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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have been cycling since I was 5 years old and I am still an avid cyclist at age 69. I have a number of bicycles, including trail and road bikes. I have always supported our US designated Wilderness areas and the need to keep them free of mechanical devices, such as bicycles. Now that we have e-bicycles there is an even greater threat to our trails and public lands because these are CLEARLY MACHINES. I would like you to note that I strenuously oppose the Forest Service's proposed rule to open up my National Forest lands to additional e-bike use for the following reasons:

E-bikes are motor vehicles, not bicycles. New e-bikes are being developed now that will drive up to 55 mph. E-bikes must travel only where motor vehicles are allowed. Because of their speed and quiet nature, e-bikes can travel much farther into the backcountry, and startle and disturb wildlife over far greater distances. E-bikes also conflict with other nonmotorized trail users like hikers, horseback riders, and bicyclists.

There will DEFINITELY be negative environmental impacts and these impacts must be fully evaluated through an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The proposed rule appears to set up conflicts with the Forest Service's Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212 et seq).

Because there is almost no enforcement now for trespass, illegal off-trail riding, and illegal trail development by some bikers, e-bikes will increasingly trespass into Wilderness and other protected areas with no consequences. This illegal use will degrade the wild character of these lands and should not be encouraged as this rule will do.

I URGE the Forest Service to withdraw this proposal.