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First name: Glenn

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

The Wyoming Office of Tourism (WOT) thanks the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and United States Forest Service (USFS) for the opportunity to comment on the proposed e-bike designation on select Jackson area trails. Tourism is Wyoming's second largest industry and outdoor recreation provides travelers in our state ample opportunity to explore and experience our state further. By providing outdoor recreationists with more options for trail usage, it can allow the state to be more welcoming to recreationists of all skill and ability levels and help Wyoming move forward to new ideas and technologies.

WOT is the only statewide organization dedicated to growing Wyoming's tourism economy. We must continue to look at what's worked well in the past and work towards more equitable and accommodating practices with outdoor recreation. We realize the vast importance of outdoor recreation and specifically biking these trails. Outdoor recreation grew 2.3% up to 168.1 million participants in 2023. That is an exciting number, as it comes with more exposure - which should then lead to more interest from travelers with varying abilities. It's widely known that the Jackson area stands as one of the most frequently visited destinations in Wyoming. It's an exciting prospect to provide our visitors with more than just the conventional mountain biking experiences, offering them the chance to explore additional public lands that they might not otherwise access without this designation.

Overall, the potential boost in our state's reputation for providing inclusive recreational opportunities, along with the prospect of increased economic growth, makes it worthwhile to consider the implementation of this proposal. Currently, Curt Gowdy State Park allows the use of e-bikes on select trails, and as per our Outdoor Recreation office, there have been no observed detrimental effects on these trails attributable to e-bike usage. E-bikes remain in high demand as outdoor recreational activities, and as previously noted, offer significant potential across various performance indicators such as economic growth. As Wyoming provides a multitude of outdoor recreational opportunities for both visitors and residents, it is crucial that we remain committed to expanding our understanding of best practices. We can actively participate in the ongoing evolution of this industry. While e-bike technology isn't new, its popularity continues to soar.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. WOT is committed to continuing to grow our visitor economy and to help travelers recreate responsibly, and at their own pace. By allowing these trails the updated use of e-bikes, we can provide more equitable experiences, bolster local economies, and continue to push toward the forefront of industry innovation.

Sincerely,

Diane Shober

Executive Director - Wyoming Office of Tourism

*Please note that the attached PDF has same comments on official WOT letterhead. Thank you.