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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To: U.S. Forest Service

Subject: Opposing Quonset Hut Reconstruction in Mount Timpanogos Wilderness

Dear Forest Service Officials,

I'm writing to respectfully urge you not to proceed with the proposal to reconstruct the Quonset hut in the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness Area. Rebuilding this damaged metal structure is not only inconsistent with the principles of wilderness preservation, it would also set a troubling precedent for human development in places intended to remain untouched by modern infrastructure.

The Wilderness Act of 1964-and the Forest Service's own policy-makes clear that wilderness users are expected to be self-reliant, prepared to deal with weather, remoteness, and natural hazards without artificial shelter or rapid access to emergency services. The existence of this Quonset hut was always a deviation from the wilderness ideal, and now that it has been compromised by natural forces, it offers a rare opportunity to let the land heal and return to a more natural state.

Rather than rebuilding the hut using modern materials and intrusive equipment such as helicopters, jackhammers, and cement mixers, the Forest Service should focus on removing the remaining metal in a way that respects the wilderness character-or allow it to deteriorate naturally. The foundation stones and cement base could be disassembled by hand, and left to blend back into the landscape. It's worth noting that the original construction was accomplished without motorized equipment, making the claim that such tools are now required unconvincing.

The Environmental Assessment currently offered lacks essential detail. It fails to specify how many helicopter flights would be needed, how long the work would take, or what impacts this construction would have on wildlife and visitor experience. It also dismisses the use of pack animals without clearly explaining why. The Forest Service has its own wilderness-qualified stock teams-was their expertise even consulted? Such significant mechanical intrusion into a wilderness area, especially without fully examining alternatives, requires an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under NEPA.

More than a shelter, this hut has come to represent a difficult choice between preserving history and honoring the wild nature of wilderness. I believe the right decision is to let nature take its course, as the Wilderness Act intended. Please choose an alternative that avoids reconstruction and affirms your responsibility to protect the undeveloped character of Mount Timpanogos for future generations.

Thank you for considering this comment.