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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I'm a healthy 50yo who rides 7 days a week here in central Connecticut. Depending on diff factors (ie weather) I decide to go out on my road/gravel bike, regular MTB or class 1 eMTB (2018 Specialized Levo). I have ridden over 1k miles on each already in 2020 and am well qualified to speak on the differences between MTB and eMTBs. The two most important I'd like you to understand are 1- Class 1 eMTB motors are NOT the primary source of power and 2- eMTB's footprint on terrain is the same as a MTB. I could go into more detailed explanations on both but will spare you that.

The problem we have out here is with the local mountain bike associations, namely NEMBA. They have been actively lobbying for continued segregation of eMTBs to only use motorcycle trails, citing outdated motor vehicle laws as a pretext to have privileged access to what is instead a public resource. When I decide to ride my eMTB I am not going to drive 70 miles to ride a forest road on the other side of the state. I am going to ride the same local trails as I do on my MTB. NEMBA says eMTBs are banned from all singletrack trails in New England. This incites the hardline NEMBA members to feel empowered to harass, bully and intimidate other citizens from using "their" trails. This NIMBYism has created a great and unnecessary rift in our local mountain biking community.

Most people cannot tell the difference between a MTB and eMTB. This is only going to continue as technology improves and manufactures build eMTBs which look almost identical to their MTB counterparts (compare the 2021 version of Specialized's Levo to their Stumpjumper). As such trying to enforce any rules between MTB and eMTBs will become futile.

What eMTBs riders need are more national-level organizations to be progressive and green light the use of Class 1 pedal-assist eMTBs on public land. The National Park Service recently did this and I hope the US Forest Service follows suit. It will be the right side of history.

I strongly support treating class 1 pedal-assist eMTBs the same as a pedal MTBs. They are human operated and should not fall in the motorized vehicle category.

Thank you for considering