

June 8, 2020

Ms. Holly Jewkes  
Supervisor, Deschutes National Forest  
63095 Deschutes Market Road  
Bend, OR 97701

**RE: Plea for Class-1 E-bikes for Seniors on Deschutes National Forest Single-Track Trails**

I am a 70 year-old man retired in Bend. I am also a volunteer on behalf of Deschutes National Forest (DNF) through Discover your Forest. It is my pleasure to be a volunteer on one of the best managed forests I have ever lived near over the course of my lifetime of having lived in the Midwest, South, Northeast, and Western US. I heartily thank all of those serving as dedicated employees of DNF for their stewardship of the precious resource all of us in Central Oregon are lucky enough to have and enjoy right here in our own back yard.

During the pandemic one of the things that has kept me sane is to get to forest lands to ride my mountain bike. We are blessed here in Central Oregon to have many single-track, and other trails, housed in DNF. I can get away from crowds and get exercise on trails quickly in this area. However, as I have aged, I find myself getting off my mountain bike more frequently to walk up the steeper hills on the Phil's Trailhead Complex of single-track trails. Now beset with some pulmonary insufficiency, I become short of breath on steep hill climbs on my mountain bike. Given my age-related decline in physical strength and stamina, along with shortness of breath on climbs, a Class-1 E-bike would allow me to continue enjoying single-track trails while getting exercise beneficial to my quality of life.

I am a bit chagrined to find that DNF prohibits all E-bikes on single-track trails. This in the face of the fact per the USFS national website, that 40% of all trails on USFS managed forests and grasslands allow E-bikes. I don't understand why DNF does not at least allow Class-1 E-bikes since they are limited to 20 mph maximum assistance and only operate only when the rider pedals. However, there may indeed be rationale for not allowing Class-2 & 3 E-bikes on narrow single-track trails.

The rationale for allowing Class-1 E-bikes is that they are only pedal-assisted - meaning the electric assistance of the motor will not operate unless the rider is pedaling. Also, the bike limits the assistance to 20 mph maximum, and the electric wattage is generally less than Class-2 & 3 E-bikes. Class-2 & 3 E-bikes have a throttle in effect that can propel the bicycles without a rider pedaling, and with higher wattage motors on some E-bikes which can reach speeds up to 30-40 mph.

I believe that DNF marks all of its trails, and some paved paths, with "No Motor Vehicles" to prevent ATVs, Motorcycles, Cars/Trucks/RVs from using said trails. That is clearly understandable since most trails and paths are most suitable for pedestrians and bicycles.

However, there is a very interesting definition that the USFS uses for 'Motor Vehicle' that resides in the CFRs:

***36 CFR § 212.1 Motor vehicle. Any vehicle which is self-propelled, other than: (1) A vehicle operated on rails; and (2) Any wheelchair or mobility device, including one that is battery-powered, that is designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion, and that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area.***

The 'Motor Vehicle' CFR definition does not disqualify a Class-1 E-bike from being used on trails in DNF. A Class-1 E-bike is not self-propelled. It only engages the motor assistance when a rider pedals. Thus, in my opinion, the definition and issue needs to be revisited and the definition either adjusted to include Class-1 E-bikes, or that DNF should embrace a rule change that allows Class-1 E-bikes on all its trails and paved pathway systems.

Locally in Central Oregon, the Central Oregon Trail Alliance (COTA) is tacitly biased against any E-bikes on any of the trails they maintain on public lands. This is unfortunate since I am a member of COTA, and I value the work they do in creating, maintaining, and promoting the sport of Mountain Biking. The case against E-bikes that I have heard and read about include the concern that they may degrade single-track trails (eg spinning of rear wheels) and potentially cause speeding incidents. While the potential for those E-bikes that are Class-2 & 3 could potentially do just that may be justified, that is simply not the case with Class-1 E-bikes.

The other case against E-bikes is that I have heard that mountain bike single-track 'purists' insist that E-bikes will destroy the pure sport of human-powered mountain biking on single-track trails. To that I say, the USFS public lands are for everyone, not just a select group of sports-enthusiasts biased against a pedal-assisted E-bike for seniors who could use an assist to continue to enjoy public trails. To those much younger riders who by my observation are intent on as much speed as possible going downhill, I would suggest they take that specific interest to Mt. Bachelor where ostensibly they can go as fast as they wish on the dedicated downhill courses thereon.

