

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/23/2020 1:35:42 PM

First name: Andrew

Last name: Ashburn

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I submit this comment in opposition to the proposed rule to allow greater e-bike use on our National Forest lands for several reasons. E-bikes are indeed motor vehicles and should not be considered bicycles. Recent advancements enable e-bikes to achieve speeds of 55mph. They should only be allowed access to areas designated for motor vehicle use.

This proposed rule change would have environmental impacts severe enough to warrant an environmental impact statement (EIS) according to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It would also be in opposition of the Forest Service's Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212 et seq).

By their nature e-bikes have the potential to cause increased harm to wildlife, they are fast and quiet enabling them to cover greater distances and startle vast swathes of local fauna. E-bikes also pose conflict with other trail users including hikers, horseback riders, and bicyclists, further heightening risk of accidental collisions and serious injuries deep in the backcountry.

Because there is little to no enforcement for trespass, illegal off-trail riding, and illegal trail development by some bikers, it is very likely e-bikes will increasingly trespass into Wilderness and protected areas free of consequence. Undoubtedly illegal use will diminish the natural integrity and wild character of these lands and should in no way be facilitated by the Forestry Service. Please withdraw this short sighted proposal.