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Comments: The Forest Service's foremost responsibility is to protect the wild character of the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness. The agency's own wilderness policy affirms that structures are not necessary for visitor use and that visitors must be prepared 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 keeping with this mandate, the Forest Service must analyze and adopt an alternative that allows the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness to remain truly wild-either by allowing the metal remnants of the Quonset hut to naturally fade over time or by using traditional, wilderness-compatible methods to remove them. The remaining rock and cement materials could be carefully dismantled and allowed to return to the landscape. The claim that the structure cannot be dismantled-or even repaired-without motorized equipment is unfounded. Notably, the Forest Service originally built the hut without the use of motorized tools.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) fails to provide critical details, such as the number of helicopter flights or the duration of the proposed project. It merely asserts, without substantiation, that pack stock is impractical and that unnamed stock users declined to bring animals to the site. This assertion is questionable, especially since the Forest Service itself maintains wilderness pack stock, and there is no evidence the agency consulted its own personnel on the matter.

Given the scale of the proposed project-which involves helicopter flights, jackhammers, cement mixers, and other motorized tools in designated Wilderness-an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is clearly warranted. Such significant intrusion into protected Wilderness requires a more thorough and transparent analysis than what is provided in the current EA.