



Idaho Trails Association | P.O. Box 165 | Boise, Idaho 83701
www.idahotrailsassociation.org

10/23/20

U.S. Forest Service
Director, Recreation Staff
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250-1124

Subject: Comments on proposed revisions to Forest Service Travel Management Manual 7700

Dear Ms. Wu:

I am writing on behalf of the Idaho Trails Association to comment on proposed changes to Forest Service directives related to the use of electric bikes (e-bikes) on National Forest System Lands. The Idaho Trails Association is Idaho's voice for hikers and backpackers. As Idaho's only Hiking advocacy organization, we represent our members in voicing concerns with actions that have effects on the hiking community. The Idaho Trails Association works to protect these values through, stewardship activities, public education, outreach.

The Idaho Trails Association wants to make sure that this new proposal dealing with E-bikes does not have negative impacts to the hiking community. We all recognize that e-bikes are a growing recreational activity, and as a new recreational opportunity, they are looking for their piece of our public lands. Because e-bikes have a motor, it is appropriate to classify and manage their use along with all other motorized vehicles. As an organization that performs a lot of trail maintenance on non-motorized trails we see the impacts that wheeled vehicles can have on the non-motorized trail resource, Hikers have lost a lot of their backcountry experiences to mountain bikes already, rutted trails, banked switchbacks, and trail features created to provide interesting opportunities for mountain bikers degrades the experience for hikers. If E-bikes are added to the non-motorized experience the hikers lose out again. Wheeled vehicles already can cause a lot of resource concerns and the addition of the E-bikes will impact National Forest System resources such as soil, water, fish, and wildlife. They are motorized vehicles and should remain on motorized trails with the other motor vehicles. When recreation uses want to expand, they always seem to expand into non-motorized areas where the non-motorized user's opportunities diminish. That is why we believe all E-bikes, no matter what classification they are, have motors and should stay on motorized trails.

Insufficient management of e-bike use can also create conflicts between different user groups. For example, if the Forest Service were to allow e-bike use on all non-motorized trails, then it would result in conflicts between hikers and even mountain bikers who seek purely human-powered recreational experiences. Many of our members are equestrians and they also have concerns, they try to stay on non-motorized trails for safety reasons and the speeds and silence of the mountain bikes can cause dangerous situations for both the stock and riders. Adding E-



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bikes will further this safety concern as these bikes can travel faster and farther with less effort by the rider. We encourage the Forest Service to really look at the safety and quality experience of the forest users. There are already plenty of opportunities for the E-bike user on the national forest system lands.

Sincerely,

Jeff Halligan

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