Cypremort Beach Ranks With The Riviera ... Almost

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CYPREMORT POINT

What Acapulco is to Mexico, the Riviera is to Europe and Fort Lauderdale is to thousands of college kids, so Cypremort Point could be to Acadiana.

The common denominator is here: a beautiful, sandy beach. Understand that beauty and even sand are relative terms when comparing such far-flung geographical locations.

The beach, located east of the boat landing, was built several years ago at considerable expense by the state Department of Public Works. Estimates of the cost, including the construction of a breakwater and restroom facilities, soar past the million-dollar mark and plummet into the low thousands, depending upon who you ask.

It is currently being operated and maintained by George Moresi of Jeanerette, who has a concession contract with the state Parks and Recreation Commission. Last summer, Moresi charged a dollar a person admission fee. He pays $100 per month to the parks commission, which places the money in a "revolving account" with other similarly-generated funds to be used within the state's parks system.

One Year With Option

Moresi leased the beach for one year with an option on an additional year. The lease comes up for renewal this spring but, with the option, he will not have to compete with other bidders. Next year, however, he will.

The leasing of the concession rights in the first place did not escape some public grumbling. Claims were made that the state had sold out public property to private enterprise. Others said it was a move to exclude Negroes from the beach.

But the park commission sees it as a "stop-gap" measure to prevent the beach from going to seed before state money can be appropriated to maintain it. Before Moresi took over, an ineffective beach commission, operating under the auspices of the Iberia Parish Police Jury, was unable to secure funds to take care of the beach. The area was littered and vandalized and generally forsaken by the authorities.

"Relatively Well"

"Comparing on the basis of comments last year and before, the lease setup is working relatively well," Wylie Harvey, an executive assistant to the director of the parks commission, told The Advertiser yesterday. "We had a world of trouble and complaints down there before and relatively few now. Still, we regard it as a stop-gap measure — it was a matter of being the only thing to do until we can see if operation and maintenance funds become available to us."

Harvey said the commission has other similar sites which could be operated and maintained by it if the legislature authorizes the funds.

"In the meantime," he said, "this is better than letting the beach lie there and go fallow like it did under the Cypremort beach commission."

Kind Word

By Florida standards, fallow would be a kind word to describe the beach at Cypremort on its best day. But this isn't Florida. On the other hand, it is only a few minutes by car from New Iberia, Jeanerette or Franklin and only a few minutes more from Abbeville, Lafayette, St. Martinville, Loreauville, etc.

And it is a beach. Add beach towels, bikinis, Frisbee-throwers and -catchers, beer drinkers, fried-chicken eaters, and suntan-lotion spreaders and spreadees — and who needs the Riviera?