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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Oct. 21, 2020

Comment review officials,

I have a great interest in improving ebike access, particularly regarding access to appropriate non-motorized Forest Service trails. Where I live in Montana, surrounded by the Custer-Gallatin National Forest, the most desirable trails to ride an ebike happen to be non-motorized trails, which are presently off limits to ebikes. Sometimes I find older people riding ebikes, enjoying the trails anyway.

Following are my comments on changes where I have concern:

7702 Objectives.

8. To consider emerging technologies (such as ebikes) that are changing the way people access and recreate on NFS lands.

The example of ebikes given is well and good, but I must stress this new paragraph should be without doubt about all emerging technologies. The paragraph may need additional wording to that end. I say this because our Forest completed it's Travel Plan in 2006, when fatbikes were introduced for broad retail sale. Now fatbikes are everywhere, but our Forest hasn't yet embraced any Travel Plan amendments that would allow fatbikes onto groomed or ungroomed trails designated for cross-country skiing. Our other winter trails are too steep and rugged for fatbike access. Our Forest issued tickets to fatbike riders until a Montana state law was passed allowing fatbikes onto groomed snowmobile trails. Presently we can use those snowmobile trails but at considerable peril due to speed differentials. I stress that all emerging technologies must be considered and the Forests must do so in a reasonable timeline. Custer-Gallatin National Forest lacks motivation as we are still waiting for due consideration for fatbike access after 14 years!!

Please change item 8 to read: To consider all emerging technologies that are changing the way people access and recreate on NFS lands. Emerging technologies shall be considered within a reasonable timeline.

7705 Definitions

These additions to Definitions are so important! Thank you for providing the definitions and for differentiating between a human powered bicycle and an electric bicycle. This verbal separation of two similar devices has been lacking from most conversations. It provides a clarity that has been lacking. These thoughtful definitions are long overdue. Thank you!

7715.03 Policy

9. My concern is similar to 7702. Other emerging technologies should be considered in addition to ebikes. Considerations should be performed in a reasonable timeline.

Please change item 9 to read: Consider all emerging technologies that are changing the way people access and recreate on NFS lands. Emerging technologies shall be considered within a reasonable timeline.

7715.5 Criteria

4. item b. I'm greatly concerned about the two words, "as appropriate". I feel these two words open the door for management meddling, possibly to find a myriad of arbitrary excuses for not allowing ebikes in many settings. I recommend the words, "as appropriate" be removed from item b. in the interest of clarity. I feel those two words sow unnecessary confusion into a clear paragraph.

7715.72 Road and trail jurisdiction and coordination

item 8. Thank you for requiring coordination across multiple jurisdictions. This requirement is important for the public to be treated fairly. It will be also important for full assessment of emerging technologies, as new devices can often be the cause of suspicion and resulting uncomfortable prohibitions. Coordination can often alleviate these problems.

Sincerely,

Greg Beardslee

Bozeman, MT