



"Bass Lake Fish Hatchery"

Bass Lake State Fish Hatchery is located in Starke County on the Northeast corner of Bass Lake, the third largest natural lake in the State. This hatchery was one of Indiana's first State Fish Hatcheries.

In 1912 the Bass Lake Businessmen and Anglers' Society built one pond and raised fish for the first time. The following year the State Department of Fisheries (a progenitor of the Division of Fish and Wildlife of the Indiana Department of Natural resources) took over the hatchery operation and added one additional pond. Today the hatchery occupies 14 acres of land and has 12 ponds which are used to hatch and raise fish. Total water acreage of the 12 ponds is approximately five acres.

Bass Lake Hatchery is one of eight hatcheries presently operated by the Division of Fish and Wildlife. It is the smallest hatchery in the State and it is also the oldest. In 1861 Mrs. Nancy Roger's house was the only residence on Bass Lake. This property later became known as the Shoup Farm and eventually became the Hatchery site.

Prior to 1861 Bass Lake was known by its Indian name, Wichetonqua, meaning Beautiful Water. In the early settlement days, the lake, bordered by many cedar trees, soon became known as Cedar Lake. Around 1895 a settler--apparently an enthusiastic fisherman--renamed it Bass Lake.

Most of the Hatchery's ponds were built in the early 1900s by hand and are fairly shallow. During the last several years the Division of Fish and Wildlife has enlarged many of the ponds and rebuilt several levees. However, the basic design of the ponds as they appear today would look very familiar to the men who dug the original ones.

In 1928 a service building and manager's residence were constructed and the property took on its present appearance. In the early 1960s the State expanded its fish management program and Bass Lake State Fish Hatchery became District Headquarters for fish management for all of Northwest Indiana. While the Hatchery continues to produce fish, the majority of activity on the property now concerns the management of public waters within the 16 counties included in District 1.