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First name: Mark
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Organization: Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon
Title: Executive Director
Comments: Ranger Russ Hansen and Supervisor David Whittekiend,

I am writing to express my strong support for the restoration of the historic Emerald Lake Shelter on Mount Timpanogos. This shelter is a vital part of the area's cultural and historical heritage and plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and well-being of the many hikers who explore this beautiful wilderness each year.

I understand that the Forest Service is currently seeking input on a proposal to reconstruct the Emerald Lake Shelter within the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness, Utah County, Utah. As a structure eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the Emerald Lake Shelter contributes to the character of the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness as an Other Feature of Value, recognized for its cultural, scenic, and historical significance.

The historic nature of this project is particularly noteworthy given that the shelter was constructed in 1960, well before the passage of the 1984 Wilderness Act, which established the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness. The shelter's presence prior to the Act's enactment underscores its long-standing role in the area, and its repairs should be considered grandfathered in under this historical context. This consideration is crucial to ensuring that the restoration can proceed without unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles, allowing the shelter to continue serving its original purpose.

The Proposed Action to reconstruct the Emerald Lake Shelter to similar specifications as the existing structure is a necessary and commendable step in preserving this important landmark. The shelter's history, dating back to its construction with the support of Utah County, the U.S. Forest Service, Provo City, the Provo Chamber of Commerce, and Brigham Young University, reflects the community's deep connection to Mount Timpanogos and the shared commitment to ensuring the safety of those who venture into the wilderness.

The shelter has been a lifeline for countless hikers over the years, providing essential protection from the elements and serving as a base for the Timpanogos Emergency Response Team. Its role in the historic Mount Timpanogos Hike, a tradition that continues to this day, further underscores its cultural significance.

Restoring the Emerald Lake Shelter will not only preserve a critical piece of Utah's history but will also continue to provide a safe refuge for hikers, ensuring that future generations can enjoy the same experiences that have drawn people to Mount Timpanogos for over a century.

I strongly urge you to proceed with the reconstruction of the Emerald Lake Shelter and to secure the necessary funding and resources to preserve this invaluable structure, considering its pre-1984 establishment and the need for its repairs to be appropriately grandfathered in.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing efforts to protect and preserve our national forests.

Sincerely,
Mark Allen
Executive Director
Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon