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Comments: I oppose the Forest Service's proposed rule to open up any National Forest lands to additional e-bike use for the following reasons:

E-bikes must be treated as motor vehicles, not bicycles. E-bikes are being developed now that will drive up to 55 mph. E-bikes should only travel where motor vehicles are allowed.

This proposed rule suggests likely environmental impacts that should 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).

E-bikes can travel much farther into the backcountry because of their speed and quiet operation, and startle and disturb wildlife over far greater distances. E-bikes conflict with other nonmotorized trail users like hikers, horseback riders, and bicyclists.

Since almost no enforcement exists 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.

The Forest Service should withdraw this proposal.