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Comments:

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

E-bikes must be treated as motor vehicles, not as bicycles. Because new e-bikes are now being developed that will be capable of being driven up to 55 mph, e-bikes must be permitted only where motor vehicles are allowed.

This proposed rule does not adequately address the likely environmental impacts that this rule change would have on the ecosystem. Before this change is considered, it should be fully evaluated through an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Further, the proposed rule seems 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 back country. Their abrupt appearance will startle and disturb wildlife over far greater distances. E-bikes are in conflict with other non motorized trail users like hikers, horseback riders, and bicyclists. E-bikers present a serious threat of injury to these non motorized trail users.

At present, there is virtually no enforcement for trespass, illegal off-trail riding, and illegal trail development by some bikers; e-bikes will undoubtedly, and 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 oppose this rule change and ask the Forest Service to withdraw it.