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Organization: Timpanogos Emergency Response Team

Title: Team Leader/Director of Training

Comments: I have volunteered with the Timpanogos Emergency Response team since 1996, and have helped thousands of hikers on the trail. This is an amazing mountain, and due to its close proximity to the valley, it is heavily trafficked by people who are frequently unprepared for the rigors of the elevation change and weather conditions. The mountain has gotten steadily busier in the years that I have volunteered, and so has the call volume for help. TERT's motto is to keep "small things small" - we regularly filter water, provide electrolytes, and give first aid to stabilize people until they can be evacuated by our partners at Utah County Search and Rescue, or become sufficiently well to get themselves off the mountain (ideal!) Last year, Search and Rescue had a staggering call volume, nearly 100 more for the year than any prior year, many of them on Timpanogos. Equally, TERT helped many hundreds of hikers and prevented additional evacuations.

Timpanogos is a wilderness area. TERT educates hikers regularly about leave no trace, no fires, not cutting trails, etc. However, any evacuation that is necessary is intrusive on the wilderness experience. One of the most important assets we've had on the mountain for many decades to reduce evacuations is the Emerald Lake Shelter to give people reprieve from inclement weather. I have personally cared for many altitude sick, dehydrated, and injured hikers in the shelter until it was collapsed by a heavy snow year. Most of those people went on to hike themselves down, avoiding a helicopter ride or complicated ground rescue that requires a large team for carry out. I recognize there is a balance between leaving everything completely natural with no man made structures for the wilderness experience vs. maintaining the historically significant shelter that has quite literally saved many lives over the years.

I respectfully request that you restore the shelter to its functional state.