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First name: Lance

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Greetings and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sadly, I must Strongly oppose this project.

While I feel everyone should have access to our National Forests, this is a disaster waiting to happen. The idea of having motorized vehicles on forest trails is setting a very bad precedent and will undoubtedly result in increased tension and incidents between non motorized bikers, hikers and horses.

While I commend the BTNF for limiting e bikes to Category 1 bikes only, I fear this will not be the end result. Cat 2 and 3 bikers will be sure to use these trails, with increased speeds etc. I also suspect we will see dirt bikes on these trails as well.

While BTNF advises only Cat 1 bikes will be allowed, I do not believe BTNF has the manpower or resources to enforce this limitation and I seriously doubt future funds will be made available to enforce the rules.

I also would like to point out that the town and county of Jackson and Teton recently allowed E bikes on the town and county pathways. Oh what a disaster that has been.

While I feel it is Great that school kids can now ride their e bikes to school, it has been very very challenging for those of us who walk the pathways on an almost daily basis.

I have lost count of the numerous times kids and even adults have come up from behind us on Cat 1, 2 and 3 bikes without alerting us to their presence. My wife and I have almost been hit several times due to folks not having the common courtesy of ringing their bell or announcing, On Your Left. It is very disconcerting to have someone speed by you at 20-30 miles an hour without advance notice. This is on wide open pathways, I can only imagine the carnage when an E-biker is coming around a blind corner either uphill or downhill and hits a non motorized biker, a hiker or an individual on a horse.

A few other observations:

I have contacted Friends of Pathways in Teton County to Please provide more signage on the pathways requesting ALL bikers to announce themselves when coming up behind those walking or biking at a slower pace.

I suggest we stencil messages onto the pathway similar to the signs posted on BTNF signs around the valley showing a biker passing a hiker and reading Can I pass on your left. Please see attachment.

I also we suggested making more " fun" signs on the pathways such as:

There is no Poop Fairy,  
Be nice, say hello  
etc.

I even volunteered to purchase stencils at my personal cost and would volunteer to gather people to spray paint on the pathways.

Sadly my suggestions were met with silence.

After pressing Teton County Parks and Rec for a response, their response was- we don't want sign pollution on the pathways.

After much back and forth, the Board of Teton County Pathways finally relented and advised I could go ahead and spray paint on the pathways at my expense. So much for my tax dollars working for good. I am in the process of signing up friends to assist and we should start spray painting in Spring 2024.

One other mention, the NY Times ran an article recently about the increasing injuries and fatalities occurring in California of kids using E-Bikes.

Paul Hansen of Jackson wrote an editorial that it is only a matter of time until we suffer a fatality of a child in Teton County due to unsafe operation of an E bike.

I sent the NY times article to our County Commissioners and only 1 had the courtesy to respond.

Once again, I must mention the carnage we will experience if motorized vehicles are allowed on forest trails.

I believe E-Bikers users have PLENTY of other options on the many many dirt roads in the Teton Valley area to enjoy their motorized vehicles and getting further out into the wilderness that they desire.

I urge BTNF to not allow e bikes on non motorized trails.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.