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Comments: I appreciate the opportunity to engage on proposed FSM 7700 and 7710. It is my understanding that these rules, if approved as is, which would revise current Forest Service directives to update and clarify guidance on the use of electric bicycle (e-bike) use on National Forest System lands.

The mountain bike community is responsible for a large part of the natural surface trail infrastructure that exists today on our federal, state and local public lands. Hundreds of organized mountain bike clubs around the country manage thousands of volunteers who work closely with land managers on trail development, trail maintenance, and trail education for all users. Much of this work relies on funding sources specific to non-motorized trail projects.

As a partially-impaired user of the trail system, maintaining access to the trail system for all users - even those with impairments - is a critical element in any guidelines established to modify rules related to electrical-assisted mountain bikes for partially-impaired users such as myself and many others - my patients - as I am an orthopedic surgeon.

The proposed directives could jeopardize this funding and increase user conflict if non-motorized trails were to become reclassified as motorized to allow for eMTBs. Instead, the final directive must reconsider how to allow class 1 eMTBs on select non-motorized trails while retaining a trail's non-motorized status, similar to the recent Department of Interior final rule. The final directive can be further improved by following the International Mountain Bicycling Association's management recommendations: managing the three classes of e-bikes separately from one another, and prohibiting class 2 and class 3 eMTBs on natural surface, non-motorized trails.

As a retirement-aged person, I know others will appreciate the privilege of trail access with their assisted mountain bikes. We mountain bikers appreciate the leap in technology presented by eMTBs and we recognize that it is a unique management challenge. These proposed directives (as I've stated above) rightfully plan separate management for bicycles and electric bicycles. It is critical that land managers and local mountain bikers work together to determine where eMTBs are and are not appropriate on current and future mountain bike trails.

Thank you for the willingness to engage with the mountain bike community.

Sincerely,

Daniel W. Bullock M.D., Mount Shasta, California