~~What is claimed is:~~CLAIMS

1. A topical oil-in-water emulsion composition comprising:

(a) a discontinuous oil phase;

(b) a continuous aqueous phase comprising water;

(c) a thickening agent;

(d) at least one lamellar membrane structure comprising (i) a phospholipid which is hydrogenated phosphatidylcholine, (ii) a fatty alcohol which is behenyl alcohol or a mixture of cetyl alcohol and behenyl alcohol, and (iii) a fatty acid which is behenic acid,~~;~~ and (iv) an ester of a fatty acid and a fatty alcohol which is isostearyl isostearate,

wherein the fatty alcohol and the phospholipid are present in a weight ratio of from about 10:1 to about 1:1; the fatty alcohol and the fatty acid are present in a weight ratio of from about 10:1 to about 1:1; and the fatty alcohol and the ester are present in a weight ratio of from about 10:1 to about 1:1; and

wherein in use the composition has a water vapor transmission rate of less than about 70 $g.m^{-2}.hr^{-1}$ measured *in vitro* using the *mod*WVTR test methodology.

~~2. The composition according to claim 1, wherein the composition further comprises glycerin in an amount from about 1% to about 40% by weight, based on the total weight of the composition.~~

~~3~~2. The composition according to claim 1~~ or 2~~, wherein the composition further comprises glycerin in an amount from about 5% to about 15% by weight, based on the total weight of the composition.

~~4. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the phospholipid is selected from the group consisting of lecithin, hydrogenated lecithin, phosphatidylcholine, hydrogenated phosphatidylcholine, and mixtures thereof.~~

~~5. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the phospholipid is hydrogenated phosphatidylcholine.~~

~~6~~3.The composition according to ~~any one of~~ claim~~s~~ 1~~ to 5~~, wherein the phospholipid is present in an amount from about 0.5% to about 5% by weight, based on the total weight of the composition.

~~7. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the fatty alcohol is a C_{12} C_{36} fatty alcohol.~~

~~8. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the fatty alcohol is a C_{18} C_{36} fatty alcohol.~~

~~9. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the fatty alcohol is a C_{20}-C_{26} fatty alcohol.~~

~~10. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein the fatty alcohol is a C_{22} fatty alcohol.~~

~~11~~4. The composition according to ~~any one of~~ claim~~s~~ 1 ~~to 10~~, wherein the fatty alcohol is present in an amount from about 2% to about 15% by weight, based on the total weight of the composition.

~~12. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the fatty alcohol and the phospholipid are present in a weight ratio from about 10: 1 to about 1 : 1.~~

~~13. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the fatty alcohol and the phospholipid are present in a weight ratio from about 8: 1 to about 2: 1.~~

~~14. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 13, wherein the fatty alcohol and the phospholipid are present in a weight ratio from about 5: 1 to about 4: 1.~~

~~15. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein the fatty acid is a C_{12} to C_{36} fatty acid.~~

~~16. The composition according to claim 15, wherein the fatty acid is a C_{18} to C_{36} fatty acid.~~

~~17. The composition according to claim 15, wherein the fatty acid is a C_{20} to C_{26} fatty acid.~~

~~18. The composition according to claim 15, wherein the fatty acid is a C_{22} fatty acid.~~

~~19~~5. The composition according to ~~any one of~~ claim~~s~~ 1~~5 to 18~~, wherein the fatty acid is present in an amount from about 0.1% to about 5% by weight, based on the total weight of the composition.

~~20. The composition according to any one of claims 15 to 19, wherein the fatty alcohol and the fatty acid are present in a weight ratio from about 10: 1 to about 1: 1.~~

~~21. The composition according to any one of claims 15 to 20, wherein the fatty alcohol and the fatty acid are present in a weight ratio from about 8: 1 to about 4: 1.~~

~~22. The composition according to any one of claims 15 to 21, wherein the phospholipid and fatty acid are present in a weight ratio from about 5: 1 to about 1:5.~~

~~23. The composition according to any one of claims 15 to 22, wherein the fatty acid and phospholipid are present in a weight ratio from about 2: 1 to about 1 :2.~~

~~24. The composition according to any one of claims 15 to 23, wherein the phospholipid and the fatty acid are present in a weight ratio from about 2: 1 to about 1: 1.~~

~~25. The composition according to any of claims 1 to 24, further comprising an ester of a fatty acid and a fatty alcohol.~~

~~26. The composition according to claim 25, wherein the ester is of a branched fatty acid and a branched fatty alcohol.~~

~~27. The composition according to claim 26, wherein the ester is an ester of a C_{16} to C_{22} branched fatty acid and a Ci6 to C22 branched fatty alcohol.~~

~~28. The composition according to claim 26 or 27, wherein the ester is isostearyl isostearate.~~

~~29~~6. The composition according to ~~any one of~~ claim~~s 25 to 28~~1, wherein the ester is present in an amount from about 0.1% to about 5% by weight, based on the total weight of the composition.

~~30~~7. The composition according to ~~any one of the preceding~~ claim~~s~~ 1, which further comprises at least one dermatologically acceptable excipient selected from an antioxidant, a chelating agent, a preservative, a colorant, a sensate, a moisturizer, a humectant, a pH adjusting agent, and combinations and mixtures thereof.

~~31~~8. The composition according to ~~any one of the preceding~~ claim~~s~~ 1, which further comprises at least one pharmaceutically acceptable active agent.

~~32. A method for moisturizing, and protecting, repairing, or restoring the skin lipid barrier of a mammal, the method comprising applying to the skin of the mammal in need thereof an effective amount of a topical oil-in-water emulsion composition comprising a composition according to any of claims 1 to 31.~~

9. The composition according to claim 1 wherein the weight ratio of the phospholipid:fatty alcohol:fatty acid:ester is about 1.4:6.4:1:1.