It is also my observation on the DNF single-track trails that all level of riders are on the trails from children to seniors. Thus, in the course of a day's ride, some will be passed routinely by those going faster, and that proximity of slower and faster pedaling cyclists should not upset 'purists', since the trails are not for sporting competitions only, but for everyday riders enjoying our forest lands. Additionally, COTA has done a spectacular job of creating special zones in the Phil's Complex for those who wish to embrace jumps and other challenging maneuvers and terrain, while the vast majority of the single-track trails are for riders of all levels, and the trails are marked according to difficulty as such. It is a shame as a senior with diminishing physical stamina, that I cannot use a pedal-assisted E-bike on DNF single-track trails – and I am not alone.

Locally here in Central Oregon there are others discussing the wish to have the assistance of E-bikes as well. These needs are from the rapidly growing retirement community in our area. In

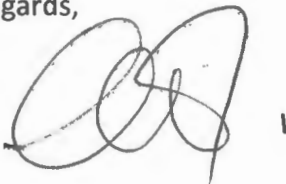
our local newspaper, *The Bulletin*, articles about seniors with age-related issues wishing they also could use the assistance of the appropriate E-bike to give them the boost they need on trails have been published. I have printed some off for your review. The most interesting part of the articles are some of the comments from the community – of course some are for, and some are against E-bikes on trails. I can also assure you that I, and other 65+ Seniors, are the age-group the least interested in degradation of single-track trails, and/or creating speeding incidents.

At the least DNF should allow pedal-assisted Class 1 E-bikes that do not exceed 20 mph for those 65+ years old. This would allow those of us with some physical limitation to continue to remain active using the trails. Capping a rule to an age group may be controversial, but it is this age group that needs the most assistance offered by E-bikes in order to remain active and be able to use our public lands that have bicycle trails.

I posit a compromise for seniors 65+ being able to use single-track trails with limited top speeds using pedal-assisted bikes would not be too far from the intent of what the American Disability Act (ADA) did for the disabled wherein some logical and needed accommodation was made for those with physical limitations. While recreation is not the same necessity that the availability of restrooms and entrances to buildings for those benefiting from the ADA, as one ages past 65, many folks could use an assist on an e-bike in order to remain active and to manage trails with hills.

I have discussed this matter via Zoom with Justin Ewer, and we had a constructive conversation, and I greatly appreciated his willingness to embrace the discussion. I realize he is not in a position by himself to drive a change in the current rule of no E-bikes on single-track trails in DNF. However, I am hoping that your review of my plea and the correspondence enclosed will help drive a consideration for a change in allowing the usage of Class-1 E-bikes on DNF public lands that have bicycle trails and other roadways for Seniors 65+. I would be happy to engage anyone at DNF in additional discussion if there is any need for clarification or additional dialogue that I could provide toward my plea. I thank you in advance for your consideration of the needs of the 65+ age group in remaining active, healthy and out on public land trails using Class- 1 E-bikes.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "ERICH D. RYLL, JR.", written in a cursive style.

