

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/19/2020 6:37:48 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello-

Thank you for taking the time to consider this important issue and evaluate public feedback. I am an avid public land user (5-10 times/week) and trail work volunteer. I am the former ED of our local 501(c)3 trails group and have worked as the Wood River Trails Coordinator through the Blaine County Recreation District, a position funded by a BLM grant. In 2012 I was invited by the International Mountain Bike Association to testify in front of a US House of Representatives subcommittee on public land management about the importance of recreation planning and partnerships in public land management. I am currently a full-time Lieutenant/EMT for the Ketchum Fire Department where I am on the backcountry rescue team. We have two e-bikes that we use to respond to backcountry rescue calls.

In the Wood River Valley of Idaho, we have an extensive network of trails (475+ miles) that extend seamlessly across multiple land ownerships, designations, and jurisdictions that include private, BLM, USFS, and the state of Idaho. The majority of our trails are currently opened to motorized use (including e-bikes). Up to this point e-bikes have been considered "motorized use" and have had access to the same trails currently enjoyed by motorcycles. This simple interpretation has provided e-bikes access to hundreds of miles of trail while keeping usage designation simple to interpret and understand. Despite this simplicity, compliance amongst e-bike users has been less than acceptable in my opinion. Rarely do I go for a ride or hike on our non-motorized trails that I don't have an encounter with an e-bike user. I politely try to educate the user in these encounters with mixed success. Most e-bike users that I have encountered simply haven't bothered to inquire about where they may or may not be allowed. Others simply do not care and express as much. Many e-bike users that I have encountered have no concept of sharing the trail or who yields to whom. My impression of e-bike users at this point is that they tend to be the least educated and least ethical group on the trails. So, my question then becomes, why are we trying to reward these users by creating a special new user designation for them? Why do they deserve more trails than the motorcycle riders, who perform hundreds of hours of trail work each spring/summer cutting out fallen trees from our local trail network. Why should electric motorized users have access to more trails than combustion motorized users?