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Organization:

Title:

Comments: USFS Proposed e-Bike Directives:

I am a 74 year old active single track mountain biker. It is my main source of exercise and fitness in my "use it or lose it" age bracket. Maintaining my balance and agility, as well as the well documented mental health benefits of exercise in the great outdoors are also important benefits. Some of us with hip, knee and ankle issues find that we can ride an e-Bike, even if hiking and running are not good options for our joints. The social aspects of riding with a group of friends is very important as well.

As I get older, some of the steeper and more technical trails I used to love to ride have become more difficult. My ability to ride with younger, long time Single Track cycling friends began to wane, but my enthusiasm for the sport did not. My salvation (and that of many of my older MTB friends) has been a class 1 e-Bike. We have found it to be a great equalizer, allowing us to ride our favorite rides in the area and to ride with younger friends as well. It also is a great means of exploration, allowing longer rides and exploration of new areas. I can get the same exercise (or as much as I am capable of) and the health benefits of exercising, while enjoying the sport as much or even more than before.

However, it is critically important to not classify a pedal assist e-Bike limited to a max speed of 20 mph (the class 1 bikes that all my older friends and I use) as a motorized vehicle. It has an electric motor, but riding it is much more similar to riding a non pedal assist MTB than riding any motorcycle, dirt bike or ORV. They are almost indistinguishable from a MTB in appearance and handling. Just like a regular MTB, it goes nowhere without your pedaling. It makes almost no noise and has no emissions. It does no more damage to trails than a regular MTB in my experience, and is far less destructive to trails than motorized vehicles with lots of torque. Class 2 and Class 3 e-bikes are more similar to motorized vehicles and should not be allowed on non-motorized tracks and trails that MTBs are allowed on. Therefore it is imperative that:

1. non-motorized tracks and trails not be reclassified as motorized to allow Class 1 e-Bikes, and
2. that Class 1 bikes be classified as mountain bikes.

Thank you for considering these comments and for promoting the health and enjoyment of our national forest lands by the large number of senior mountain bike enthusiasts in America. May everyone involved in this effort one day be included in our demographic group, and experience the benefits of riding a Class 1 e-Bike on these mountain bike trails themselves.