Erich D. Ryll, Jr.  
61258 SW Brookside Loop  
Bend, Oregon 97702

541-797-6537

enlryll@bendbroadband.com

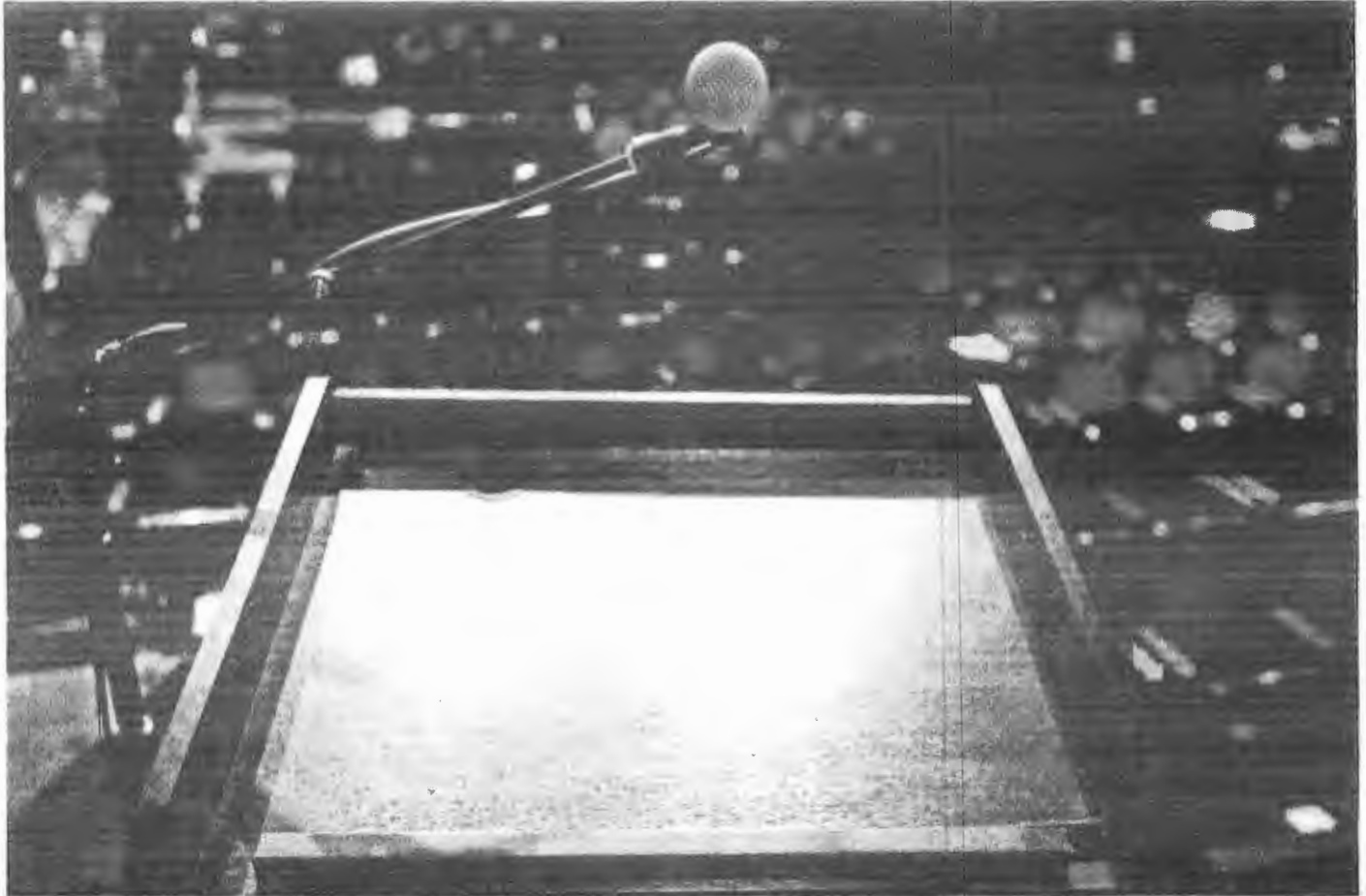
Enclosures: Online Version of Columns Published from *The Bulletin*, Bend, Oregon:  
Guest Column, May 9, 2020 – *Snobbery on the bike trails*  
Editorial, May 12, 2020 – *Editorial: Let the e-bikes roam*  
Guest Column, May 13, 2020 – *E-bikes should be allowed on trails*  
Guest Column, May 20, 2020 – *COTA's role in the e-bike debate*

[https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/guest-column-snobbery-on-the-bike-trails/article\\_b99621fa-8fd6-11ea-bb11-037478a36e53.html](https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/guest-column-snobbery-on-the-bike-trails/article_b99621fa-8fd6-11ea-bb11-037478a36e53.html)

## Guest Column: Snobbery on the bike trails

BY JERRY MARCYK

May 9, 2020



Bulletin file photo

---

### Editor's Note

Do you have a point you'd like to make or an issue you feel strongly about? Submit a letter to the editor or a guest column.

During the COVID quarantine, I've been riding my bike a lot, and I've noticed new signs put up on the Phil's Trail system by the USFS and the Central Oregon Trail Association posting "No E-bikes" and "No Pedal Assist."

I am 68 years old and have been a bike enthusiast all my life. Three years ago, I had a heart attack and an emergency triple bypass. My heart blood-pumping function was rated as “failure” after my surgery, and a subsequent pacemaker implant has improved it up to “below average.” My cardiologist tells me that it will never get back to “normal.”

I bought an electric mountain bike so that I have the stamina and confidence to continue my bike riding enjoyment. My bike has “pedal assist ,” which means that it has an electric motor that amplifies the torque provided by my legs. The amplification can be selected in four ranges from “eco” to “turbo.” There is no throttle, and my bike does not move unless I pedal it. The electric assist is limited to a maximum 25 mile per hour, which I can reach only when going downhill.

I’ve had multiple comments from avid mountain bike enthusiasts about my electric bike ranging from neutral to hostile. The most aggressive being “If I ever catch you on a trail, it’s going to get ugly. Real ugly.”

