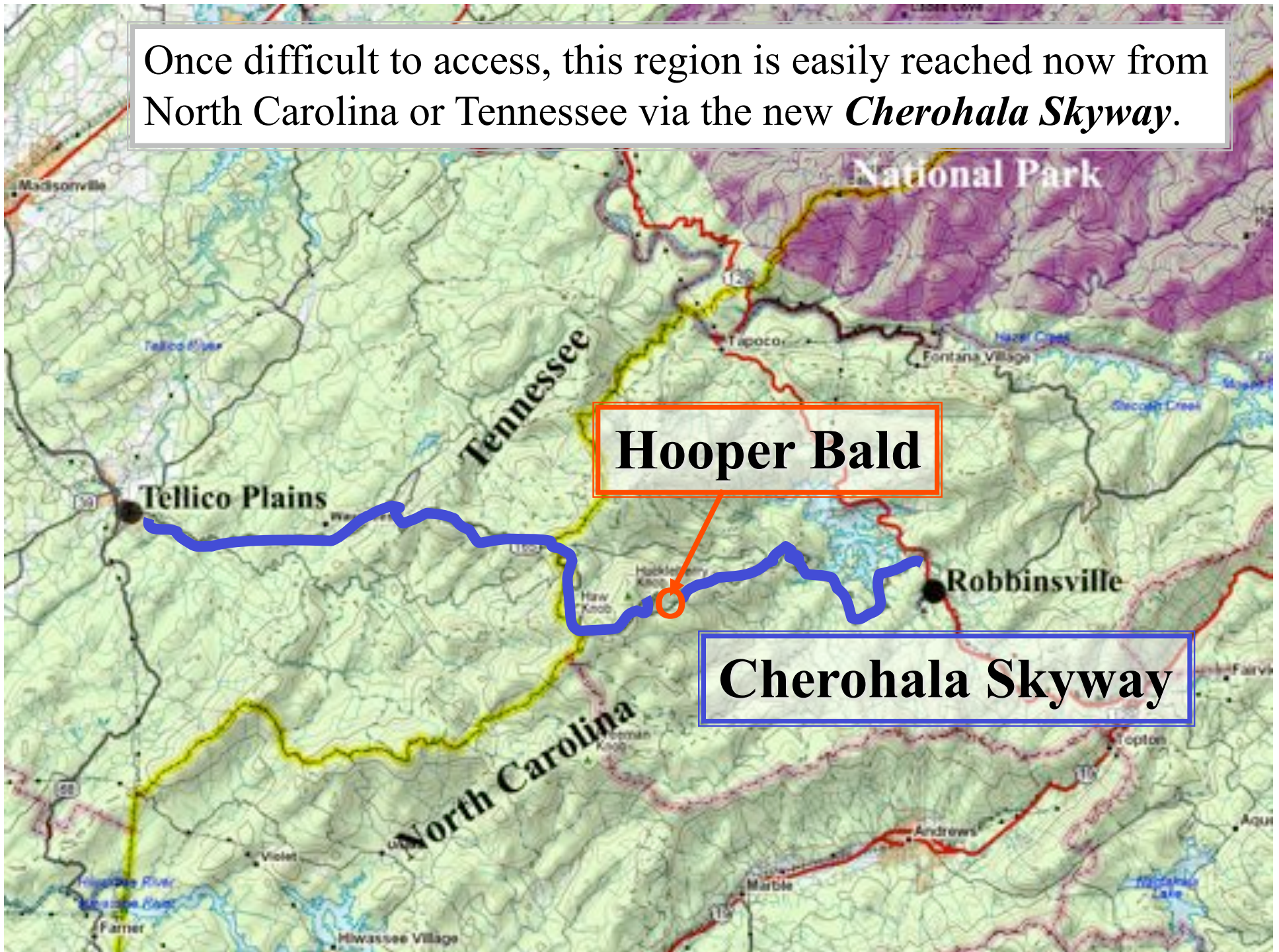
Once difficult to access, this region is easily reached now from North Carolina or Tennessee via the new *Cherochala Skyway*.



Once difficult to access, this region is easily reached now from North Carolina or Tennessee via the new *Cherochala Skyway*.

