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Organization:

Title:

Comments: In general, I am in favor of expanding e-bike access to FS trails. I agree with the classification of e-bikes into the proposed class 1,2, and 3 categories stated in the proposed directive. I would advocate for looking at trails or trail systems individually, and with the input of local users, allowing or not allowing e-bike use where it is determined to not cause user conflicts or other issues.

I am a long-time mountain biker. I don't currently own an e-bike, but I have ridden them several times on a variety of trails. There are definitely some misconceptions about the impact and speed of e-bikes. The power assist is limited to 20 mph. A very average rider can easily exceed 20 mph on a non-e-bike riding downhill. Any additional speed would be limited to uphill riding, and the increased speed is really negligible from a safety standpoint. E-bikes are incapable of spinning out the rear tire like a motorcycle. Much of the damage to motorized trails is a result of users spinning out accidentally or purposefully. E-bikes are slightly heavier than regular bikes, but I can't see any plausible scenario where e-bikes degrade a trail more than a regular bike. Certainly less than a horse or string of horses.

I do believe there is the possibility of bringing greater numbers of users to more remote areas where current human-powered recreationists are accustomed to finding solitude. I count myself in that group, I really enjoy riding deep into remote areas and not seeing a bunch of people. I believe this impact can be managed on a regional level by retaining fully non-motorized status on some trails. I also believe that certain trails may be best set aside for horses or no bikes at all. I personally don't enjoy riding around horses and I know they feel the same about me.

E-bikes are here to stay. They have so much potential to provide recreational opportunities to older Americans or riders returning from injury or illness. They can even cut down on backcountry vehicle traffic as riders find they can ride longer loops without using car shuttles to avoid long stretches of road. Most of the resistance can be overcome with education and good etiquette from e-bike users.