Let me share with you some of the reasons that I was given by people objecting to my e-bike and my rebuttal. “You’re going to be ripping up the trails.” No, my bike has the same form, function and tires as mountain bike. “You’re going to be kicking up rooster tails.” No, I can’t rev my engine and spin out. “That’s just cheating” Maybe, but my pedal assist is just like using a lower gear. “You’re going to be zooming by people”. No, I can’t go any faster on a single track than you can. “I’ve got to use my muscles to go up hill.” Yes, and so do I. “You need to be physically fit to mountain bike.” Wow, that’s just snobbery. “There are lots of forest roads where you can ride instead” So the trails were created for only a select few? “The COTA trails are reserved for human-powered bikes.” Pedaling my bike is not human powered?

The Central Oregon Trail Association’s mission is to provide for “human-powered multi-use trails.” While an e-bike is considered a bicycle on a road, COTA considers it a motorized vehicle on a single track trail.

The National Forest Service has taken COTA's position on the subject. Unlike a wheelchair or a scooter, the USFS does not consider an e-bike as an enabling device for the physically challenged. That's where I disagree. My e-bike allows me access to enjoy public lands just like any other citizen. I would definitely not be able to access the Phil's Trail system without this assistance, and my family would not let me ride on a mountain bike trail without it.

I believe that it is a blatant form of elitism and discrimination against the elderly and physically challenged to prevent pedal assist bikes on trails. Take down the "No Pedal Assist" signs: You are preventing me from using and enjoying public lands.

Jerry Marcyk lives in Bend.

## (5) comments

pdqwest May 12, 2020 5:50pm

I rode a regular mountain bike for 30 years. However, as an above knee amputee with 4 fused vertebrae and an upcoming hip replacement I too switched to an electric pedal assist bike. It is basically a Specialized Stumpjumper that can't go any faster than most other riders. This has allowed me to get back in shape physically and it has done more for me mentally than I can possibly describe. I can now ride without extreme pain and I can even keep up with my family and friends again. Most people who see me have nothing but positive comments. However, there are always a couple of snobs who just can't help themselves and feel the need to school me. I just smile and nod. I am not hurting anyone and doing absolutely no more damage than any other bike.

Report Add Reply

City MTB May 10, 2020 6:11pm

This is a misunderstanding of why e-MTBs are not allowed on trails managed as non-motorized. e-MTBs contain a motor. Hence, on lands managed as non-motorized, by definition, they can not be allowed. Whatever a person says to the author on the trail, the fact is its the legal hurdles that will keep e-MTBs off mo

Here is a primer on Oregon access, starting on page 16:  
<https://www.tcnf.legal/app/uploads/2018/08/Oregon-E-Bike-Rights-A-Legal-Guide-for-Electric-Bike-Riders.pdf>

Report Add Reply

jb May 10, 2020 1:20pm

This is a great editorial. I run and mountain bike a lot at Phil's and I completely agree with you. I have little respect for mountain bike purists who are no-compromise anti-ebike. I don't need to ride an ebike yet, but in 10 years or so I will. When that times comes, I don't want any bike snobs telling me I can't ride an ebike on single track trails.



Report Add Reply



gsr May 10, 2020 8:54am

Don't see a lot of horse or motorcycle riders at Phil's either.

