

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/22/2020 10:59:50 PM

First name: Mark

Last name: Gabbard

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity for the public to engage on FSM 7700 and 7710, which would revise Forest Service directives to update and clarify guidance on management of electric bicycle (e-bike) use on National Forest System lands.

The mountain bike community is responsible for a large part of the natural surface trail infrastructure that exists today on our federal, state and local public lands. Hundreds of organized mountain bike clubs around the country manage thousands of volunteers who work closely with land managers on trail development, trail maintenance, and trail education for all users. Much of this work relies on funding sources specific to non-motorized trail projects.

The proposed directives could jeopardize this funding and increase user conflict if non-motorized trails were to become reclassified as motorized to allow for eMTBs. Instead, the final directive must reconsider allowing class 1 eMTBs on select non-motorized trails while retaining a trail's non-motorized status, similar to the recent Department of Interior final rule.

Mountain bikers like me appreciate the leap in technology presented by eMTBs is a unique management challenge. Riding a class 1 eMTB has allowed me to continue to experience our trail systems as I age and recover from injury and/or medical issues. It has also been documented the class 1 eMTBs have the same impact to trails as traditional mountain bikes. I support trail access for Class 1 eMTBs and support shared use on non-motorized trails without jeopardizing access to traditional mountain bikes or current trail designations.

Thank you for the willingness to engage with the mountain bike community.

Sincerely,

Mark