

E-bike Use Designation on Select Jackson Area Trails

Bridger-Teton National Forest:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the BTNF E-Bike proposal.

As a user of these trails I have significant concerns for the use of motorized vehicles (yes e-bikes) on trails built for non-motorized vehicles. I am also concerned with the news that this proposal was developed by the USFS in consultation with a pro e-bike stakeholder group. As a result the scoping document is biased and should be null and void.

1. Slippery Slope: Once you begin to alter your designations for areas you open the door for more confusion and it creates a slippery slope. The forest service plan calls these trails non-motorized, e-bikes ARE motorized. Don't open the Pandora's box of mechanized vehicles without a strict plan to adhere to. There are numerous pathways and trails open to motorized vehicles already.
2. Safety: More and faster bikes calls for more people, more congestion, more accidents, and more conflict between people and their equipment. These trails were not built for mechanized vehicles at these speeds.
3. Enforcement: Success of this proposal relies on the willingness of e-bike riders to comply. Yet, there is no component in the scoping document that includes how enforcement would take place. A quick Google search will give you multiple (if not hundreds) of websites showing the everyday user how to hack your E-bike to make it faster than it is supposed to go. Assuming people come in and register - which is highly unlikely- what is to stop them from turning their class 1 e-bike into a faster one? Will there be patrol up there, I doubt and hope not. I already run into people regularly on trails where e-bikes are NOT allowed. Sometimes people are not aware and sometimes they are, but they don't care. What makes you think if certain bikes are allowed they will play by the rules? This needs to be addressed beforehand, not after the fact. Ending up behind the 8 ball is unacceptable in this case.
4. Access: While many give a reason to allow e-bikes in more places it that they offer the opportunity for people with disabilities to ride in places they cannot access now, that is just inaccurate. Different abled persons are allowed to ride e-bikes now on many trails where they are not open to the general public, this proposal would not further their access. I am in my 40's and understand how getting older and injuries affect my lifestyle. I also accept that this is part of life and I don't expect the FS or the NPS or any other entity to change how it operates so that I can keep doing what I have been doing my whole life. We get older, we adapt, it is selfish to expect the rules to change for you.
5. Wildlife and Habitat: More and faster vehicles will have large negative impacts on the wildlife and their habitat. We live in the last intact ecosystem in the lower 48, we need to

give them more space not less. Bikes are already dangerous for these sensitive areas and the wildlife, and e-bikes are worse.

6. TCSAR Demand: Our Search and Rescue team is already super busy. The likelihood of an increase in calls from people who went too far and their battery ran out and cannot get back, or collisions from more trail users or people going the wrong way since they can now (physically) ride up black canyon, etc. (even though they are not supposed to) is much higher. This will create increased and unnecessary demand on TSCAR.

While e-bikes are a wonderful tool for some people and some places, Teton Pass is not an appropriate place to implement this plan. The impacts on the ecosystem and the human-powered users does not merit this change.

Thank you for your time and I appreciate your consideration in my comments.

Respectfully,
Emily Sadow