Report Add Reply

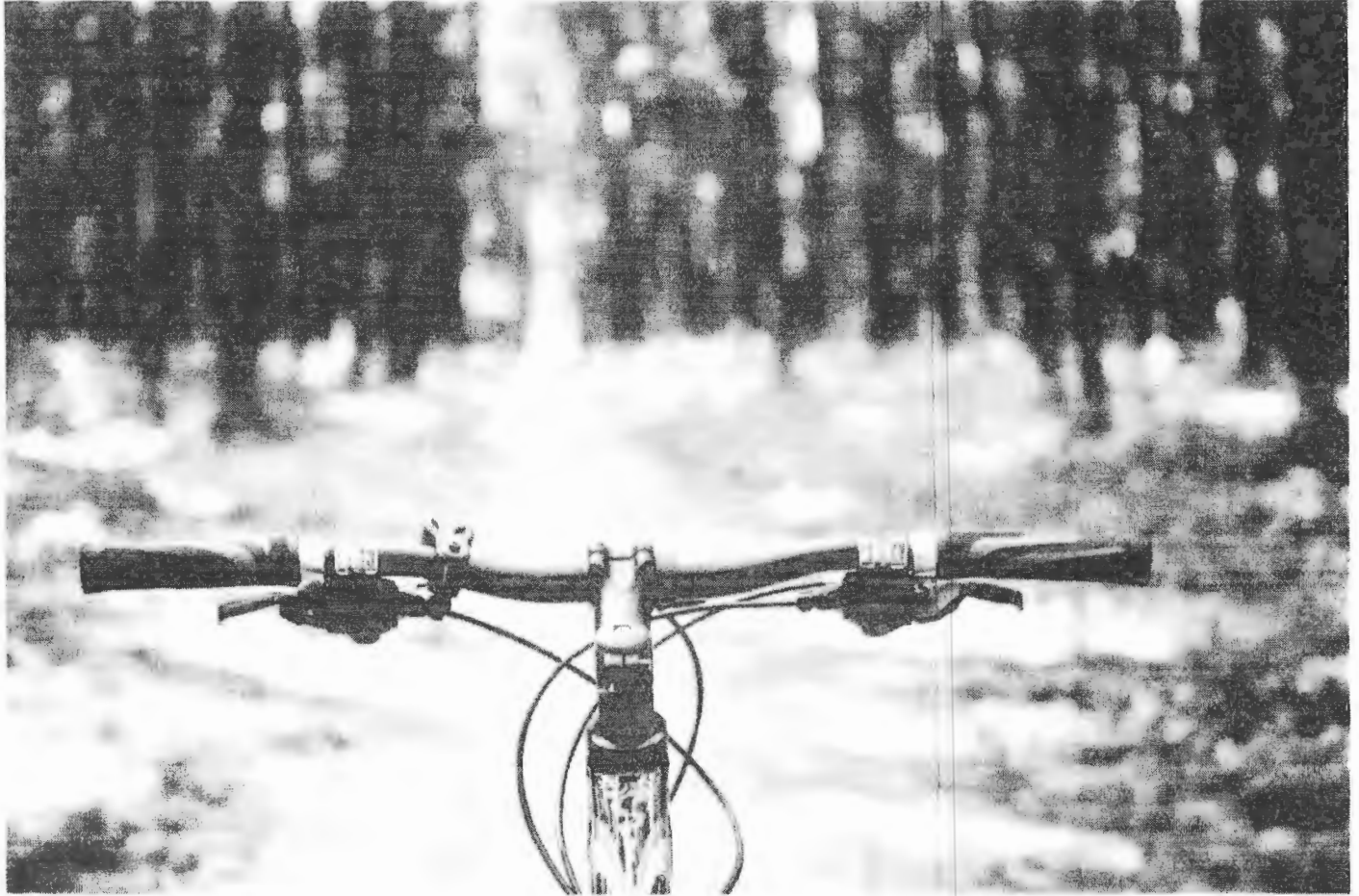
Otterman May 22, 2020 11:39am

You don't see a lot of horse or motorcycles on Phil's single-track trails simply because they are not allowed. All trails have sign posts displaying what is/is not allowed in case you have never noticed! The entire issue is over e-bikes that are pedal-assisted uses for elderly and impaired users - much like an electric wheelchair for wheelchair bound persons.

## Editorial: Let the e-bikes roam

Bulletin Editorial Board

May 12, 2020



123Rf

The way we get from here to there is changing. Right now people are getting around less. But when people are getting around, more and more use e-bikes.

Some e-bike riders want the same sort of access as their non-motorized, bicycling brethren. And some don't want them to have it.

What should the rules be?

The Bureau of Land Management is in the final month of taking comments for its new rule for e-bikes. E-bikes would be treated in large part like non-motorized bicycles on BLM land. If the rule is adopted as written, it would be clear that Class 1, 2, and 3 e-bikes could be allowed on BLM roads and trails upon which mechanized, non-motorized use is allowed. E-bikes wouldn't necessarily be allowed everywhere. More localized decisions would be made.

Nothing in the rule would allow e-bikes in designated wilderness. All bikes are forbidden in designated wilderness.

Federal rules get complicated. They pretty much have to plug up all the nooks and crannies of contingencies. This proposed rule goes on for six pages.

One of the key distinctions is the definitions of the classes of e-bikes. Class 1 e-bikes have a motor that only assists the rider when the rider is pedaling. The motor ceases when the bike's speed hits 20 miles per hour. Class 2 e-bikes do pedal assist and can also power the bike without pedaling. The motor also ceases when the bike hits 20 mph. Class 3 e-bikes are similar to Class 1 in that the motor only assists when the rider is pedaling, but the motor ceases at 28 mph. The power limit for the motor on all the bikes is 750 watts or 1 horsepower.