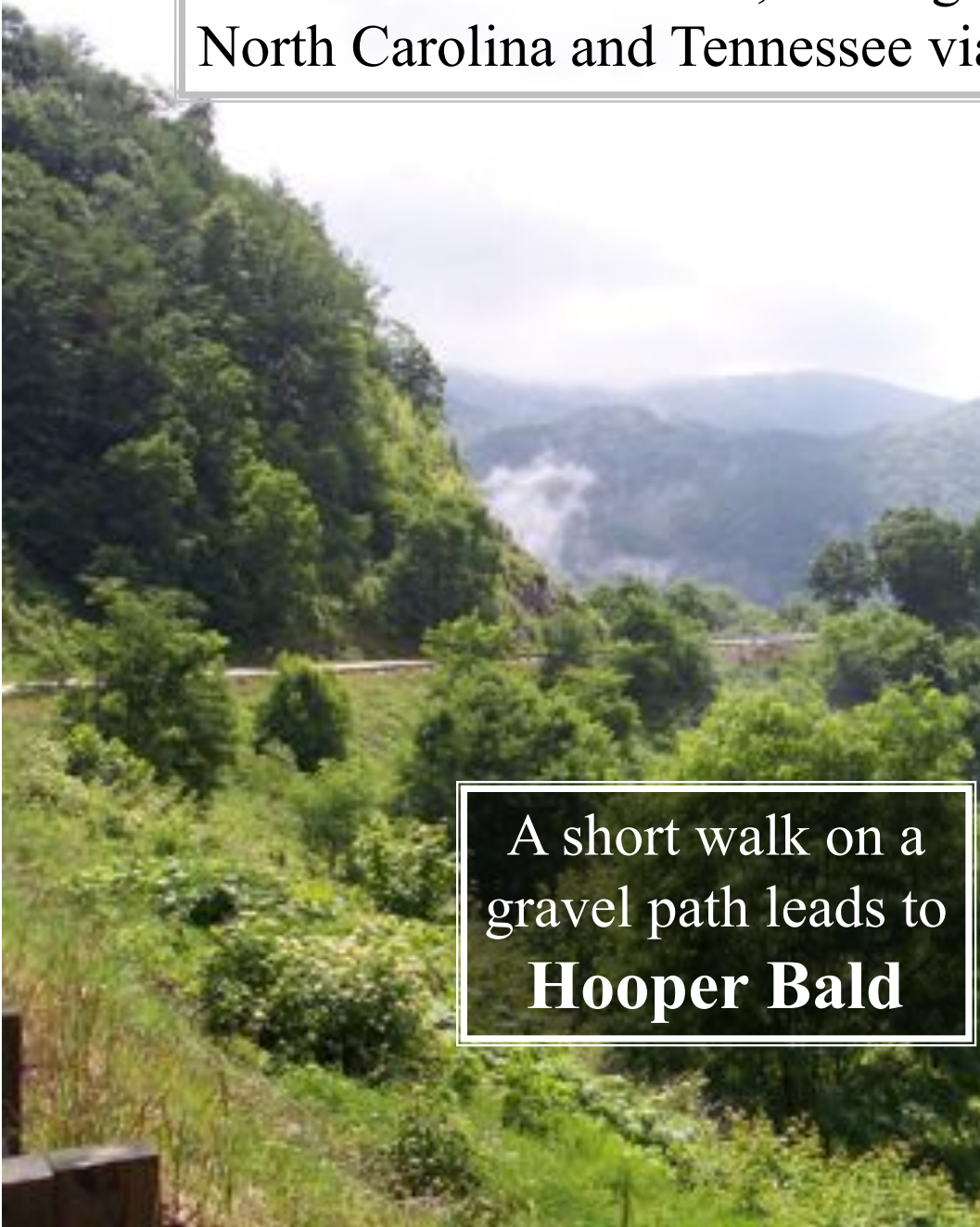
Hooper Bald

Cherochala Skyway



Once difficult to access, this region is easily reached now from North Carolina and Tennessee via the new *Cherochala Skyway*.

