

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/22/2020 2:57:13 AM

First name: Kari

Last name: Gunderson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I spend a lot of time on the trails in national forest lands. I am alarmed at the rapid increase in popularity of e-bikes and have witnessed illegal use on nonmotorized trails. I know that due to budget cuts there are not enough LEO's out patrolling national forest lands, especially when they have to leave their vehicles and actually hike up trails. It seems that there is a political agenda driven by the current administration and Mr. Perdue who is doing the president's bidding. I object to e-bikes on national forest trails for the following reasons: E-bikes must continue to be treated as 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.

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 (Naidoo & Burton, 2020). 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 (Landres, et al., 2015).

The Forest Service should withdraw this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

References:

Naidoo, R. & Burton, A.Cole. 202. Relative effects of recreational activities on a temperate terrestrial wildlife assemblage. Conservation Science and Practice.

Landres, et al. 2015. Keeping it wild 2: an updated interagency strategy to monitor trends in wilderness character across the National Wilderness Preservation System. Gen. Tech. Rep. RMRS-GTR-340. Fort Collins, CO. US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Rocky Mountain Research Station. 114 p.