

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/9/2024 9:27:10 PM

First name: Burt

Last name: Culver

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service Officials,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed Emerald Lake Shelter Reconstruction Project within the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness. While I appreciate the Forest Service's intent to improve the area, I firmly believe that the current proposal fundamentally contradicts the very essence of Wilderness preservation.

The Wilderness Act's mandate is clear: to protect lands "where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." The Emerald Lake Shelter, a man-made structure, inherently detracts from the natural character of this Wilderness. Rebuilding it with the use of helicopters and motorized equipment further compounds the intrusion.

The Forest Service's own wilderness policy acknowledges the need for visitors to be self-sufficient and prepared for the challenges of the wilderness environment. The presence of a shelter can foster a false sense of security, encouraging unprepared visitors and potentially increasing the burden on search and rescue operations.

Furthermore, the notion that a structure like the Quonset hut contributes to the wilderness character of the area is a gross misinterpretation of the Wilderness Act. The Act explicitly prohibits structures except in the rarest of circumstances where they are the absolute minimum necessary for Wilderness preservation. The Emerald Lake Shelter fails to meet this stringent criterion.

I urge the Forest Service to adopt an alternative that respects the wild nature of the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness. The metal remnants of the Quonset hut should be allowed to naturally deteriorate and fade into the landscape, or, if removal is deemed necessary, it should be accomplished using non-motorized and non-mechanized methods that are consistent with Wilderness principles.

The Mount Timpanogos Wilderness is a precious resource that deserves our utmost protection. Let us not compromise its wild character in the name of convenience or misguided notions of improvement.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,  
Burt Culver