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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am encouraged and excited to know that our Forest Service trails will potentially be accessible via ebike. I am a longtime business owner in Alaska that was challenged in Seward, Alaska in 1998 when I started my heli-mushing operation taking guests up to the Godwin Glacier for dog sled rides. The overwhelming vote was in favor of the helicopters which was in stark contrast to a small minority who were opposed; people could get up to these amazing places without having to be expert mountaineers which includes only a very small fraction of the population. In a very similar way, there are trails that many people simply cannot bike and enjoy without the assist of power. Ebikes are unique in the lack of any noise and a governing speed of 20mph for class 1 & 2 bikes where the "assist" cuts off. There is no; I repeat NO additional wear and tear on trails due to an ebike and the safety of a more dependable ride to reach your destination is noteworthy.

I am currently part owner of a bike rental business in Cooper Landing, AK and 90% of our trails are not open to ebikes as of this writing. Many of our guests are travelers who are not physically capable of hiking or pedal biking the trails so in a sense, they are denied the opportunity to see beauty and have the wilderness experience they as tax paying Americans have a right to. The use of an ebike would make those trails possible to ride safely.

This new technology was borne out of the changing desires and needs pertaining to bicycling. This last year has seen a boom in outdoor enthusiasts getting outside more and more due to the pandemic. It's an obvious fact that whatever can facilitate this parade of enthusiasm is positive in many respects; it's good for the wilderness as it offers a new respect by the traveler, better for the economy to have these ebikes produced and the businesses that sell/rent them, and for the trickle down expenditures that helps a community attracting this type of visitor.

I fully believe with proper regulations this will enhance trail use and offer more folks the joy of a trail ride in the back country. I hope the National Forest Trails will be open to ebikes starting in 2021.

Respectfully,

Lorraine Temple