What is claimed is:

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, (ii) a fatty alcohol, and (iii) a fatty acid; 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 5% to about 15% by weight, based on the total weight of the composition.

3. The composition according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the phospholipid is selected from the group consisting of lecithin, hydrogenated lecithin, phosphatidylcholine, hydrogenated phosphatidylcholine, and mixtures thereof.

4. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the phospholipid is hydrogenated phosphatidylcholine.

5. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 4, 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.

6. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the fatty alcohol is a C_{18}-C_{36} fatty alcohol.

7. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the fatty alcohol is a C_{22} fatty alcohol.

8. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 7, 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.

9. The composition according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the fatty acid is a C_{12} to C_{36} fatty acid.

10. The composition according to claim 9, wherein the fatty acid is a C_{20} to C_{26} fatty acid.

11. The composition according to claim 9 or claim 10, 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.

12. The composition according to any of claims 1 to 11, further comprising an ester of a fatty acid and a fatty alcohol.

13. The composition according to claim 12, wherein the ester is of a branched fatty acid and a branched fatty alcohol.

14. The composition according to claim 13, wherein the ester is an ester of a C_{16} to C_{22} branched fatty acid and a C_{16} to C_{22} branched fatty alcohol.

15. The composition according to any one of claims 12 to 14, 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.

16. The composition according to any one of the preceding claims 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.

17. The composition according to any one of the preceding claims which further comprises at least one pharmaceutically acceptable active agent.

18. Use of a topical oil-in-water emulsion composition according to any of claims 1 to 17 in the manufacture of a medicament for moisturizing, and protecting, repairing, or restoring the skin lipid barrier of a mammal.

19. A topical oil-in-water emulsion composition according to any of claims 1 to 17 for use in moisturizing, and protecting, repairing, or restoring the skin lipid barrier of a mammal.