A short walk on a gravel path leads to
Hooper Bald





Red



Apricot



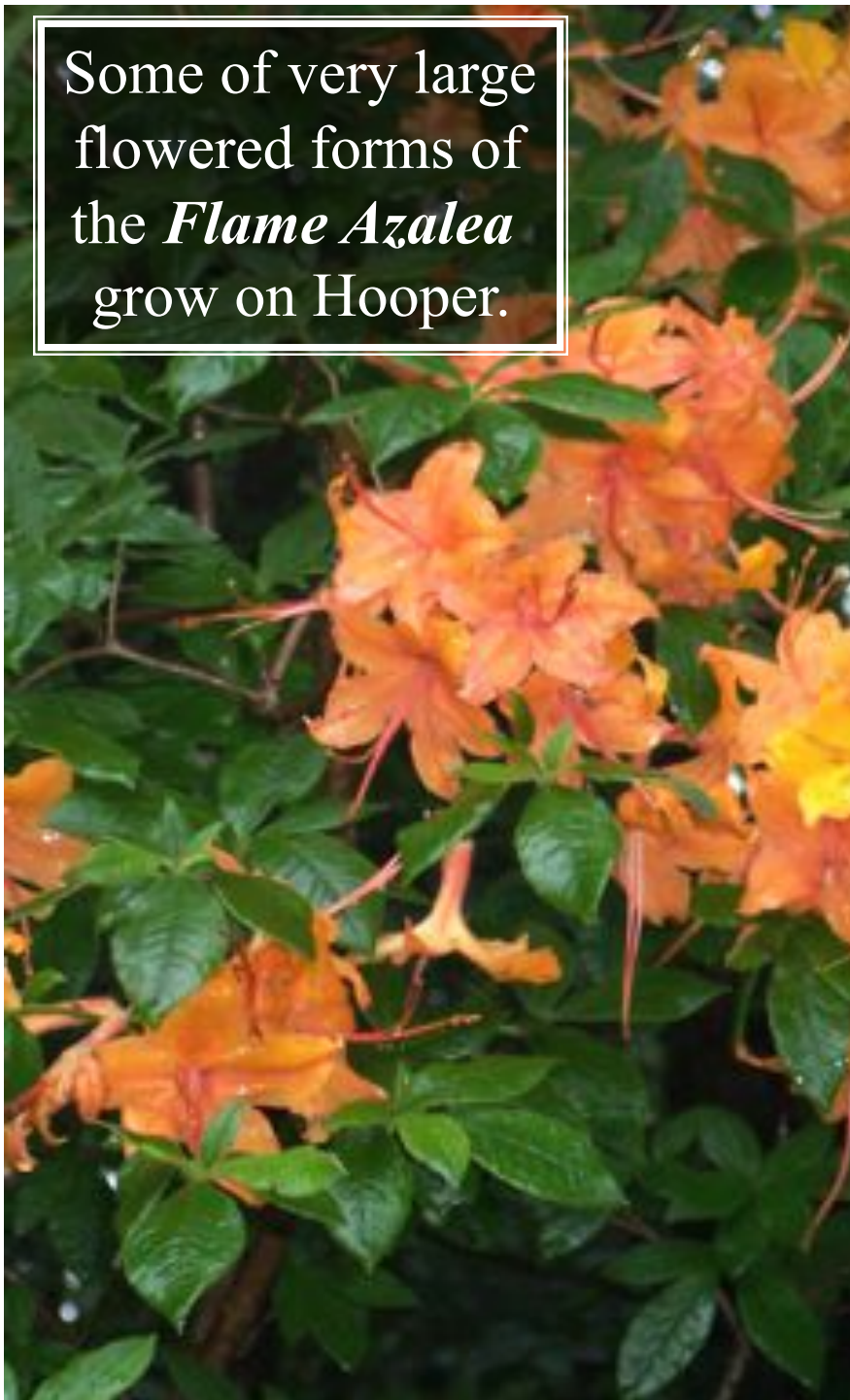
Gold



Orange

Some of very large
flowered forms of
the *Flame Azalea*
grow on Hooper.

Blossoms can exceed
3 inches across!

