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

E-bikes are clearly 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. Forests are already negatively impacted by normal bikes. Wildlife and ecosystems are already under too much stress.

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).

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.

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. The Forest Service should withdraw this proposal.