

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/16/2020 7:33:05 PM

First name: Chris

Last name: Hebel

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to submit a comment on e-bike usage on our National Forest trails. As a mountain biker since 1992 and an employee in the Bicycle industry since 1997 I have given the issue some thought for a few years now. E-bikes are an appropriate use of our public lands, but should be managed as motorized vehicles and not as non-motorized bicycles. The bicycle industry would like to sell more expensive "bicycles" to their aging customer base. I have heard industry professionals talk about how we should not call it a motor, call it an assist so they can use the non-motorized trails. They also say how it does not matter anyway, "soon there will be so many of them they will just have to accept it" (they being the Forest service, and enforcement efforts). I do not agree with this approach. This is only the beginning of this technology. Soon they will be as powerful as a gas powered motorcycle, and the industry is already trying to make them look like non-motorized bicycles. I already hear many people talking about how to modify the existing ebikes to get around the regulations, and many potential ebike customers first questions are if we can "chip it" to get around the limits. It will be impossible to tell the difference between a legal class 1 ebike and one that only looks like one from the outside, but is in fact a powerful motorcycle. The multi use trails are already too crowded in many places here in the Front Range, and bike/hiker conflict is already a potential problem as it is. Enforcement budgets are already stretched thin. Ebikes have a place in our public lands, but should be managed as the motorized vehicles that they are. We can build more trail systems to meet the increasing demands on our trails instead of abandoning the concept of non-motorized trails that have always been so. What is the problem with preserving already heavily used non-motorized trail systems? Instead of sacrificing the entire concept of non-motorized trail access we should go forward with new trail system development to meet the increasing demand for non-motorized and motorized trail use.