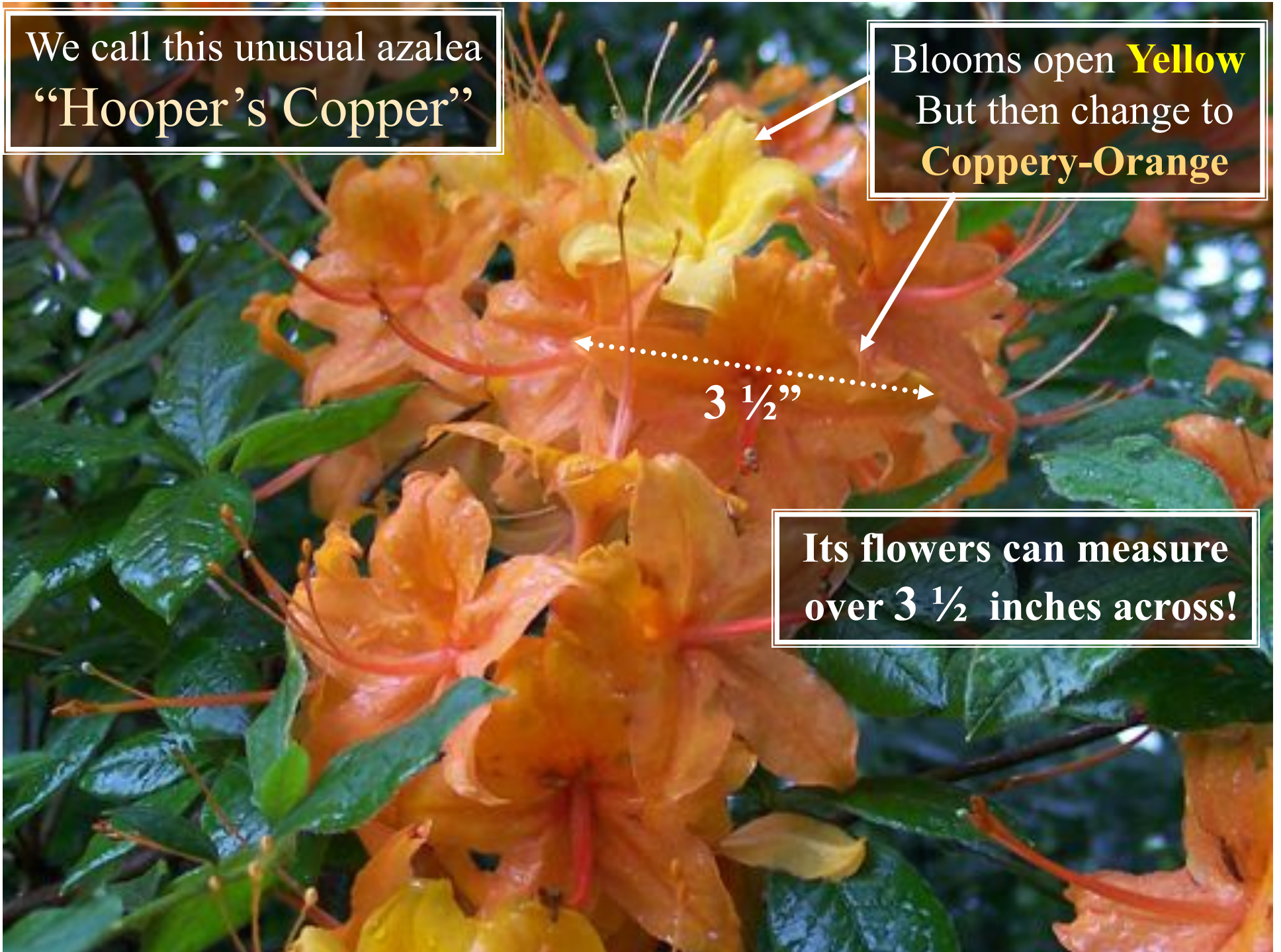


We call this unusual azalea
“Hooper’s Copper”

Blooms open **Yellow**
But then change to
Coppery-Orange

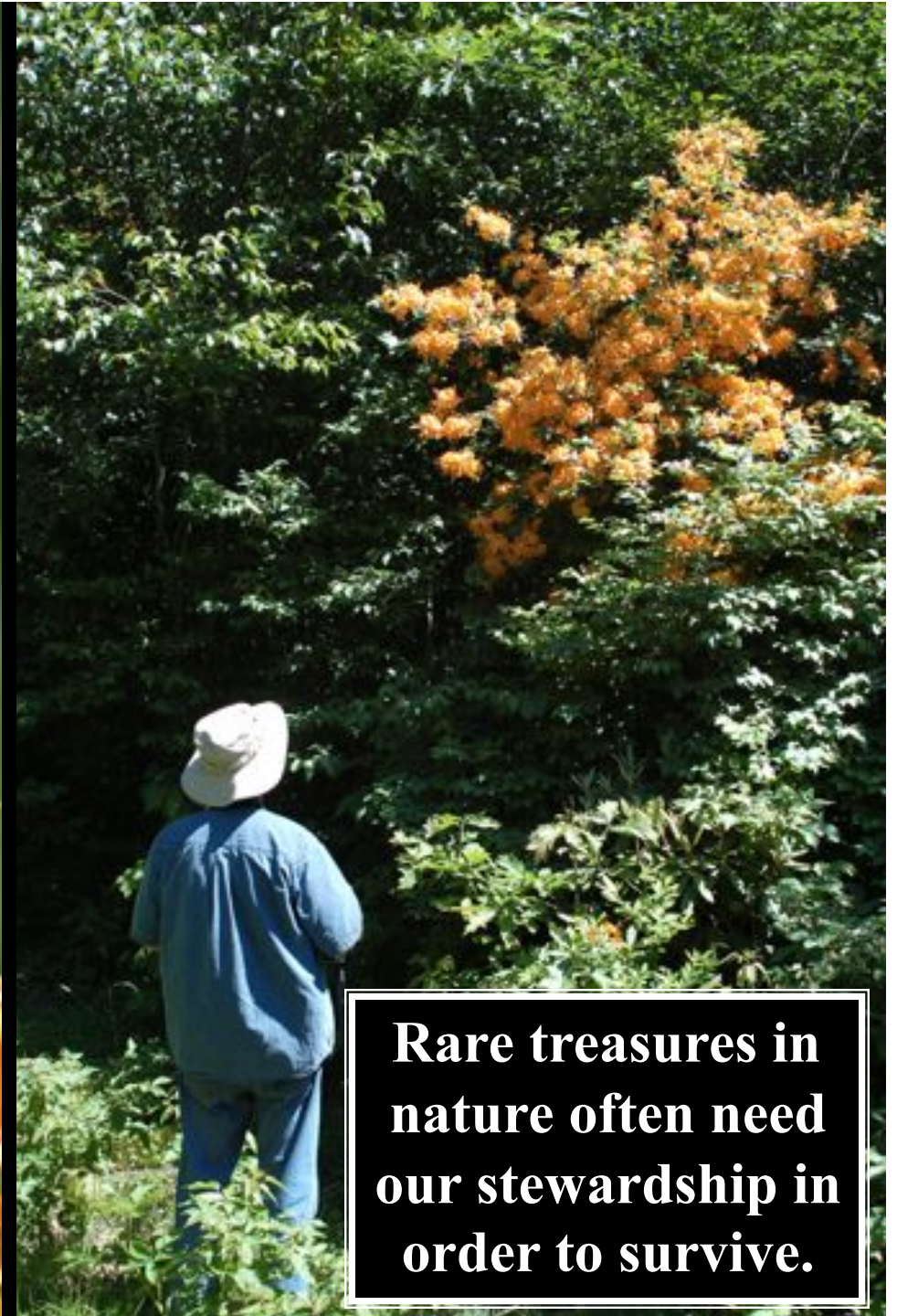
3 1/2”

