

Ducey's on the Lake:

A historical profile of Bass Lakes's most celebrated restaurant

In 1941, Buddy Freeman started a Bass Lake tradition with the construction of Freeman's Bass Lake Lodge on the north shore of the lake on Forest Service land about one mile west of the Pines Village. The lodge, which consisted of a bar, restaurant, and rental cabins, was sold to three men in 1947; Jeff Jeffords, Karl Briz and A. C. Zingle of Fresno.

In 1950, the facility was purchased by Maurice and Marie Ducey of Fresno and the name was changed to Ducey's Bass Lake Lodge. During the fifties, they built a general store and campground and added to the collection of Indian baskets, antique guns, and mounted animal heads that decorated the lodge. For nearly 20 years, both locals and visitors grew accustomed to making "Ducey's" a regular gathering spot. Upon their retirement in 1968, they sold the lodge to Al Westman who sold it a year later to Dr. Robert and Gloria Rickard. In 1975, The Pines Resort purchased Ducey's. It was the rustic charm of the old Ducey's Lodge that brought Universal Pictures to Bass Lake during the fall of 1987 to film *The Great Outdoors* starring John Candy and Dan Ackroyd. The Lodge was featured in a number of scenes in the movie.

Six months later, with plans being made for another busy summer at Ducey's, tragedy struck. On June 2, 1988, cooks were in the kitchen preparing for a dinner meeting when a grease fire erupted. Four hours later all that was left of the wooden structure were the slate steps that led to the front entry and the stone fireplace and the sign on a post out by the street. The fire was widely reported around the state and mourned by all who had enjoyed good food and fun times at this historic gathering place.

After two years of planning and nearly a year of construction, a new era began at Bass Lake with the Grand Opening of Ducey's On The Lake on Saturday, April 20, 1991. Although larger and containing modern amenities, the "new" Ducey's has retained the warmth of the old lodge being built primarily with wood and stone on the lake's edge, one mile east of the original site. Each table has been hand-crafted by a local artisan and boat builder, reminiscent of the deck work on many classic wooden boats. And, as a respectful tribute to Ducey's colorful history and charm, the original Ducey's sign and historical Bass Lake photographs are proudly displayed in the new building's foyer.