

LAKES OF CANCANO

Once past the towers of Fraele, ancient and mighty buildings, you reach the artificial lakes of Cancano, created in the middle of the last century for the production of electricity and today managed by A2A. The lakes are fed also through a dense straight line of forced pipes by the water of the Spòl, of the Alpe, Gavia, Frodolfo, Zebrù, Braulio, Viola and Forcola streams and also by the more famous Adda river, which has its sources not far away.

The lakes were designed by the then AEM, a sort of Government Power Company, in the early decades of the twentieth century to respond to the growing demand for electricity. Works for the construction of the San Giacomo dam were completed in 1950 while the Cancano dam recognizable for its arch structure, was completed in 1956.

The lakes are capable of holding up to over 190 million cubic meters of water in maximum flow!

The reservoir of San Giacomo, with a capacity of about 64 million cubic meters of water, was at the time the largest European dam for the volume of concrete used for its construction.

A curiosity: in 1939 a trolleybus line was also built for the transport of materials and workers for the construction of the two dams. The line started from Tirano, which was the railway terminus, and reached the construction sites of the dams for a length of about 66 km and with a difference in height of 1500 m!

The cable car, built with reinforced concrete poles, was characterized by the famous "filocars" that transported building materials from the Tirano station to the First Roadman's house of Stelvio. From here the material continued for another 7 km by means of a cableway up to the Fraele Valley at an altitude of 1950 m. The village of Digapoli was also built at the foot of the dam to house the workers. Later, the village was submerged by the water. The ruins of these buildings can still be seen when the partial and controlled emptying of the two artificial basins is carried out!

Through a path with a gentle gradient, it is possible to skirt the Cancano dam first, which overlooks the Ravine of the Fraele Valley and, later, S. Giacomo dam. Finally, it is possible to travel the complete length of the lake of S. Giacomo, crossing the dam and returning to the starting point.

The cycle path allows you to observe the two relevant basins and enjoy an unusual panorama for the Alps, which recalls typical landscapes of the great North. Observing carefully we cannot fail to grasp the main peaks of the area and reach with our eyes as far as the Stelvio Pass and its glaciers!