Its flowers can measure
over 3 1/2 inches across!



But it is rapidly getting overgrown.





Rare treasures in nature often need our stewardship in order to survive.

**We have tried to
keep that plant from
getting overgrown.**

**Hooper's Copper
is still safe...
at least for now.**





**Without our help
they could be lost.**

**Concerned environmental groups
help keep many balds open.**





**Flame Azaleas
abound**



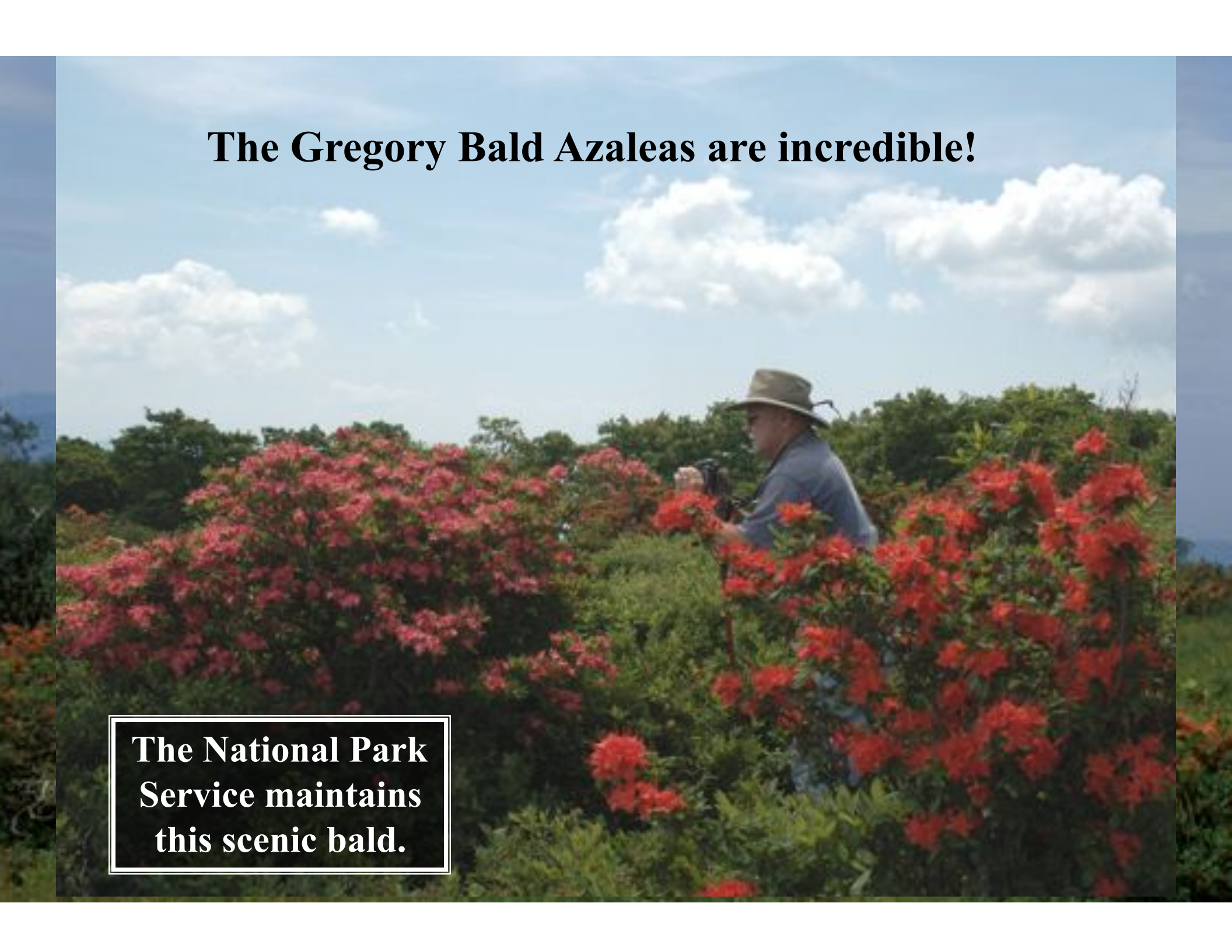
**Rare Gray's Lilies
are multiplying**

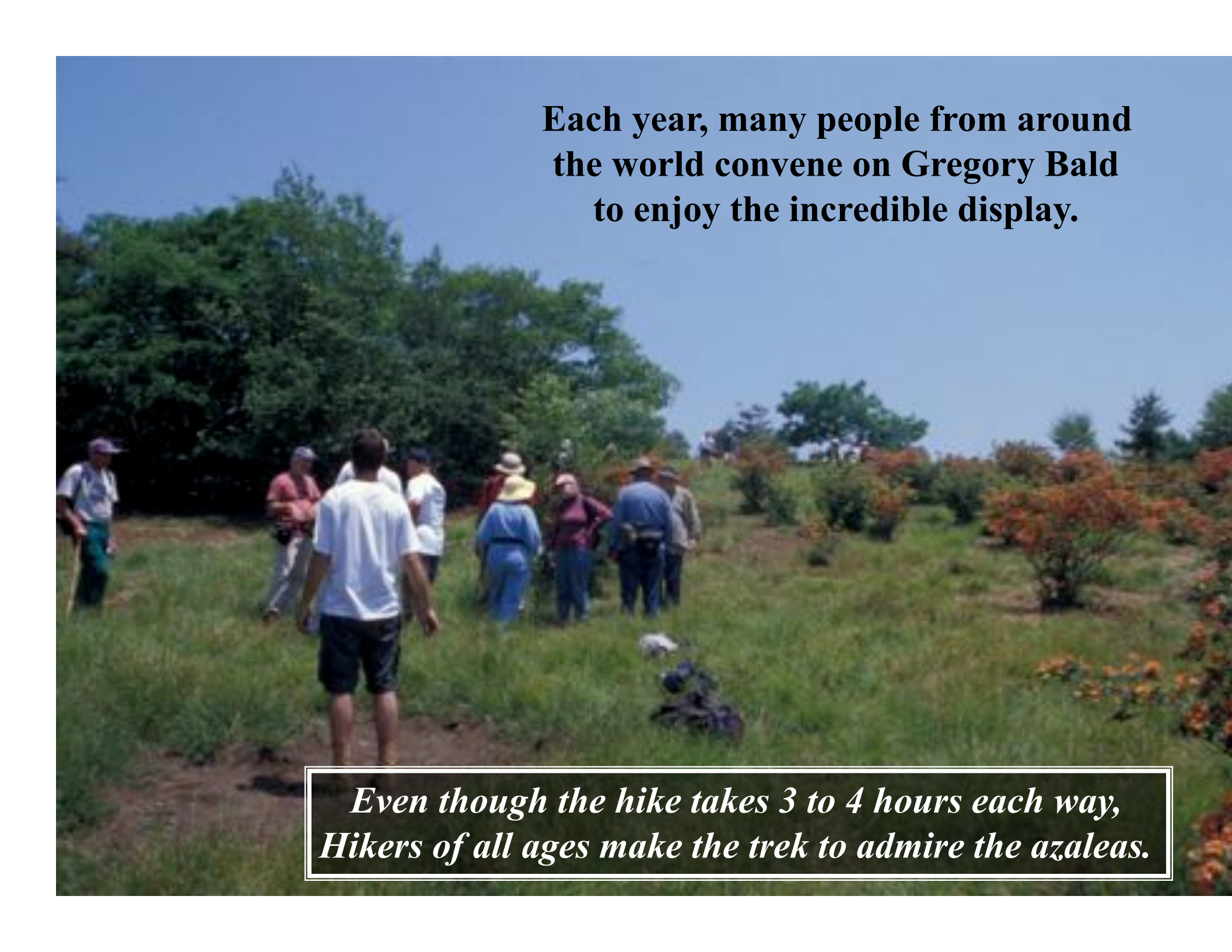
Rhododendron catawbiense
on Grassy Ridge is world famous.



The Gregory Bald Azaleas are incredible!

