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Comments: Thank you for accepting my comments on the Emerald Lake Shelter Reconstruction Project. While the proposal aims to improve the wilderness character of the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness along the Wasatch Front in Utah, in reality, the agency's proposal would seriously degrade this rugged, high elevation Wilderness.

The Forest Service proposes to use helicopters and other motorized equipment to reconstruct the Emerald Lake Shelter, a sheet metal Quonset hut in the Wilderness. The Wilderness Act prohibits structures, with a very narrow exception for those that are the minimum necessary to preserve Wilderness. This out-of-place hut not only detracts from the Wilderness, but also fails to meet this Wilderness Act requirement.

Rather than adhere to the Wilderness Act, the Forest Service incorrectly asserts that this structure is part of the area's wilderness character and needs to be rebuilt/updated to protect the Wilderness. This is false.

The proposal includes helicopter flights, motorized equipment, cement mixers, and other motorized tools. Incidentally, the original hut was supposedly built without helicopters or motorized access, and most supplies were packed in.

The natural deterioration of structures is part of Wilderness-it is evidence of untrammeled and timeless natural processes reclaiming the Wilderness from temporary human occupation. Structures should be removed if that can be done in a manner consistent with wilderness principles and if the impact from removing the structure is less than the impact from leaving the structure. This hut is not listed on the national register of historic places, though it has been proposed for listing. Even if listed, it could be documented but should be allowed to fade into 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."

The Forest Service needs to preserve the Wilderness characteristics of Mount Timpanogos Wilderness and allow the structure to degrade with time, or use only wilderness-compatible methods (non-motorized and non-mechanized tools) to remove it.

Thank you.