CYPREMORT POINT — Warm, sunny days bring a crowd of families to Cypremort Point in Iberia Parish, with about 2,500 people passing through the gates of the park on an average Sunday, according to the park ranger.

The busiest season is May to June, but people continue to come out in the fall until the water becomes too cold, said park ranger Louis Geerts. Cypremort Point (or The Point as regulars call it) juts out from the state between Vermilion Bay and West Cote Blanche Bay.

The park is open 8 a.m.-10 p.m. all week and charges a fee of $2 per vehicle for four people and 50 cents for each additional person.

The park has picnic areas, some with barbecue pits, a boat landing and restroom facilities. It has recently undergone some improvements, said Randy Trahan of the state Department of Parks and Recreation. Several new concession stands have been installed, as well as a new fishing pier over the water.

Although litter can sometimes become a problem, Geerts said that strict fines are enforced and a trash crew cleans the beach daily.

Many families spend the day there barbecuing dinner, listening to portable stereos and lying on the beach. Children generally enjoy trying to build sandcastles and splashing in the water.

Many come out to the beach to enjoy windsurfing, water skiing and sailing in their hobie cats.

"Vermilion Bay has the best sailing winds in the area," Trahan said.

One of the windsurfers, Chris Johnson, 21, of Lafayette, says he usually spends every weekend during the summer with a group of windsurfers.

"I enjoy the sunshine," Johnson said. He added that the only thing he didn't like about The Point was the mosquitoes. "I think they should have mosquito control."

Windsurfing does have some danger involved, Johnson said. Speeds of 35 miles per hour can be reached while "catching the waves."

"There's quite a bit of danger if you flip over and you're not a good swimmer," Johnson said.

Posted signs warn swimmers that there are no lifeguards on duty at the beach, so swimmers are on their own.

A new sailing ramp at the end of The Point has made it more accessible for hobie cats, said Trahan.

The area is used by hobie cat clubs for their regattas (boat races) at least once a year, said Bob Carlin, a member of Fleet 93, a Lafayette hobie cat club.

Hobie cats are between 14 feet and 18 feet in length, with 16 feet being the most popular length, said Joel Palmer of Pack and Paddle in Lafayette. The boats race with two people, but can carry up to four.

The prices of the boats vary from $2,000 to $5,000, depending on the length and equipment, Palmer said. He added that throughout the years, the local hobie cat clubs have competed for some unusual prizes made of old boat parts.

See POINT, page 12
Hobie cat owners generally enjoy the beach of Cypremort Point because of the sand, which is easier to land on and easier to wash off, said Palmer. The park is not the only attraction of Cypremort Point. Since the park does not allow overnight campers on the grounds, the surrounding area is widely used by weekend campers. The lots are individually owned and leased.

Camps built in the area range from old patrol boats to elaborate homes. Some people live out at The Point year-round, but the majority are seasonal dwellers, said Richard Legnon, one of the developers of the area. Legnon operates the Cypremort Supply House and charter boat service of a 48-foot boat.

“We have a general supply with everything from plumbing to boat suppliers,” Legnon said. He caters to the camp owners, crabbers and fishermen. Chartering his boat ranges in price from $600-$700.

About 90 percent of Legnon’s charters are from out of state, with the majority coming from Kansas and Oklahoma. With advance notice, Legnon can make arrangements for overnight accommodations.

Another developer of the area, Bob Auerback, says his favorite subject is how to promote the area. “The community is unique,” Auerback said.

Auerback is currently developing a private resort area, with fishing community lots for sale at an average price of $25,000. The lots are large enough to be shared by two campsites and two boat sheds. The lots allow fishermen easy access to a canal leading to the Gulf of Mexico.

The community is restricted and all buildings must meet architectural approval. Auerback said they established a taxing area to give additional police and fire protection.

“People from New Iberia take The Point for granted because they’re close to it,” Auerback said. “People from Lafayette and the surrounding area think of it as their own private resort area.”

The area’s natural beauty and activities have attracted many people to the area and has sparked a growth of campers, Legnon said.

“We have a volunteer fire department, two churches, a delightful restaurant and the Cypremort Point Yacht Club,” he said. “It’s a gem of a place.”

Some people ride out to The Point not to enjoy the water sports, but to have a look around. Twice a month, Bert Savoy of Jeanerette gets on his motorcycle to enjoy the view because “it’s different.”

Fishermen enjoy the Point because of its easy access to the Gulf. During the fishing season, Don Cobena of Lafayette goes fishing there once a week.

“We don’t have to go far to catch fish,” Cobena said. “It’s a good way to get away from spending the day washing the car.”