



THE ANNENBERG FOUNDATION TRUST AT SUNNYLANDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Geoffrey Baum, 760-202-2283 or gbaum@sunnylands.org

FAQ: SAVING WATER AT SUNNYLANDS

RANCHO MIRAGE, CALIFORNIA, JUNE 1, 2015 -- Since its inception, The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands has demonstrated a strong commitment to the environment and often uses the 200-acre estate as a living laboratory to test and develop sustainable environmental practices. Before the estate was opened to the public in 2012, Sunnylands invested more than \$7 million in projects aimed at water conservation, including:

- The installation of a state-of the-art irrigation system to manage water consumption.
- The introduction of an advanced water-monitoring system to track usage and ensure efficiency.
- Relining each of the lakes on the property to prevent water loss and seepage into the ground.
- Replacing 60 acres of turf on the historic estate with mulch and drought-tolerant tall grass.

Q: With California's ongoing drought, how is Sunnylands responding now to calls by Gov. Jerry Brown and the Coachella Valley Water District to cut water use by 25 percent and 36 percent, respectively?

A: Sunnylands is largely watering outdoors only between the hours of 7 pm and 7 am. Additionally, Sunnylands is taking these water-saving steps:

- The mile-long strip of grass that lines the perimeter of Sunnylands along Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra drives will be removed and re-landscaped with drought-resistant plants and other material.
- Sunnylands will not overseed the grounds of the historic estate with water-thirsty rye grass, a process that is typically used to keep lawns green in cooler months. In a pilot program last winter, Sunnylands did not overseed 43 acres of the property, including parts of the golf course. The acreage turned brown in winter and reemerged as green in the spring.
- Watering will be reduced 50% on an additional 44 acres of the historic estate.

Q: Will the water-conservation measures change the look of Sunnylands?

A: Yes. Aside from the removal of turf outside Sunnylands' pink wall, visitors will see large sections of brown, dormant Bermuda grass inside the historic estate, particularly in winter months when the grounds are not overseeded. The grass is expected to naturally return to a more verdant state as the weather warms.

Q: Is the golf course used exclusively by the President of the United States?

A: No, the golf course and the estate host a variety of educational and environmental programs. For example, the property's lakes are monitored for wildlife in collaboration with a major environmental group, the Xerces Society. Clients of Desert Arc, the Coachella Valley nonprofit dedicated to providing services to the developmentally disabled, practice for the Special Olympics on the course. Guests attending Sunnylands retreats may also play golf on the course.

Q: Will Sunnylands turn off its fountains?

A: Sunnylands is not under orders to turn off its fountains. The fountains are off on days Sunnylands is closed, including the three summer months when Sunnylands Center & Gardens is closed. Recirculated water is used in the fountains to the greatest extent possible.

Q: Why does Sunnylands maintain a Great Lawn at the Center & Gardens?

A: The Great Lawn is used for programming and educational activities, including yoga, tai chi, themed family days, and musical performances. Lawn space at the Center & Gardens is half an acre. Nine acres are dedicated to a desert garden populated with more than 70 species of arid-adapted plants.

Q: Is Sunnylands subject to any city, state or federal historic preservation measures?

A: No, but the Declaration of Trust requires trustees to “maintain Sunnylands in excellent repair and condition.” Sunnylands remains committed to fulfilling its mission to serve as an impactful venue for high-level retreats, a beautiful and historic site for visitors, and a living laboratory to advance sustainable practices.

For more about sustainability efforts at Sunnylands, read about [our Green Vision](#).

About The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands

The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands, which operates The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands in Rancho Mirage, California, is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit operating entity. The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands hosts high-level retreats that address serious issues facing the nation and the world, including the 2013 meeting between President Obama and President Xi of the People's Republic of China. In addition, Sunnylands offers programs through the Sunnylands Center & Gardens to educate the public about the history of Sunnylands, its architecture, art collections, cultural significance, and sustainable practices. For more information, visit www.sunnylands.org.

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