



*A Message From Secretary Noah Valenstein*

Good Afternoon, All,

Today, I'm pleased to announce that the department will be launching WATER (Water Assistance Tracking and Emergency Response) Tracker, a new online system to coordinate drinking and wastewater utilities across the state during times of emergency. WATER Tracker will replace the former utility coordination system, Storm Tracker, in order to provide a more robust and interactive communication and coordination platform for all water utilities to use in emergency situations, such as hurricanes. WATER Tracker will ensure that needs of individual facilities are met as quickly and efficiently as possible, and that the entire statewide network will run smoothly to better serve the people of Florida.



The system was developed by the Division of Water Resource Management (DWRM) in partnership with the Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA) and will be online this week. I'd like to thank DWRM for the hard work they've put into coordinating and developing Florida's WATER Tracker, and I look forward seeing the system in action and helping utilities provide clean drinking water and the safe collection and treatment of wastewater during the times we'll need it most.

In other news from around the agency, last week at Indian River Lagoon Preserve State Park, Florida Park Service staff offered part of the park for temporary housing to medical professionals through a program called RVs for MDs. This program matches RV owners with travelling medical professionals and first responders who require alternative living situations to protect the health of their families while performing jobs in close proximity to patients with COVID-19.

In an incredible act of kindness, after hearing about the RVs for MDs program, a family drove two hours from Titusville to Indian River Lagoon to deliver their RV to a nurse while she cares for COVID patients at Indian River Hospital in Vero Beach. This "home-away-from-home" will not only keep the nurse safe, but will protect her family as well, and is an excellent example of repurposing of state park facilities, and the kindness of people throughout this state.

These are remarkable examples of what DEP can achieve to both protect the environment and to use our state's natural resources for the benefit of Floridians in a time of need. Both WATER Tracker and the Florida Park Services participation in the RVs for MDs program will have long-lasting effects for Florida and its citizens.



As we talk about often with OneDEP, our successes should be celebrated together – both big and small, and I thank DWRM and the staff at Indian River Lagoon State Park for sharing this news with the rest of the agency.

Thank you all for continuing to protect Florida's environment, working hard, and persisting to find new and innovative ways to keep our agency working at its best – for the people and natural resources of Florida.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Noah Valenstein', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Noah Valenstein

