

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/11/2025 6:07:06 PM

First name: Lin

Last name: Provost

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Forest Service's first responsibility is to protect the wild character of the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness. The agency'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."

Help stop a construction project in the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness

The Forest Service is accepting public comments on its proposal to reconstruct a useless, dilapidated, sheet metal Quonset hut in the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness along the Wasatch Front in northern Utah that was damaged by snow during the winter of 2021-2022. As part of the construction plan, the agency would invade the Wilderness with helicopters, jackhammers, cement mixers, and other motorized equipment. Absurdly the Forest Service claims that rebuilding the structure would improve the area's wilderness character.

Your letters are needed by July 25 to protect the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness from the Forest Service's foolhardy project. We must convince the agency to let the Wilderness be wild by allowing the hut to fade with time, or by using wilderness-compatible means to remove the collapsed hut's remnants.

The 20 x 18-foot metal Quonset hut with a cemented rock retaining wall was originally completed in 1960. Prior to the area's 1984 wilderness designation, the hut provided shelter and restrooms for an annual public group hike that was first organized in 1912. The hut was used during this annual hike until the event's excessive impacts caused the Forest Service to ask hike organizers to end it after 8,000 people attempted to reach Mount Timpanogos' summit during the 1969 group hike. So, the group hike ended, and about 15 years later the area became part of the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness. The hut's condition deteriorated over the decades and collapsed during the winter of 2021-2022.

The Wilderness Act prohibits structures, with a very narrow exception for those that are the minimum necessary to preserve Wilderness—a high bar to achieve. This out-of-place hut not only detracts from the Wilderness, but also fails to meet this Wilderness Act requirement.

The Forest Service must analyze and 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 to remove it. The remaining rock and cement could be safely dismantled and allowed to fade back into the Wilderness. The claim that it can't be dismantled (or even repaired) using traditional means is false, as the Forest Service built the hut without motorized equipment.

The EA does not detail how many helicopter flights are expected or the duration of the project. It only alleges, without proof, that stock is impractical and stock users (unidentified) said they wouldn't take their animals up there. The Forest Service has wilderness stock. There is no indication the agency asked its own people.

For such a massive undertaking, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is needed, especially because the Forest Service proposes a project in Wilderness involving helicopter flights, motorized equipment, jackhammers, cement mixers, and other motorized tools.

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. I do not understand how this improves the wilderness character - it seems to me that it would distract from it.