

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/27/2021 12:52:59 PM

First name: adam

Last name: jacobs

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a winter hiker and ice climber who will be adversely impacted by the removal of Hermit Lake shelters 3, 5, 6 and 7. These lean-tos provide crucial overnight shelter in the dead of winter and get climbers off the cold ground. The Harvard Cabin does not provide adequate space for the amount of winter climbers who visit Tuckerman and Huntington Ravine. While adding tent platforms and a single Mahoosuc-style shelter is a nice gesture, neither of these options mitigate the primary benefit of the shelters that are proposed to be removed when it comes to winter overnights - staying dry! Even a good 4 season tent inevitably builds up condensation on the interior. When your body is burning large amounts of calories to stay warm, you need every bit of protection from the weather possible to be able to maintain the strength needed to complete a winter alpine climb. Removing these shelters quite literally makes climbing in the ravines in winter less safe. While I understand the need to mitigate the snow loading issues from these shelters, they seem to have survived quite well over many decades of winters. IF there is a critical need to replace these shelters, I implore the USFS to find a way to ensure the replacement shelters include doors that enable full shelter from the elements. Better yet, why not invest in structural improvements to the existing shelters that would negate the need for new virgin materials to be used in constructing a replacement shelter? More tent pads do very little to help me safely ascend these beautiful ravines in winter conditions, and with the weight of a full rack of ice screws, rope, and other climbing gear - the last thing I want to do is haul up a 4-season tent that doesn't provide nearly the same protection from the elements and the dangerous factor that is moisture! Simply put - the existing shelters with closable doors are critically important to climbers, and removing them removes a layer of safety and protection for all who recreate on the east side of Mount Washington. This also increases the risk of cold weather ailments such as hypothermia for climbers and skiers, which in turn, puts first responder and volunteer Search and Rescue at a higher risk as well. I have attached a picture of a March 2021 ascent of North Gully in Huntington Ravine where we used Hermit Lake Shelter #7 as a basecamp. The following day, a father and his young son used that same shelter as their basecamp for a ski trip up Tuckerman's. Without access to these dry shelters, less people will be able to experience these ravine's in all their glory. Please do not remove that opportunity for us.