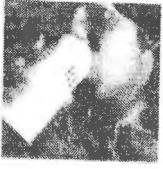
The rules are written so e-bike users still have to pedal to be able to access areas where non-motorized bikes are permitted. So Class 2 bikes would not be permitted to operate in those areas if they were just powered by the motor.

A complaint about e-bikes is speed. Put the same rider on an e-bike and a non-motorized bike and they can undoubtedly go faster on the e-bike. People can already race fast enough on trails to pose a danger to others. Won't e-bikes make that worse? Maybe. Another issue is the Class 2 e-bikes. Good luck enforcing any rule that prohibits those riders from just relying on the motor to get around.

But the most important issue to us is that people should have more access to federal lands. Permitting e-bikes will allow more people to do so. That's a very good thing.

If you want to comment on the rule, the link is  
<https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=BLM-2020-0001>

## (1) comment



gsr May 13, 2020 8:38am

The issue is not "that people should have more access to federal lands"; it's how and where that access should occur. Many trails, parks and roads are over-used, allowing additional uses will not help that.

Report Add Reply

[https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/guest-column-e-bikes-should-be-allowed-on-trails/article\\_1e2390ca-9541-11ea-bde9-7b0467588c7d.html](https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/guest-column-e-bikes-should-be-allowed-on-trails/article_1e2390ca-9541-11ea-bde9-7b0467588c7d.html)

## Guest Column: E-bikes should be allowed on trails

BY ERICH RYLL

May 13, 2020



Bulletin file photo

---

### Editor's Note

Do you have a point you'd like to make or an issue you feel strongly about? Submit a letter to the editor or a guest column.

Jerry Marcyk's guest article, "Snobbery on the local bike trails" on May 10 was spot on! I am two years his senior, and being a septuagenarian a 'pedal-assisted' e-bike would be very helpful. I have pulmonary insufficiency peddling uphill on

single-track trails, and assisted pedaling would help me overcome shortness of breath which often have me off my mountain bike and walking it up hills. Keep in mind Jerry's mention that that assisted pedaling e-bikes have no throttle, but only help when the bicyclist pedals the bike to get the assistance.

I have heard and read the arguments against e-bikes as it may promote high speeds and a degradation of trails. The only difficulty I have encountered on the Phil's Trail system has been on a one-way downhill section run (Phil's Trail) wherein a cluster of 5 much younger cyclists passed me at a breakneck speed in a narrow section involving rocks on the trail and boulders on each side and it nearly caused a collision. At the bottom of the hill the young men, probably in their early 20s, were chatting at a standstill. As I approached them, I asked them to consider not passing at speed on narrow sections involving rocks and limited space. As they acknowledged my comments with their eyes rolling, I suspect they thought, "OK Boomer!".

We 'Boomers' in our 60s and 70s are not interested in going fast or tearing up trails. Pedal assisted e-bikes cannot spin wheels and the fastest I go is up to 18 mph downhill on a paved pathway (the paved path from United States Forest Service Welcome Center to the hotel off Century Drive). On dirt single-track trails downhill, and with no rocks or tree roots, I go no faster than 10-12 mph. Seniors are not the cyclists that COTA or USFS should be concerned will tear up the trails and cause speeding incidents.

There needs to be a method folks 60+ can use e-bikes that are only pedaling assisted on any single-track trail on any public land. Like Jerry, my goal is to remain active and use our wealth of trails here locally that we are blessed to have. I would not be opposed to a process where I am licensed to use a pedal-assisted e-bike by proof of age and would be happy to pay a small fee for the same. Central Oregon is fast becoming a larger retirement community, and there are many of us Seniors that would benefit from an assist using e-bikes on single-track trails.

Simply put, the only concern over the use of e-bikes on mountain bike single-track trails should be over high wattage e-bikes that are throttle based and can go speeds unacceptable on small trails. Pedal-assisted e-bikes of acceptable

wattage for those 60+ should be allowed. It is not Jerry and myself that should concern COTA and USFS in this regard. I posit it is the adrenaline-seeking much younger cyclists that would be able and interested in achieving high speeds that would potentially degrade the managed trails and create speeding incidents. Perhaps it is time to petition COTA and USFS for logical changes, and I would welcome The Bulletin in giving we seniors a hand at getting started on that process.

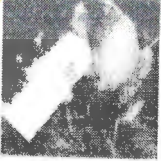
Erich Ryll lives in Bend.

