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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have been an avid user of National Forests, mostly the Cherokee and Chattahoochee, for the majority of my life. I consider myself a traditional forest user, one who hunts, fishes, camps, hikes, and runs. I understand the delicate ecosystems and how management decisions can have a positive or negative effect.

E-bikes should be classified as motor vehicles and nothing else. They in fact, have an electric motor. I am strongly opposed to having three classes of e-bikes, as they should all be considered an electric bicycle and approved only for roads open to vehicular traffic.

Having three classes of E-bikes will be a disaster for law enforcement. LE&I is already stretched too thin to handle what is given to them now. If there are three classes of E-bikes designated, it will only make the officer's jobs more difficult. There would not be a simple "E-bike or not" or preferably a "motorized vehicle or not" determination by officers. Instead, they would have to spend more time determining the classification of the vehicle instead of identifying a motorized vehicle or not, which could lead to misidentification and more problems from there.

I support access and opportunity for the public, but many areas of National Forests are overused and overcrowded already, placing obvious stress on the ecosystem and agency resources. Allowing another user group free reign on National Forests is a terrible idea. Imagine the accidents and rescue situations that will come from an increase in forest users on a motorized vehicle, miles from the nearest road that rescue crews will have access to. E-bikes should not be allowed on the same trails as manual bicycles, hikers, and/or horseback riders. There should be designated roads and trails that should have the determination of having no impact on the ecosystem or other forest users, such as hunters and anglers.

As forest users increase, the stress on animal populations also increases. There is no point in restoring habitat in an area, to then allow an increase in traffic from another form of a motorized vehicle to place stress on nesting birds, deer fawns, endangered flora and fauna, etc.

Electric bicycles should be designated as motorized vehicles, should not have three classes of identification but one, and should only be allowed on designated roads and trails for motorized use. Do not risk the resource for what some may call "greater access". A negative precedent will be made if lobbying is allowed to threaten our resource and the visitor experience of traditional forest users like myself.

Thank You