

RIETVLEI DAM – FAITHFUL SUPPLIER OF WATER TO THE CAPITAL

For over 80 years the Rietvlei Dam, located south east of Pretoria has been providing the South African capital with water.

Constructed between 1930 and 1934 by the then Pretoria municipality, Rietvlei Dam is located in the Sesmyspruit, a tributary of the Hennops River. Prior to the construction of this dam the only water supply to the town, which by 1928 had around 75 000 residents, came from dolomitic resources in the Fountains valley.

The dam was built on the farm Rietvlei, which is today managed as a nature reserve. Most of the construction work on the dam was done by hand, including construction of the dam wall and all associated brick work. All the soil was carted away by mule

carts and oxwagons (numerous horse shoes can still reportedly be found on the site). The dam wall, an earthen structure with a central concrete core and hand-packed rip-rap, was constructed to a height of 32 m, and a length of 350 m. A concrete-lined chute spillway varying from 90 m wide at the crest to 47 m wide at the discharge end is located on the left flank. The concrete outlet tower feeds water to the adjacent purification plant through a concrete culvert beneath the wall.

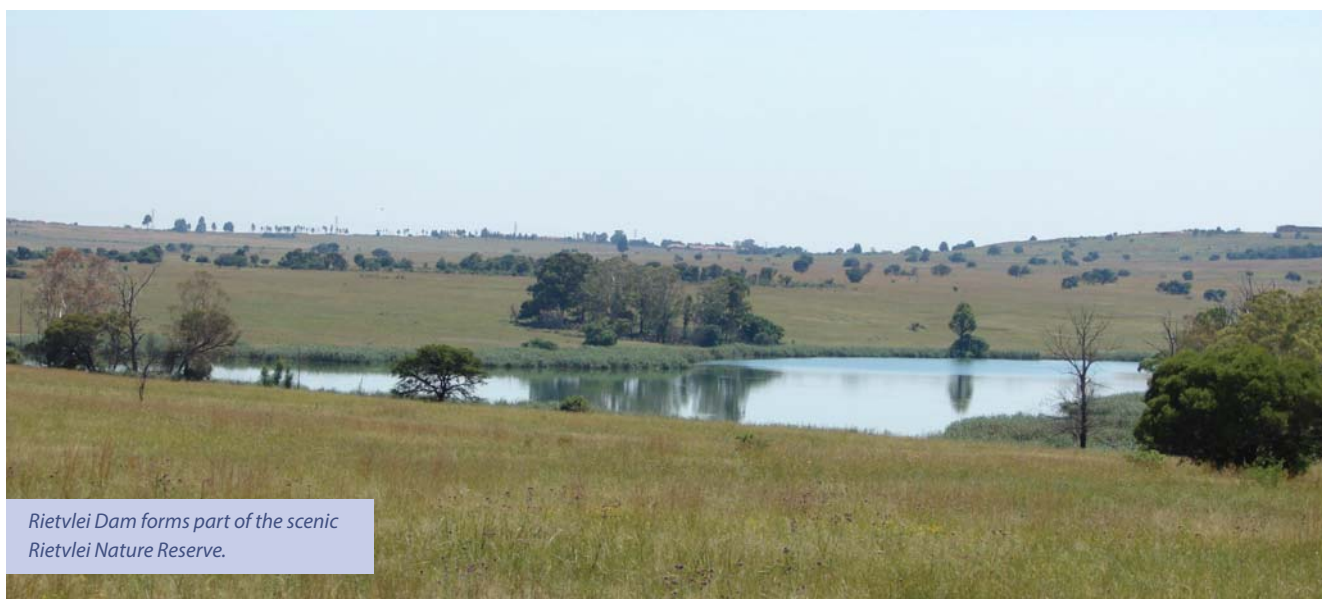
Today, Rietvlei Dam still provides around 15% of the City of Tshwane's water requirements. In 1990, the spillway capacity was increased from 1 100 m³/s to 2 500 m³/s for the dam to meet modern safety requirements. In addition, dam wall stability and the security of the outlet works were improved.



Constructed during the economic depression years of the 1930s, most of the original dam wall was built by hand.



The concrete outlet tower feeds water to the adjacent purification plant.



Rietvlei Dam forms part of the scenic Rietvlei Nature Reserve.