

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/26/2020 12:55:55 PM

First name: Ryan

Last name: Brown

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern: The opportunity to express my educated and observed insights/opinions regarding this topic is very well received, and hopefully I shall represent myself honorably.

As an extensive user and volunteer of our public lands trail infrastructure, it would behoove our agencies to continue to maintain the delineation of non-motorized and motorized use of trails. I understand and recognize the need to expand upon trail availability due to changing technologies and demands.

However, by my observations as both a trail user and as a volunteer trail steward, user conflicts between groups is already at an all-time high given the current social, economic and political climate. There is a plethora of reasons regardless of class of e-MTB to continue to keep non-motorized and motorized users on separate trail systems.

Trail/Resource damage: Regardless of classification and/or how the power is applied, an e-Mountain bike is motorized. As a trail steward, I have seen plenty of evidence of damage from e-MTBs occurring in a short period of time on trails in my vicinity. Regardless of uphill or downhill travel, the bikes DO CAUSE MORE DAMAGE. The bikes are heavier, and motorized. Users typically do not understand or recognize how those two things in combination create substantially more damage. Observing users spin out going uphill, as well as sliding and/or attempting to stop, creates substantially more erosion. This has caused my workload as a volunteer to be vastly greater than it would be without e-bikers poaching trails where they are currently not allowed.

Another component. While I am recreating in the forest on a trail, I am NOT INTERESTED in hearing the whirring of an electric MOTOR on a trail designated as NON-MOTORIZED.

Socio-economic clash. As a trail user and volunteer, I have seen the clash that comes from e-mountain bikers and mountain bikers. The entitlement an e-mountain biker exudes is only comparable to that of another motorsport enthusiast. All e-bikes have the ability to alter the amount of power that is applied, as far as I am aware. For example: Eco mode, Power mode, Boost mode, etc...

I would like to follow all of this up with, I am a hardcore mountain biker, of which is self-powered! As well as a hiker, backpacker, trail runner and avid trail volunteer. I see the need for inclusion of e-bikes on trails, as it allows for a wider demographic, to a certain extent, those with physical disabilities are whom I am considering primarily. Most of my interaction with people on e-bikes has not been very persuasive in favor for e-bikes, unfortunately. A majority of the e-bike users are of a higher economic class, as e-Mountain bikes are MUCH more expensive than traditional.

I am all about inclusion in outdoor recreation and want to see more availability for bike/e-bike usage, and one of the best ways to do so is allowing and funding the creation of MORE BIKE SPECIFIC TRAILS. Ideally, these will be separated by NON-E-BIKE, and E-BIKE allowed (of which should be limited to class 1 ONLY), and that of BICYCLE USE ONLY. Funding for such projects could easily come from adding a tax to the sale of e-bikes (all types) as well as mandating ALL e-bike users register their bikes with the US-Forest Service for a yearly pass at a fee. These fees that e-bike passes/registration should go directly to the creation of bike specific trails as well as the maintenance of them.

The clash I have witnessed in the forest where I live is quite profound, and personally I am very tired of being stuck in the middle of it. Time to open more bicycle specific trails.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

~Ryan J Brown