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Title:

Comments: Electric mountain bikes (eMTBs) are relatively new on the scene and mountain bikers are freaking out. "They shouldn't be allowed on our trails." "They are going to ruin the sport." It reminds me of when the first mountain bikes started popping up on trails and hikers were panicking with visions of crazed bikers running them over. Well, their fears never materialized, and mountain bikes have become popular tools for exploring the outdoors responsibly.

I have been mountain biking since the early 1980s, when the first Specialized MTB came out. Over the years, I've explored up and down the mountains of Utah, Washington, Oregon, Montana, Colorado, and South Dakota in search of the best singletrack. The bikes and my body changed but my passion ebbed not. When I started building trails throughout the above-mentioned states mountain biking was still one of my top outdoor pursuits. Mountain bikes have come a long way since the 80s. Rock Shox showed up and eventually everyone had a hardtail bike. Then came dual-suspension bikes for all sorts of riding styles. My choice was a cross-country bike so I could climb fast and descend fast without the need for big air. Brakes have gone from simple calipers, to grippy Shimano V-Brakes, to bomber hydraulic disk brakes. While all this was going on street-focused eBikes were evolving too. It should be no shock that the technologies would merge to create eMTBs. A lot of people who were part of the mountain biking revolution in the 80s are getting older and eBikes allow them to continue the sport they love later in life. Whether it's riders dealing with health issues or injuries, or simply just getting older, the emergence of eMTBs makes total sense.

Why I NEED an eBike

The years have been good to me since I started riding my first mountain bike, but my body is getting old (64) it's harder to keep my asthma at bay unless I continue to exercise. In the past couple of years I have started to develop arthritis and hitting the trail hard on a regular bike was hurting like crazy. I found it easier to moderate my exercise which can be very beneficial, but strenuous activity can be detrimental. With mountain biking it is difficult to avoid exertion except with lift-assist or shuttles to trails with uninterrupted descents. Typical mountain bike rides with even slight hills would send me into a tailspin. I started not going riding because I was pushing more than riding and then my asthma started to flare up more when I wasn't exercising as much.

A couple of years ago my local bike shop owner came to me with this idea of getting an eBike so I could ride again. He shared some YouTube videos of guys riding these new bikes on technical terrain I dreamed of doing again. I was intrigued enough to test ride an eBike. The owner let me take the ebike for a long hilly spin on a dual-suspension demo bike and I was impressed enough that I bought it that day. The motor is adjustable from barely noticeable to seriously helping on the uphill. It doesn't propel a rider like a motorcycle does, instead it just gives a boost to the rider's normal pedaling of the bike. This assist mode can be turned off too.

When I found out I couldn't legally ride on our Forest Service I was decimated. Luckily our community had over 30 miles of single track trails in town. We got the City Council to allow e-bikes on our intown trails and it has been a blessing for the past two years. However some of the best single track lies on Forest Service property and it would be great to ride on these trails again.

Please change the rules to allow e-bikes on Forest Service trails where mountain bikes are allowed.

Thanks