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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I strongly oppose the Forest Service's proposed rule to open up our National Forest lands to additional e-bike use. In fact, I believe the Forest Service should withdraw this proposal for the following reasons:

I am an avid outdoors woman who utilizes our/my National forests mostly for equestrian and hiking use. It is my opinion, that allowing e-bikes further access (beyond trails and areas treated as motor vehicles, as that's what they are - - motorized bicycles) will further degrade the Forest experience for non motorized trail users like me. I have already experienced difficult situations in Forest lands with "regular" bicycles going too fast (especially on steep downhill trails) to be able to properly yield to hikers and horses. There will be many injurious accidents should this proposal be allowed.

New e-bikes have been developed that approach highway speeds - up to 55 mph - and this is too fast for nonmotorized trail users to safely co-exist. As such, I believe e-bikes should continue to be treated as motor vehicles. I'm sure that the Forest wildlife will appreciate lesser intrusions as well.

The Forest Service is already spread too thin for enforcement of existing rules and regulations. I am very concerned that given the nature of the new e-bikes - fast, far-reaching, and fairly quiet - that trespass, and illegal off-trail riding and trail develop will continue at an exponential pace within "backcountry" areas. I believe allowing e-bikes in Forest lands (beyond where motorized vehicles are currently allowed) will significantly degrade the wild character of these lands, and therefore the regenerative nature that most users are looking for.

The proposed rule suggests likely environmental impacts that should be fully evaluated through an appropriately thorough EIS (under NEPA). And it appears that the proposed rule sets up conflicts with your own Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212 et seq).

Thank for allowing my comments, and once again, I strongly oppose the Forest Service's proposed rule, regarding opening more of the Forest land to e-bikes.