

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/23/2020 1:38:04 PM

First name: Julie

Last name: Tickle

Organization: DREAM Adaptive Recreation

Title: Executive Director

Comments: DREAM's mission is to enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities by providing access to year-round outdoor recreational opportunities. Outdoor recreation provides many social, physical, and mental/emotional benefits, and we believe that everyone should have access to such empowering experiences. The organization was founded in 1985 and currently provides over 1,000 lessons and opportunities annually in alpine skiing/snowboarding, nordic skiing, paddleboarding, kayaking, mountain biking and a variety of motorized water sports such as water skiing and wake surfing. There is a large educational component to each of our programs to ensure safety for all involved, proper handling of the equipment and situational etiquette. Our focus on is leveraging each person's unique abilities and promoting the highest level of independence possible.

E-bikes are a great tool to help a wider-range of people have access to dirt trails and paved pathways. They are widely used in the adaptive recreation field, with two-wheeled, three-wheeled and four-wheeled versions. We started our adaptive mountain bike program in 2019 and it is extremely popular. By the spring of 2021, all of DREAM's adaptive foot-pedaled and hand-pedaled mountain bikes will have e-assist, primarily class 1 and class 2. Some of our bikes have throttles to support individuals with more involved disabilities including quadriplegics and those with upper extremity challenges.

Adaptive mountain bikes allow individuals with mobility impairments (ex: Spinal Cord Injuries, MS, Spina Bifida, Amputations) to go further in nature, either for a leisurely stroll or for an adrenaline-filled workout. It is often a way for people with physical disabilities to take a "walk" through the woods with family and friends and connect with the larger recreational community. The e-assist makes it possible for individuals to propel the often heavy adaptive bikes. Furthermore, it allows them to ride for longer distances; An adaptive mountain biker might only be able to ride for 1-2 miles without e-assist, but with e-assist, they can get out for 10+ mile rides.

DREAM also works with Montana Veterans who have a wide variety of visible and invisible (PTSD/Traumatic Brain Injury) disabilities. We find that two-wheel upright e-bikes are a great way to support this population who so desperately needs to be re-integrated back into the community. It makes the sport a little more approachable for those who biked prior to their injury or who would like to pick up a new sport but might have some hesitations.

In closing, DREAM is a strong supporter of equipment that breaks down barriers to participation in the outdoor recreation space and that promotes the greater well-being of ALL community members.