**The National Park
Service maintains
this scenic bald.**



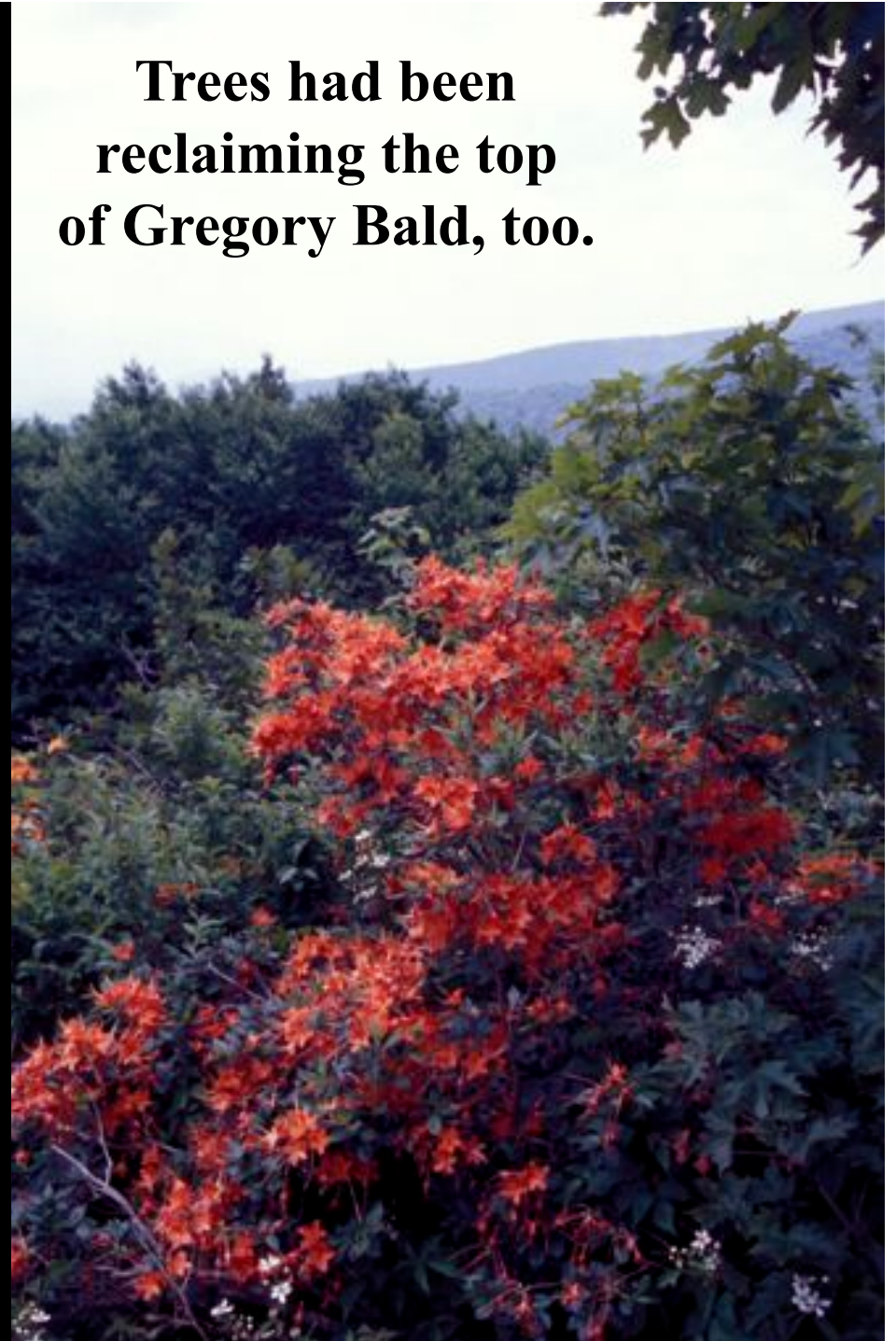
A group of hikers is seen from behind, walking along a dirt path on a grassy hillside. The hikers are dressed in casual outdoor attire, including hats and backpacks. To the right of the path, there are several large, bushy plants with bright orange flowers, likely azaleas. The background features a dense line of green trees under a clear, bright blue sky.

