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First name: Sarah

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service,

I have owned and ridden mountain bikes for many, many years. But their use has gotten out of control - literally, there is little/no control. Sometimes i prefer to walk, and a VERY LARGE segment of the biking community RUINS my walking/hiking experience. As the land manager, you need to step up and take some control.

EVERY TIME time i walk/hike on our local NFS trails, i encounter mountain bikers who don't care ONE BIT that pedestrians have the right-of-way. They expect us to be hyper-vigilant, anticipate high-speed bikers around every bend, and jump out of their way, leaving us in a cloud of dust. It has become so awful that many people i know will not walk/hike on local NFS trails anymore, due to conflicts with bikes. The USFS has, by its refusal to close any of our local trails to bikes, to essentially displace other users.

When mountain bikers approach, they yell "COMING THROUGH" or "ON YOUR LEFT" and expect you to quickly jump out of their way. Last summer, one of them came around a blind turn at high speed and hit me with his handlebars because i wasn't able to get out of the way soon enough. He didn't even stop to see if i was okay. Luckily, it was just a bruise and small cut.

E-bikes are only making it worse. They make it possible for MORE people to ride trails, and for them to get FURTHER OUT into the forest. That means more crowded trails, and fewer places where we can have a peaceful walking/hiking experience without having to be hyper-vigilant about encounters with bikes.

For these and other reasons, i oppose the Forest Service's proposed rule to open our NFS lands to additional e-bike use.

E-bikes should continue to be treated as motor vehicles, not bicycles. The e-bikes can travel at very high speeds, and should be allowed only where motor vehicles are allowed.

The proposed rule would result in environmental impacts that should be fully evaluated through an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The proposed rule also would conflict with elements of 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 and other trail users over far greater distances.

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 clearly would do.

Please withdraw this proposal, or at minimum prepare a full EIS.