## (2) comments

**Monicaruggieri** May 14, 2020 8:32am

We all need to get outside. I am a mountain biker. Those who ride pedal assist bikes do so because they need to. They are considerate and are not on the technical trails. While I'm here, the sign by the college should now read, "Get outside. Enjoy Bend fresh". No more ominous "stay home", please

Report Add Reply



**gsr** May 14, 2020 6:48am

Pay a fee and show ID so some can go on "any single-track trail on any public land"? Seems a stretch on so many levels.



[https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/guest-column-cotas-role-in-the-e-bike-debate/article\\_8379b4c8-9950-11ea-83a8-b3cc4035ce01.html](https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/guest-column-cotas-role-in-the-e-bike-debate/article_8379b4c8-9950-11ea-83a8-b3cc4035ce01.html)

## Guest Column: COTA's role in the e-bike debate

BY BRUCE SCHROEDER

May 20, 2020



Bulletin file photo

---

### Editor's Note

Do you have a point you'd like to make or an issue you feel strongly about? Submit a letter to the editor or a guest column.

In a recent guest column about riding electric bikes (e-bikes) in the forests west of Bend, there were some inaccuracies that the Central Oregon Trail Alliance's Board of Directors would like to correct and clarify.

COTA's mission is to develop, protect and enhance the Central Oregon mountain bike experience through trail stewardship, advocacy, collaboration and education. Since our founding in 1992, we have designed, built and have stewardship/maintenance agreements on hundreds of miles of single-track trails. While intended to be used primarily by mountain bikers, many others enjoy the work COTA has performed over the past 25+ years, including hikers, trail runners and equestrians.

COTA works with many land managing agencies, such the US Forest Service (Deschutes, Ochoco and Willamette National Forests), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bend Parks and Recreation, Redmond Parks and Recreation, City of Madras, City of Prineville, Crook County and a few others. In each of these relationships, trail management policies (including usage restrictions) are dictated by the specific land managers.

For instance, COTA has, in fact, built trails open to e-mountain bikes at the East Hills Trail System in Madras, because the City of Madras allowed it.

Regarding the Phil's network and trails west of Bend, the land manager is USFS/Deschutes National Forest. The USFS's national policy states that electric bikes are to be considered motorized vehicles, and therefore manages them differently than human-powered mountain bikes. Thus, e-bikes are not allowed on USFS trails managed for non-motorized use.

A different example can be seen in the Oakridge area, where some of the single-track trails allow e-bikes. Here these trails are managed by the Willamette National Forest as motorized trails and are open to motorcycles.

COTA's role has always been as a supportive organization, holding volunteer agreements with the various land managers, including the local Forest Service office. We follow the rules and regulations put forth by the USFS.

The Deschutes National Forest Trail Manager asked COTA for assistance in funding and implementing a 'No E-Bikes' signage program. We provided funding and volunteer labor to install the signs, which were approved by DNF.

This is consistent with our mission, since education and collaboration are part of what we do.

Although the USFS is not currently reviewing its e-bikes policy, the BLM is actively in a review process. Comments or concerns regarding e-bike use on BLM lands can be submitted through June 9 (search 'e-bike regulations' at [blm.gov](http://blm.gov)).

E-bike management on trails is very complex and we applaud the BLM for a full review and public comment period before making a final decision. This decision will also affect other trail users: hikers, trail runners, equestrians, and human-powered mountain bikers. While there are compelling arguments for inclusion of e-bikes on trails open to mountain bikes, there are also many arguments against inclusion and keeping non-motorized trails just that, non-motorized.

While the current policies prohibit e-bikes on non-motorized trails they do not prevent use and enjoyment of public lands. There are literally thousands of miles of unpaved roads and trails approved for motorized recreation, which includes e-bikes.

COTA promotes good trail etiquette and responsible recreation for all users. For e-bikers, a big part of riding responsibly includes knowing where to legally ride and respecting those policies. Ignoring closures and policies does not help the impression others have of e-bikers as a user group.

Bruce Schroeder is the chair of the Central Oregon Trail Alliance.

## (8) comments



**Sheamus O'Toole** May 22, 2020 3:11pm

Motorized e-bikes are, in general, a great substitute for fossil-fuel-powered motorized vehicles, and they should be welcome wherever other motorized vehicles are allowed (including the tens of thousands of miles of trails on federal land that already allow motorized travel and recreation). They could also be a great way for people suffering from chronic illness or injury, or senior citizens (65+) to enjoy mountain biking, but only if this can be effectively regulated, which seems doubtful.

