

Firefighters Turn To 'Rain For Rent' To Protect Glacier Park Attractions

By MAXINE SPEIER • 17 HOURS AGO

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Rain for Rent high-capacity pumps, pipes, and sprinklers headed for Lake McDonald Lodge to create a curtain of water if necessary, September 7, 2017.
GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

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With large fires burning across nearly 1.5 million acres nationwide and no end to the fire season in sight, fire management crews in Montana are starting to think outside the box.

"Part of the issue is that there are so many fires throughout the west that the regular kinds of pumps that firefighters use are all in use in other locations," says Diane Sine, a spokeswoman for the management team on the Sprague Fire that's burning in Glacier National Park.

She says fire managers at the park are trying something new in an effort to protect the historic Lake McDonald lodge that is currently being threatened by the same fire that destroyed a similar beloved landmark, the Sperry Chalet, just last week.

Thursday, firefighters near the lodge began installing a system of high-capacity pumps and pipes that will pull water from the lake to hold back the Sprague fire.

"This is actually a larger capacity discharge than is normally used in wildland firefighting anyway, so it just gives us that added advantage with the structures

there."

The high capacity sprinkler system is being contracted from a company called Rain For Rent. And what does it look like?



Structure Protection Measures at Lake McDonald Lodge area on September 3, 2017.

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"Basically, if you can picture an aluminum irrigation system that would be used in agricultural applications."

Sine says the system should be up and running soon, and will be used to add humidity to the area, and to create a curtain of water around the Lake McDonald Lodge structures should the fire get closer.

Although Rain For Rent has been used in some fire applications in the past, this is the first time it is being used by this crew and the first time it is being used in Glacier National Park.

For the past few days, thick smoke trapped in the area has kept fire activity to a minimum, but Sine says people are staying vigilant to see what happens when the weather pattern moves on.

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