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Comments:

We are writing with concern about the Forest Service's proposal for the Emerald Lake Shelter Reconstruction Project in the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness along the Wasatch Front in Utah.

This proposal would seriously degrade this rugged, high elevation Wilderness.

The Forest Service's first responsibility is to protect the wild character of the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness, rather than any structures such as the Quinset hut, which degrades the area and is not necessary to administer the Wilderness.

The Forest Service's own wilderness policy recognizes that a structure is not needed for visitor use, stating that visitors must be prepared on their own to face "inherent risks of adverse weather conditions, isolation, physical hazards, and lack of rapid communications, and that search and rescue may not be as rapid as expected in an urban setting."

In addition, the Forest Service's proposal to use helicopters and build a new improved structure is antithetical to Wilderness. It is a perversion of the Wilderness Act to declare such a structure is part of the wilderness character of the area when the Act clearly precludes structures.

Therefore, our comment is that the Forest Service must adopt an alternative that lets the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness be wild by allowing the metal remnants of the Quonset hut to fade with time, or by using wilderness-compatible means, such as non-motorized/non-mechanized tools, to remove it.

Thank you for your consideration.