They're currently being pushed hard by the bike industry—including the lobbying arm of the bike industry "People for Bikes"—because of the larger margins the industry makes on selling a motorized eMTB (average cost: ~\$4,000) vs a wholly human-powered mountain bike (average cost: ~\$1,000); It has nothing to do with their claimed mission of making "bicycle travel easier and more efficient for a wide variety of people." Beyond that, the industry cares little about the access or environmental issues motorized e-bikes may cause on non-motorized trails.

eMTBs are motorized, and as such shouldn't be allowed on non-motorized trails (unless they can be specifically permitted to chronically ill or injured persons, or senior citizens [65+] as mentioned above, and that trail use for permitted riders only can be enforced).

Calling them mountain bikes, and riding one when you suffer from no underlying health issues and could simply improve your fitness and health via discipline, diet and exercise—as people have done for millennia, and as mountain bikers have done for decades—fundamentally changes and robs a sport that has been proudly, naturally human powered—in natural scenic locations—of its soul; there is nothing stopping these same able-bodied people from using non-motorized trails as the laws are currently written.

More importantly, allowing motorized eMTBs on non-motorized trail systems sets a dangerous precedent that may eventually lead to any type of motorized vehicle being allowed on trails formerly designated "non-motorized" only, effectively eliminating the "non-motorized" designation and leading to environmental degradation far worse than anything possible from wholly-human-powered or equine recreation alone.

There already exist tens of thousands of miles of trails open to motorized recreation in our National Forest System. For this reason, motorized eMTBs should not be permitted on non-motorized trails.

However, acknowledging that Forest Service land is public and open for all to enjoy, a great alternative to allowing motorized eMTBs on non-motorized trails would be for eMTB advocates to advocate for and build environmentally-conscious eMTB-specific trails, which would be a win for everyone.

Report Add Reply

**Otterman** May 22, 2020 4:58pm

Nice information. The only difficulty with eMTBs on motorized trails is I have almost been run over by motorcycles while on my Mt. bike. I strongly believe there should be some accommodation for those 60+ in using pedal-assisted eMTBs (no throttle, high-wattage bikes), and on existing trails such as the Phil's system. As for the pricing, that is a moot point relative to the benefits 60+ and physically limited folks who might qualify for usage on existing single-track trails. The benefit of being outside in the forest on a single-track trail right here in our backyard outweighs the economic cost to do so in most cases. Additionally, over time prices will go down, not up. Those 60+ should be allowed to use existing single-track trails providing the right non-throttle, top speed limiting, pedal-assisted eMTBs. Who else agrees with this proposal?

Report Add Reply

**pdqwest** May 21, 2020 8:27am

Exactly. It is my understanding from talking to the bike shops that the USFS asked COTA for their opinion on this matter. COTA told them that these are motorcycles and that they should be banned. Anyone who has ever been on a pedal assist e bike knows that these are not motorcycles. It is basically a mountain bike with a small motor to help. Also, the USFS does not recognize e bikes as an ADA compliant device for some reason so that needs to change first. It is also worth noting that many other states allow e bikes on their trails. Just not here.

For those people who state that if you need a motor you should not be on the trail in the first place then I say go back to riding a horse and hunting with a bow and arrow if you want to be a purist.

Report Add Reply

**City MTB** May 21, 2020 11:07am

Actually no. The land manager determines if e-MTBs are allowed, not the state government. An organ of the state government, like its Park or Natural Resources department could decide for itself to allow e-MTBs, but that is only on the properties they manage. A different land manager, like city or county, could decide not to allow them. This is common mistake that e-MTB riders often make, confusing DOT and product safety with land management and usage language.

Report Add Reply

**MFBend** May 21, 2020 8:04am

What was glaringly missing from this editorial is WHY e-bikes are not allowed on certain trails. That's what the discussion should be about.

Report Add Reply

**City MTB** May 21, 2020 11:03am

You mean the motor? Because that is mentioned in this editorial in mentioning that BLM allows e-MTBs on motorized trails.

Report Add Reply

**Otterman** May 22, 2020 11:20am

BLM is open for public comment now - you can see the open invitation here: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/e-bikes> The public needs to provide feedback if possible.

Report Add Reply

**Otterman** May 22, 2020 11:17am

You are right! On the USFS webpage on e-bikes, I note with great interest that nationwide 40% of the trails on USFS forests and grasslands allow e-bikes. It seems to me COTA has had an undue influence on the Deschutes Forest Trails Manager. We need more public input on the matter. Also e-bikes are not really considered motorized vehicles by the public - they are simply bikes with added pedaling assistance (unless they have a throttle which is not being advocated). Time for the public to approach Deschutes National Forest staff on this matter. COTA will be writing a letter not supporting BLM's move to consider e-bikes just so everyone is clear on their intent.