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Comments: Hello,

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

First, 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, which is a serious safety concern for the e-bike rider and the other people on the trail. E-bikes must travel only where motor vehicles are allowed.

Second, 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).

Third, the proposed rule will conflict 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 non-motorized 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.

In the past, there has been significant backlash against mountain bikes (MTBs) in backcountry areas, and e-bikes will have much more impact with more serious negative consequences. It is inconsistent with previous policy to obstruct approval of MTB and now allow e-bikes.

The Forest Service should withdraw this proposal.