

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/23/2020 5:35:18 PM

First name: Paul

Last name: Maag

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

All of my comments are in respect to class1 e-bikes. That definition should be considered the "E-MTB". Non powered bikes should be designated and analog mountain bikes. These are my personal comments and do not represent any organization. I do serve as a board member of Salida Mountain Trails, Salida Colorado.

In 1990, I became a founding member of IMBA. I served as the IMBA Southern California Desert Representative for 10 years.

I rode my rigid mountain bikes legally in wilderness (primitive areas) until it was outlawed by the Sierra Club legal action back in 1987. Access for mountain bikes was almost completely lost in the early 1990's. Thankfully, level headed minds prevailed and the mountain bikes have remained as a wonderful trail tool.

Back in the 1990's, people threw rocks at us. Road cyclists said that we should not ride our bikes on trails. Equestrians threatened to rope us and drag us down the trails.

In the early 1990's many mountain bikers commented that the front suspension bikes were not mountain bikes and should not be allowed on single track trails. Technical progress initiated full suspension in the late 1990's. Many said we should not ride them on trails. Now comes the e-bike...and the same thing is happening. This is about prejudice verses liberty, not trail conflicts.

I feel the controversy on E-MTB's is similar to what occurred with the progression of mountain bikes in the early years of the sport. I have heard and read negative comments from many analog mountain bikers about e-bikes. The naysayer's are resentful about the ability of less fit individuals being able to climb difficult trails. This is an emotional confusion amongst very conservative cyclists. It is about comparing ones own fitness to others fitness. It is essentially unfair. It is a notion that has been with cycling since it inception over 100 years ago. Cyclists are competitive and compare themselves to racing prowess. Therefore, anyone with significant technology advantage is cheating. This notion is false when used in the context of recreational use of trails. Trail use is not a competitive race.

There is no scientific proof that e-bikes will cause more damage to trail surfaces. Simple knowledge about these bikes indicates a common sense approach. Limited to 250 watts, they cannot increase trail damage. Trail damage will come from either E-MTB's or analog MTB's from improper braking maneuvers. Just like banning mountain bikes back in the early 1990's, this is all about PERCEIVED conflicts and resentments.

Conflicts between other trail users (hikers and equestrians) are virtually the same between these bicycle forms, E-MTB and analog mountain bikes. It is the responsibility of E-MTB and analog mountain bikers to yield the trail to all other trail users with courtesy and safety.

As we progress into the 2020's, I predict we will see that the mountain bike will morph into the E-MTB. Currently there is a move to decrease power and decrease E-MTB weight. I believe this will continue as a trend. These bike designs will continue to decrease noise and the ability to detect through small internal batteries and motors. This will become very difficult for the US Forest Service managers to detect and manage. Because of this, I don't think it is a prudent decision to restrict E-MTB's.

I fully recommend that the US Forest Service allow full access to the new form of mountain bike on single track

trail in non wilderness areas.