**Each year, many people from around
the world convene on Gregory Bald
to enjoy the incredible display.**

*Even though the hike takes 3 to 4 hours each way,
Hikers of all ages make the trek to admire the azaleas.*



**Trees had been
reclaiming the top
of Gregory Bald, too.**



**Rare plants and scenic vistas
could easily have been lost.**



**The Middle Atlantic Chapter of the
American Rhododendron Society
wanted to help the Park maintain
the native azaleas on Gregory Bald.**

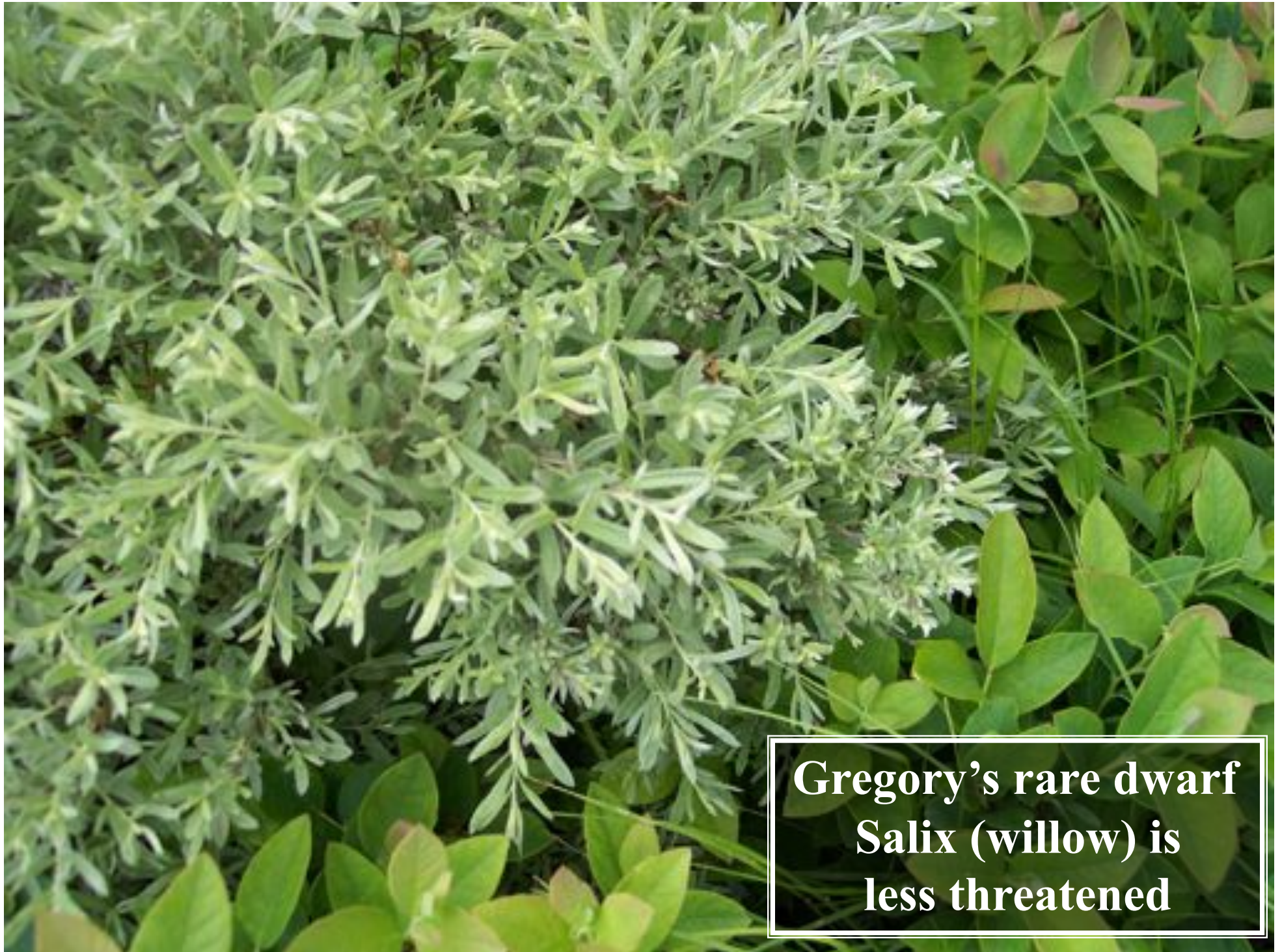


**Workers previously
cut down grass and
brush around the
azaleas by hand.**



Brambles, brush, and grass can now be cleared with relative ease. *Azaleas and other rare plants are flourishing without competition.*





**Gregory's rare dwarf
Salix (willow) is
less threatened**



**We need to turn
our attention to
Hooper Bald.**

**We should preserve such treasures
for future generations to enjoy.**



The Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS was able to get approval from the Park Authority to begin restoring Hooper Bald. This group of concerned environmentalists converged on the peak this April to begin removing vegetation that has been threatening the azaleas. We invite you to join us!



A close-up photograph of a butterfly with black and white wings feeding on orange flowers. The butterfly is positioned on the right side of the frame, facing left. The flowers are in the foreground and are in sharp focus, while the background is blurred. The text is overlaid on the image.

Let's Restore Hooper Bald!

Thanks for Listening...

Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS

**Species Study Group Representatives:
Jim Brant, Don Hyatt, and George McLellan**

PowerPoint Presentation by Don Hyatt